

Guidelines for the Grading of International Officials

1. Introduction

1.1 This Grading Guidelines document covers all categories of Officials:

- Technical Officials (Technical Delegates, Technical Officers and Judges);
- Umpire Managers;
- Umpires.

1.2 The purpose of the FIH Panel/Level System is to

- provide Officials with a clear understanding of the requirements and pathways for their careers,
- have a transparent, performance-based system which supports the FIH and Continental Federation (CF) event portfolios with high-quality Officials suitable for all types and levels of competition, and
- facilitate the FIH Umpiring Committee's and FIH Technical Officials Committee's role in assisting in the education, development and succession planning for all officials.

1.3 Unless otherwise specified, all provisions hereunder apply for all categories of Officials.

1.4 For the purposes of these Grading Guidelines, it should be noted that the final decision regarding all Panel/Level assignments, upgrades, re-grades, and changes of status rest with the FIH Technical Officials Committee (for technical officials) or the FIH Umpiring Committee (for umpires and Umpire Managers) respectively.

2. FIH International Officials

2.1 Candidature and Awarding of FIH International Official Status

Upon the qualification criteria for membership in the International Panel (IP) as specified hereunder having been met, the Official's NA may submit a fully completed International Official Application Form to the CF for verification and approval. (<https://www.fih.hockey/static-assets/pdf/fih-international-official-application-form-2023.pdf>)

Upon approval, the CF submits the application to the FIH Sport Manager. With this submission, the CF confirms the official's conversational proficiency in English and, in the case of umpires, their necessary fitness levels. If all formal requirements are met, the FIH Sport Manager confirms the new Panel/Level.

2.2 General Requirements

All FIH International Officials must:

- (a) Be regularly active in their respective role at the top level of an FIH-affiliated

- (b) National Association (NA), not necessarily their own, and active within a CF.
- (b) Have a complete and up-to-date knowledge and understanding of the relevant Rules of Hockey and Tournament regulations and their application.
- (c) Be able to understand and communicate in English.
- (d) Have general computer/IT skills including the ability to use various platforms commonly used for communication and collaboration.

2.3 Role-specific Requirements

In addition to the general requirements for all International Officials specified under item 2.2,

- (a) Technical Officials must have a working knowledge of TMS.
- (b) Umpire Managers must be currently active as an umpires' coach/selector/assessor at the highest level of competition for their own or another NA that they may be affiliated to and have a working knowledge of TMS. From Level 3 upwards, Umpire Managers must also be able to use match analysis tools such as Coach Logic.
- (c) Umpires must be physically mobile and able to reach the minimum fitness standards as specified for their respective Panel/Level. Fitness testing must be performed and results submitted in accordance with the FIH Umpire Fitness Guidelines (available at <https://www.fih.hockey/about-fih/official-documents/fih-umpires-and-umpire-managers/umpires>). From Level 3 upwards, Umpires must also be able to use match analysis tools such as Coach Logic.

2.4 Termination of International Official Status

The status of active International Official ceases:

- (a) Upon request or notification of retirement from the International Official.
- (b) Upon notification from the Official's NA or CF that the Official is ineligible or not supported by the NA or CF; (CFs to inform FIH immediately to update active lists).
- (c) On 31 December following reaching the age of 47 years for Umpires and 65 years for Umpire Managers and Technical Officials.

Note: A one-time extension of the status of active FIH Official may be granted by the FIH Technical Officials Committee or the FIH Umpiring Committee respectively by means of awarding an appointment to a specific event. In that case, the active status of the International Official ceases on the day following the completion of the event (or, in the case of cancellation or abandonment of the event, immediately upon announcement of the decision to cancel or abandon).

- (d) At the discretion of the FIH Technical Officials Committee or the FIH Umpiring Committee respectively where inappropriate behaviour, including, but not limited to, any breaches of the FIH Integrity Code or Code of Conduct has been reported and verified in accordance with the principles of natural justice.

Note: Depending on the nature and severity of the behaviour / breach, the FIH Technical Officials Committee or the FIH Umpiring Committee respectively may impose a permanent exclusion or temporary suspension from officiating or a re-grade (re-assignment to a lower Panel/Level).

2.5 Inactivity

If an Official has not been active at the top level of an FIH-affiliated NA or CF or has not officiated internationally in two (2) consecutive years, the Official will be considered inactive.

Inactive Officials will not be appointed by FIH. They may be nominated by CF or their own NA for international matches or events. Having officiated in at least one International Match, the Official's active status may be reinstated, with the Level assigned based on performance.

2.6 Declared Inactivity

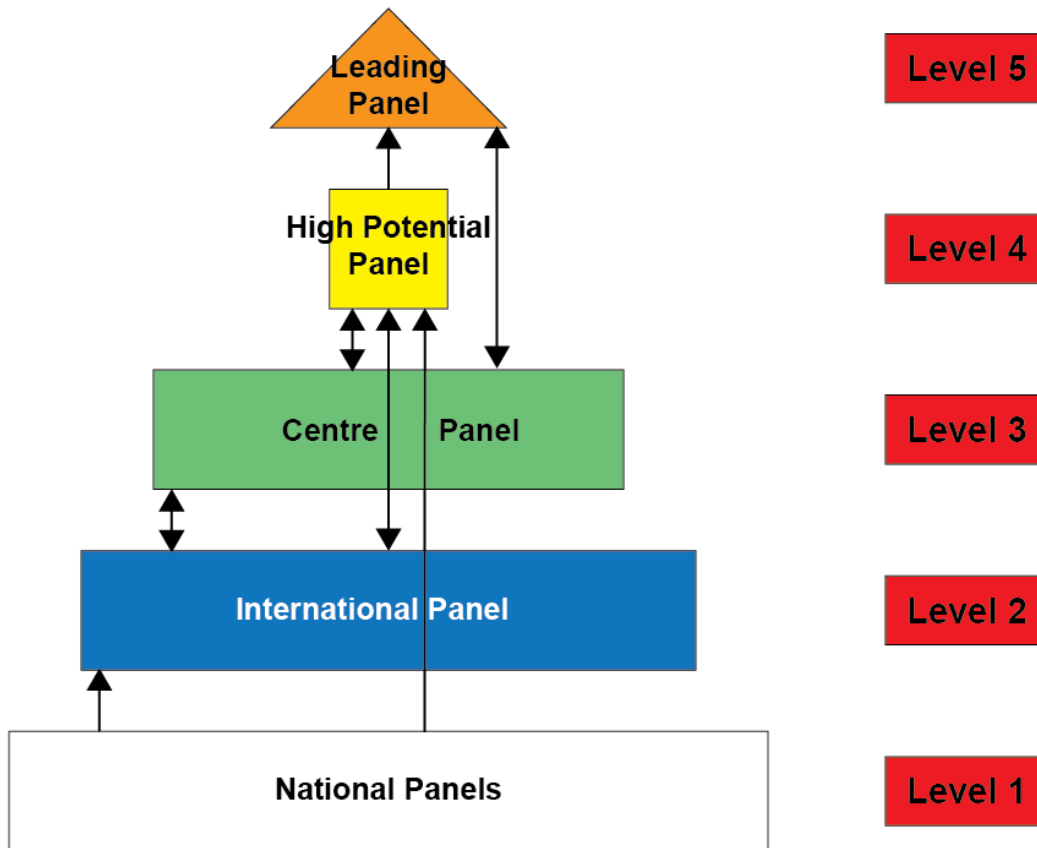
Officials must advise their CFs and FIH in writing of any planned or known extended unavailability (e.g., injury, illness, career, family reasons or taking a break) to facilitate smooth and efficient planning by the FIH Umpiring Committee and the FIH Technical Officials Committee respectively. The Secretary of the FIH Umpiring Committee and the FIH Technical Officials Committee respectively will keep a list of those declared as inactive in the relevant categories.

In case of a declared inactivity of more than 6 months, an Official may be reinstated to active international status at the end of the declared inactivity after officiating in at least one international match of qualifying status, and for Umpires additionally, after submission of a fitness test to the FIH by their NA that fulfils the requirement of the Level that they wish to return to. It is at the discretion of the FIH Technical Officials Committee or the FIH Umpiring Committee respectively to decide at which Level the Official will be reinstated.

2.7 Failure to Submit Fitness Testing Results or Meet Fitness Requirements

For Umpires, a failure to submit fitness testing results in accordance with the FIH Umpire Fitness Guidelines or failure to meet the relevant fitness requirements may, at the discretion of the FIH Umpiring Committee, lead to the Umpire being re-graded and/or considered inactive.

3. Panel/Level Structure and Pathways



The Panel/Level structure as depicted above lays out the different Panels/Levels in relation to each other.

- 3.1 Level 1: National Panels are controlled by the NA upon their nominations to CFs in accordance with this document.
- 3.2 Level 2: International Panel is controlled by CFs.
- 3.3 Levels 3 to 5, i.e., Centre Panel, High Potential Panel and Leading Panel are controlled by the FIH Umpiring Committee and FIH Technical Officials Committee respectively.

4. FIH International Officials

In the following paragraphs, each Panel/Level is described, including the following criteria:

Qualification Criteria	How does an Official qualify to be promoted to this Level / into this Panel?
Qualifying Events	At which events can an Official qualify for promotion to this Level / into this Panel?
May be appointed to (but not limited to)	Which events will an Official on this Panel/Level mainly be appointed to?

Exit criteria	Which circumstances will lead to an Official being re-graded to a lower Panel/Level?
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4.1 Level 1: National Panel (NP)

Any Official who is not yet a member of any higher Panel/Level described in this document is considered a member of the National Panel, or a National Official as identified by that NA.

This includes Officials who are officiating, or have previously officiated, in international matches or events, but have not yet obtained International Official status.

4.2 Level 2: International Panel (IP)

This level recognizes and highlights the effort and investment of Officials by being awarded International Official status, identifies a broad base of suitable, reliable Officials for continental and invitational events and introduces Officials to international officiating.

The International Panel is the first FIH international grading: upon being appointed to this Panel/Level, the Official will receive a formal letter and insignia from the FIH.

Qualification Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum of two events with qualifying performances, evaluated by an FIH Level 2 and above-listed TD or UM, and consistent performance levels • These events with qualifying performances need to have taken place a maximum of three (3) years before the application date. • For Umpires: meeting fitness requirements in accordance with the FIH Umpire Fitness Guidelines.
Qualifying Events	Any event deemed suitable by the CF
May be appointed to (but not limited to)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continental and regional events • FIH/CF-sanctioned inter-nations invitational matches or events
Exit criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance below expected level • Inappropriate behaviour, including, but not limited to, breaches of the FIH Code of Ethics and FIH Code of Conduct • For Umpires: not submitting fitness testing results or not meeting fitness requirements

4.3 Level 3: Centre Panel (CP)

The purpose of the Centre Panel is to nurture experienced and competent Officials that service events to a high standard.

The Centre Panel may contain top-class Officials that due to work or other reasons may not be able to commit to the highest level. It is also recognized that there are limitations in some CFs re number of qualifying tournaments per year and therefore officials are restricted in achieving a qualifying performance mark(s) in a timely fashion.

Depending on performance, Officials may be promoted to Level 4 or 5 or re-graded to Level 2.

Qualification Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum two events with qualifying performances, evaluated by an FIH-listed TD or UM, and track record of consistent performance levels • Candidates only from Levels 5, 4 or 2 • Umpires: meeting fitness requirements in accordance with the FIH Umpire Fitness Guidelines
Qualifying Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continental and regional events • FIH/CF-sanctioned inter-nations invitational matches or events
May be appointed to (but not limited to)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth Olympic Games • Junior World Cup • Olympic/WC qualifier • Commonwealth Games • Nations Cup
Exit criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance below expected level • Inappropriate behaviour including, but not limited to, breaches of the FIH Code of Ethics and FIH Code of Conduct • For Umpires: not submitting fitness testing results or not meeting fitness requirements

4.4 Level 4: High Potential Panel (HPP)

The purpose of the High Potential Panel is to identify, develop and fast-track Officials, who have acquired some international officiating experience and have demonstrated high potential.

Level 4 candidates will be strictly limited to a small number of very promising candidates to allow for the allocation of a sufficient number of suitable appointments, as well as education opportunities, mentorship and other support measures to facilitate the best possible learning and development.

Depending on performance, Officials may be promoted to Level 5 or re-graded to Level 2 or 3.

Qualification Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum one event with qualifying performance, evaluated by an FIH-Level 4 and above TD or UM, and track record of consistent performance levels • Maximum Age: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For Umpire Managers: 50 years - For Technical Officials: 45 years - For Umpires: 35 years • Umpires: meeting fitness requirements in accordance with the FIH Umpire Fitness Guidelines. • Candidates generally from Level 1 or Level 2
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<p>Qualifying Events</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth Olympic Games • Junior World Cup • Olympic/WC qualifier • Commonwealth Games • Nations Cup • Continental and regional events • FIH/CF-sanctioned inter-nations invitational matches or events
<p>May be appointed to (but not limited to)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth Olympic Games • Junior World Cup • Olympic/WC qualifier • Commonwealth Games • Nations Cup • FIH Pro League • In exceptional cases, World Cup or Olympic Games <p><u>Note:</u> The FIH Umpiring Committee or Technical Officials Committee respectively shall provide candidates with a minimum of 2-3 appointments in a 2-year period that allow for them to demonstrate their suitability for an upgrade to Level 5.</p>
<p>Exit criteria</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance below expected level • 2 years without progression to Level 5 (then re-graded to level 3 or 2) • Inappropriate behaviour, including, but not limited to, breaches of the FIH Code of Ethics and FIH Code of Conduct • For Umpires: not submitting fitness testing results or not meeting fitness requirements

4.5 Level 5: Leading Panel

The purpose of Levels 4 and 5 is to service the FIH Pro League and other top-level events. Being listed on these Panels/Levels requires the highest levels of performance and commitment, including the willingness and ability to be available for a minimum of 2 FIH appointments per year.

The World Cup Panel and Olympic Games panels may be selected from Officials that are on Levels 4 and 5.

<p>Qualification Criteria</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum two events with qualifying performance, evaluated by an FIH-level 5 TD or UM, and track record of consistent performance levels • Candidates only from Level 3 or 4 • Umpires: meeting fitness requirements in accordance with the FIH Umpire Fitness Guidelines • VU Competent
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<p>Qualifying Events</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Junior World Cup • Olympic/WC qualifier • Commonwealth Games • Nations Cup
<p>May be appointed to (but not limited to)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FIH Pro League • World Cup • Olympic Games • All other events
<p>Exit criteria</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance below expected level • Inability or unwillingness to be available for required number of appointments (dependent on reason) • Inappropriate behaviour, including, but not limited to, breaches of the FIH Code of Ethics and FIH Code of Conduct • For Umpires: not submitting fitness testing results or not meeting fitness requirements