

# Guidelines for the Grading of International Officials

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## 1. Introduction

This document sets out the FIH Guidelines for the grading of FIH International Officials. It explains the FIH Panel System from national to elite level, including requirements and pathways.

The term Official for the purpose of these Guidelines refers to all categories of Officials, namely:

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

and unless otherwise specified, all provisions hereunder apply for all categories of Officials.

The purpose of these Guidelines and the FIH Panel 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 appropriately skilled and experienced FIH International Officials for all types and levels of competition, and
- facilitate the FIH Technical Officials Committee's and FIH Umpiring Committee's role in assisting in the education, development and succession planning for FIH International Officials.

## 2. FIH International Official Status

### 2.1 Candidature and Awarding of FIH International Official Status

Once the qualification criteria for membership in the International Panel (IP) as specified hereunder have been met, the Official's NA may submit a fully completed FIH International Official Application to their CF, including the required attachments.

The application will be verified by the CF, and if the application is complete, all formal requirements are met and the CF approves, they will submit to FIH. By submitting the application to FIH, the CF confirms the Official's conversational proficiency in English and, in the case of umpires, their necessary fitness levels.

If approved by the CF, the application will be processed by the FIH office within a maximum of one month, verifying the application and, if all requirements are met, approving and notifying the relevant Official, their NA and CF.

Where it is not fully clear whether the requirements are met, this will include a consultation with the relevant FIH Committee

## 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 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 FIH International Officials specified under section 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. To qualify for membership in the Centre Panel, High Potential Panel and Leading Panel, 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 in the Guidelines for the Fitness of Umpires. 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>). To qualify for membership in the Centre Panel, High Potential Panel and Leading Panel, Umpires must also be able to use match analysis tools such as Coach Logic.

## 2.4 Failure to 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 any active appointments to FIH events being withdrawn, re-assignment to a lower Panel, and/or designation as inactive.

## 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 appointed by their 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 Panel assigned based on performance.

## 2.6 Declared Inactivity

FIH International 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 Technical Officials Committee and the FIH Umpiring Committee respectively. The Secretary of the FIH Technical Officials Committee and the FIH Umpiring Committee respectively will keep a list of those declared inactive in the relevant categories.

In case of a declared inactivity of more than 6 months, an FIH International 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 fulfilling the requirements as specified in the Guidelines for the Fitness of Umpires. It is at the discretion of the FIH Technical Officials Committee or the FIH Umpiring Committee respectively to decide into which Panel the FIH International Official will be reinstated.

*Note: The process of returning to umpiring after pregnancy is currently being reviewed by a FIH Umpiring Committee working group, with the outcome and confirmed new process to be added to the next update of this document.*

## 2.7 Pregnancy and Maternity

FIH is committed to ensuring that pregnancy and maternity do not create barriers to participation in officiating and ensuring Officials feel supported in a safe, inclusive and non-discriminatory environment throughout pregnancy and the post-partum period.

### 2.7.1 Notification of Freezing of Active Status Due to Pregnancy

An Official may request their Active Status to be frozen due to pregnancy for a maximum period of three (3) years, during which:

- The Official will not be considered for FIH appointments;
- Umpires will not be required to complete or submit fitness testing;
- The Official will remain part of the FIH Officials community and continue to receive relevant communications and development opportunities where appropriate.

This period will be treated as a protected inactivity period and will not in itself lead to downgrading or removal of status.

### 2.7.2 Return to Active Status

An Official may request to return to Active Status at any time during, or at the conclusion of, the three (3) year period, taking into account medical advice and recovery.

Return to Active Status requires:

- A formal request to the FIH;
- For Umpires, successful completion of a fitness test in accordance with the FIH Umpire Fitness Guidelines, in or outside the official fitness test windows.

Where these requirements are met, the Official will be reinstated to Active Status at the Official's previous level.

For FIH Officials choosing not to return to Active status following the three (3) year period, the Official may request to:

- Move to Declared Inactivity in accordance with section 2.6; or
- End their International Official Status in accordance with section 2.7.

### 2.7.3 Support at Events Following Return

Upon returning to Active Status, for up to 18 months following childbirth, FIH will seek to support Officials with caring responsibilities where reasonably practicable:

(a) Travel and Accommodation

Officials may travel with their infant and an additional caregiver. Where possible, accommodation arrangements may allow room sharing with the infant and caregiver, subject to event logistics and Local Organizing Committee (LOC) capacity. Travel and accommodation of infant and an additional caregiver will be at the cost of the Official.

(b) Infant care and Wellbeing

The LOC should, where feasible, provide a suitable private space at the venue to support infant care and the wellbeing of the Official, including feeding, caregiving, or spending private time with their child.

(c) Proximity and Access

Reasonable efforts will be made to facilitate proximity between the Official, infant and caregiver during the event, considering operational requirements and venue constraints. While FIH supports Officials travelling accompanied by infants and family members or other caregivers, these accompanying persons are not considered part of the appointed Officials group and may therefore not participate in official activities, meetings, briefings, and transport arrangements, nor access workspaces, rest areas or other areas designated for Officials, unless specifically authorized by the FIH or the Local Organizing Committee (LOC).

## 2.8 End of International Official Status

The status of active FIH International Official ceases:

- (a) Upon request or notification of retirement from the FIH International Official.
- (b) Upon notification from the FIH International 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 the FIH International Official 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 International 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 FIH 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, if a breach of the FIH Integrity Code or Code of Conduct, FIH Statutes, or other Regulations, or otherwise inappropriate behaviour, has been reported and verified in accordance with the principles of natural justice.

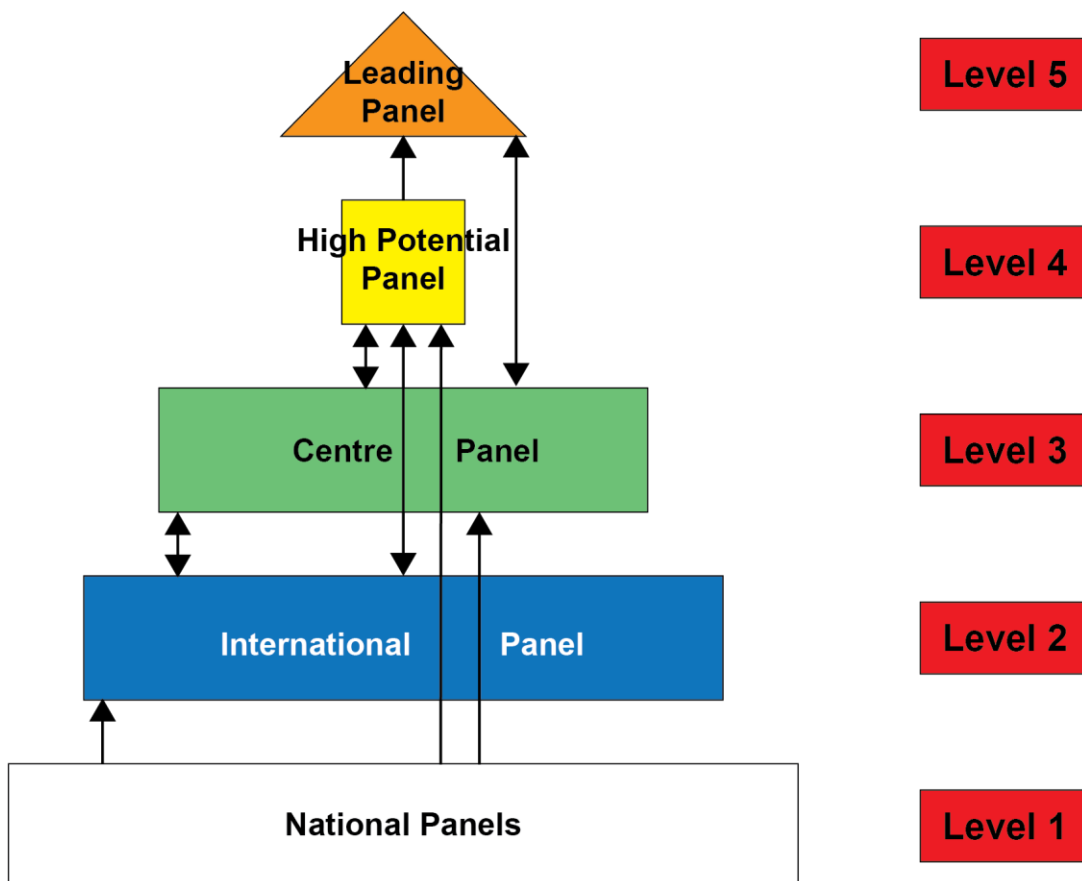
*Note: Depending on the nature and severity of the behaviour / breach, the FIH Technical Officials Committee or the FIH Umpiring Committee, respectively, may impose a temporary suspension or permanent exclusion from officiating in the sport or a re-assignment of the Official to a lower Panel as described in section 4.4 below.*

### 3. Panel System

#### 3.1 Structure

The Panel system as depicted below provides an overview of the different Panels and their relations to each other.

It should be noted that for Umpires and Umpire Managers, a separate list with all Panels will be maintained for each discipline (outdoor, indoor, Hockey5s etc.). For Technical Officials, only one list will be maintained.



### **3.2 National Panels (NP)**

Any Official who is not yet a member of an FIH Panel as described in this document is considered a member of a National Panel (National Official). This includes Officials who are officiating, or have previously officiated, in international matches or events, but have not yet obtained International Official status.

### **3.3 International Panel (IP)**

The IP is the first Panel that confers FIH International Official status. It recognizes and highlights the effort and investment of Officials, introduces Officials to international officiating, and identifies a broad base of suitable, reliable Officials for continental and invitational events.

The International Panel is the first FIH international grading: upon being appointed to this Panel (for the first time), an Official will receive a formal letter from the FIH.

### **3.4 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.

### **3.5 High Potential Panel (HPP)**

The purpose of the HPP is to identify, develop and fast-track Officials who have demonstrated exceptional potential in their previous international officiating career and are within the required age range.

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

Membership in the HPP is limited to a duration of two (2) years. While HPP Officials may be upgraded at any point prior to completing two years if they have achieved the relevant Qualifying Performances, if an HPP Official has not been upgraded to the LP at the end of two years on the HPP, they will be downgraded to the CP.

Every Official may only be a member of the HPP once in their career.

### **3.6 Leading Panel (LP)**

The purpose of the LP is to service hockey's top events such as the Olympic Games, Hockey World Cup and FIH Pro League.

Being a member of the LP requires the highest levels of performance, commitment and consistency, as well availability. The expectation is that an LP Official will generally be willing and able to be available for a minimum of two major appointments per year (i.e., two FIH appointments or one FIH appointment plus a Continental Championship).

## **4. Panel Designations, Upgrades, and Downgrades**

The final decision regarding all Panel designations and changes in Panel designations (upgrades and downgrades), changes of status and appointments lies with the FIH Technical Officials Committee for Technical Officials, and FIH Umpiring Committee for Umpires and Umpire Managers.

### **4.1 General Considerations**

All regular designations into the International Panel or changes between IP and higher Panels or between higher Panels will be based on performances achieved in the international events listed in section 4.5, taking into account only performances in the relevant role, i.e., for an Umpire only on performances as an Umpire, for Umpire Managers only on performances as an Umpire Manager, and for Technical Officials only on performances as a Technical Official.

### **4.2 Upgrades**

FIH International Official Applications may be submitted at any time, as described under section 2.1 above.

Any upgrades between the International Panel and higher Panels, or between higher Panels, will take place in accordance with sections 4.5 to 4.9 below and will be discussed and agreed on by the relevant FIH Committee twice per year, with the aim of informing Officials and publishing updated lists to the FIH website in January and July.

It is important to note that the minimum requirements for a possible upgrade as listed below are a necessary precondition for the upgrade, but do not guarantee the same, as the final decision regarding all Panel designations and changes in Panel designations lies with the relevant FIH Committee and may depend on other factors, such as the overall size of panels, global representation, or the level of the specific event where the Qualifying Performance has been achieved.

### **4.3 Scheduled Downgrades**

Downgrades (re-assignment to a lower Panel) will be discussed and agreed on by the FIH Technical Officials Committee and FIH Umpiring Committee twice per year, with the aim of informing Officials and publishing updated lists to the FIH website in January and July.

Downgrades out of the International Panel, from higher Panels to the International Panel, or between higher Panels, may occur upon receipt of a minimum of one performance report indicating a performance below the expected level for the relevant Panel.

Downgrades will also occur where an Official on the High Potential Panel has reached the two-year membership limit and is not promoted to the Leading Panel.

### **4.4 Unscheduled Downgrades**

Where an Umpire fails to meet the fitness requirements, or there has been a report of a breach of the FIH Integrity Code or Code of Conduct, FIH Statutes or other Regulations, or

otherwise inappropriate behaviour that has been verified in accordance with the principles of natural justice, the relevant FIH Committee will discuss and decide a possible re-assignment of the Official to a lower Panel within one month of receiving the relevant report.

#### 4.5 Qualifying Performances

To be considered for an upgrade to a higher Panel, Qualifying Performances as required for the relevant Panel must have been achieved as described below.

For the purpose of determining a Qualifying Performance, events which include a men’s and a women’s competition served by the same panel of officials in the same place and during the same or consecutive dates, will be considered one event and therefore one performance.

For Umpires and Technical Officials, a performance report will be considered to indicate a Qualifying Performance if

- the overall Performance Outcome (or mark) is 80 or higher, and
- the relevant report is from an event where the Official officiated a minimum of three (3) matches (performances from standalone matches, test series or events where an Official officiated in one or two matches only will not be considered for the purpose of upgrade to the International Panel or to a higher Panel).

For UMs, a performance report will be considered to indicate a Qualifying Performance if

- the overall Performance Outcome (or mark) is 80 or higher, and
- the report is from an event that included a minimum of three matches overall.
- Where available, the FIH 360 Degree Feedback Reports will be included in determining whether a Qualifying Performance has been achieved.

Overview of Events Where Qualifying Performances Can Be Achieved			
	Level 1 Events	Level 2 Events	Level 3 Events
Outdoor Hocke	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Olympic Games</li> <li>• World Cup</li> <li>• Olympic/WC Qualifier</li> <li>• FIH Pro League</li> <li>• Junior<sup>2)</sup> World Cup</li> <li>• Commonwealth Games</li> <li>• Continental Championships (top level<sup>1)</sup>)</li> <li>• Nations Cup</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nations Cup 2</li> <li>• Continental Championships (all other levels<sup>1)</sup>)</li> <li>• Junior<sup>2)</sup> Continental Championships (top level<sup>1)</sup>)</li> <li>• Continental Club Championships (organized by a CF, top level<sup>1)</sup>)</li> <li>• FIH/CF-sanctioned senior inter-nations invitational events or</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Junior<sup>2)</sup> Continental Championships (all other levels<sup>1)</sup>)</li> <li>• Continental Club Championships (organized by a CF, all other levels<sup>1)</sup>)</li> <li>• FIH/CF-sanctioned senior inter-nations invitational events or matches which do not involve at least 2 teams ranked between 1 and 25 in the relevant world</li> </ul>

		<p>matches which involve at least 2 teams ranked between 1 and 25 in the relevant world rankings at the start of the competition</p>	<p>rankings at the start of the competition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FIH/CF-sanctioned junior<sup>2)</sup> inter-nations invitational events or matches</li> </ul>
<p>Indoor Hockey</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indoor Hockey World Cup</li> <li>• Indoor Continental Championships (top level<sup>1)</sup>)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indoor Continental Club Championships (organized by a CF, top level<sup>1)</sup>)</li> <li>• FIH/CF-sanctioned senior inter-nations invitational events or matches which involve at least 2 teams ranked between 1 and 25 in the relevant world rankings at the start of the competition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indoor Continental Championships (all other levels<sup>1)</sup>)</li> <li>• Indoor Junior<sup>2)</sup> Continental Championships (all levels<sup>1)</sup>)</li> <li>• Indoor Continental Club Championships (organized by a CF, all other levels<sup>1)</sup>)</li> <li>• FIH/CF-sanctioned senior inter-nations invitational events or matches which do not involve at least 2 teams ranked between 1 and 25 in the relevant world rankings at the start of the competition</li> <li>• FIH/CF-sanctioned junior<sup>2)</sup> inter-nations invitational events or matches</li> </ul>
<p>Hockey5s</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hockey5s World Cup</li> <li>• Hockey5s Continental Championships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth Olympic Games</li> <li>• FIH/CF-sanctioned senior inter-nations invitational events or matches which involve at least 2 teams ranked between 1 and 25 in the relevant world rankings at the start of the competition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth Olympic Games Continental Qualifiers</li> <li>• FIH/CF-sanctioned inter-nations invitational events or matches which do not involve at least 2 teams ranked between 1 and 25 in the relevant world rankings at the start of the competition</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FIH/CF-sanctioned junior<sup>2)</sup> inter-nations invitational events or matches</li> </ul>
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Notes:

1) “Levels” in this context refers to the different competitions, categories or divisions which may exist within one type of event within one CF, and which are connected through promotion and relegation, e.g., EuroHockey Championship (top level) vs EuroHockey Championship II (other levels), Pan American Cup (top level) vs Pan American Challenge (other levels), Asia Cup (top level) vs AHF Cup (other levels)

2) “Junior” refers exclusively to the age group of Under 21. At events of younger age groups, generally referred to as “youth”, including but not limited to U18 and U16, no qualifying performances for the purposes of the FIH grading of officials can be achieved, with the exception of Youth Olympic Games and Youth Olympic Games Continental Qualifiers, which are considered Level 3 events, as shown above.

#### 4.6 Upgrade to the International Panel (IP)

Once the minimum requirements as described here have been met, an Official’s NA may submit the FIH International Official Application as described under section 2.1 above.

Minimum Requirements:

- For Technical Officials, a track record of consistent or improving performances, including a minimum of one (1) Qualifying Performance from a Level 2 or Level 1 event OR a minimum of two (2) Qualifying Performances from Level 3 events within the last three (3) years, evaluated by a TD from a NA other than the Official’s Home NA, who is at the time of the event on or has within no longer than three years retired from the International Panel, Centre Panel, High Potential Penal or Leading Panel. Qualifying Performances can come from events in any discipline (outdoor, indoor, Hockey5s etc.).
- For Umpire Managers and Umpires who are not yet members of the International Panel in any discipline, a track record of consistent or improving performances, including a minimum of one (1) Qualifying Performance from a Level 2 or Level 1 event OR a minimum of two (2) Qualifying Performances from Level 3 events within the last three (3) years, evaluated by a TD or UM from a NA other than the Official’s Home NA, who is at the time of the event on or has within no longer than three years retired from the International Panel, Centre Panel, High Potential Penal or Leading Panel. Qualifying Performances are considered only from events in the discipline in which International Official status is being applied for.
- For Umpire Managers and Umpires who are current members of the International Panel in one discipline, one Qualifying Performance from a Level 3, Level 2 or Level 1 event within the last twelve (12) months in the additional discipline in which International Official status is being applied for will be sufficient.
- For Umpires, meeting fitness requirements in accordance with the FIH Umpire Fitness Guidelines.

#### 4.7 Upgrade to the Centre Panel (CP)

The relevant FIH Committee may consider an Official for the upgrade to the Centre Panel in accordance with section 4.2 upon meeting the below minimum requirements:

- The Official is a member of the International Panel in the relevant discipline with a track record of consistent or improving performances. Exceptionally, an Official may be considered for an upgrade to the Centre Panel directly from the National Panel if they would otherwise be considered for the High Potential Panel but are not eligible due to age.
- A minimum of two (2) Qualifying Performances from events, at least one of which has been a Level 2 or Level 1 event in any discipline for Technical Officials or in the relevant discipline for Umpires and Umpire Managers, evaluated by a TD or UM, who is at the time of the event on or has within no longer than three years retired from the International Panel, Centre Panel, High Potential Panel or Leading Panel.
- Having officiated in a minimum of three senior international matches in a relevant match role (Umpires as on-field Umpires, Technical Officials as TOs or judges), or, in the case of Umpire Managers, having performed the Umpire Manager role in at least one senior international event with a minimum of three matches.
- For Umpires, meeting fitness requirements in accordance with the FIH Umpire Fitness Guidelines.

#### 4.8 Upgrade to the High Potential Panel (HPP)

The relevant FIH Committee may consider an Official for the upgrade to the High Potential Panel in accordance with section 4.2 upon meeting the below minimum requirements:

- The Official is a member of the National Panel, International Panel or Centre Panel with a track record of consistent or improving performances.
- The Official does not exceed the maximum age of 35 years for Umpires, 40 years for Technical Officials or 50 years for Umpire Managers.
- A minimum of two (2) Qualifying Performances as described in section 4.5 from Level 2 or Level 1 events in any discipline for Technical Officials or in the relevant discipline for Umpires and Umpire Managers, evaluated by a TD or UM who is at the time of the event on or has within no longer than three years retired from the High Potential Panel or Leading Panel.
- Having officiated in a minimum of three senior international matches in a relevant match role (Umpires as on-field Umpires, Technical Officials as TOs or judges), or, in the case of Umpire Managers, having performed the Umpire Manager role in at least one senior international event with a minimum of three matches.
- For Umpires, meeting fitness requirements in accordance with the FIH Umpire Fitness Guidelines.

#### 4.9 Upgrade to the Leading Panel (LP)

The relevant FIH Committee may consider an Official for the upgrade to the Leading Panel in accordance with section 4.2 upon meeting the below minimum requirements:

- The Official is a member of the Centre Panel or the High Potential Panel with a track record of consistent or improving performances.
- A minimum of two (2) Qualifying Performances as described in section 4.5 from Level 1 events, at least one of which included teams from a CF other than the Official's Home CF, in any discipline for Technical Officials or in the relevant discipline for Umpires and Umpire Managers, evaluated by a TD or UM who is at the time of the event on or has within no longer than three years retired from the Leading Panel.
- For Umpires, meeting fitness requirements in accordance with the FIH Umpire Fitness Guidelines as well as video umpiring experience and competency.

## 5. Appointments

The following table provides an overview of Officials from which Panels may be considered by the FIH Technical Officials Committee and FIH Umpiring Committee for appointments to the relevant events.

	<b>LP</b>	<b>HPP</b>	<b>CP</b>	<b>IP</b>	<b>NP</b>
<b>Olympic Games</b>	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
<b>World Cup</b>	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
<b>Olympic Qualifier</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
<b>World Cup Qualifier</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
<b>FIH Pro League</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
<b>Junior World Cup</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
<b>Commonwealth Games</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Occasionally (*)	No
<b>Nations Cup</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Occasionally (*)	No
<b>Nations Cup 2</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Occasionally (*)	No
<b>Indoor Hockey World Cup</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Occasionally (*)	No
<b>Hockey5s World Cup</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Occasionally (*)	No
<b>Youth Olympic Games</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Occasionally (*)	No
<b>Continental Championships</b>	Continental Federations may appoint any Officials they deem suitable				
<b>Continental Club Championships</b>	Continental Federations may appoint any Officials they deem suitable				
<b>FIH/CF-sanctioned senior and junior international events or matches</b>	Any Officials deemed suitable may be nominated by their NA and appointed by the CF or FIH as appropriate				

(\*) While officials on the IP are generally not considered by the FIH Technical Officials Committee and FIH Umpiring Committee for appointments, they may be considered under exceptional circumstances, e.g., in the case of last-moment replacements or where continental quota requirements apply.