

# INDIVIDUAL ATHLETE PROGRAM

2027-2028 APPLICATION GUIDELINES

# ACTAS



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Sport and Recreation, positioned within Chief Ministers, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate, is the lead government agency for sport and active recreation in the ACT.

The **ACT Academy of Sport (ACTAS)** was formed in 1989 as the high performance arm of Sport and Recreation.

Located on the world-renowned Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) campus, ACTAS is an endorsed 'Official Olympic and Paralympic Training Centre' and a member of Australia's National Institute Network (NIN). Membership of the NIN includes the eight Australian state and territory institutes and academies of sport as well as the Australian Institute of Sport.

ACTAS provides a range of performance support services for talented athletes including:

### Performance Support

Strength and Conditioning  
Sport Science  
Performance Nutrition  
Performance Psychology  
Athlete Wellbeing and Engagement  
Competition Support  
Program Management support

### Performance Health

Sports Physiotherapy  
Sports Medicine  
Soft Tissue Therapy/Pilates

In Olympic, Paralympic and Commonwealth Games sports where ACTAS does not have a partnered high performance program, categorised athletes may apply for a scholarship in the **Individual Athlete Program**.

The Individual Athlete Program is aligned to Australia's High Performance 2032+ Sport Strategy and prioritises athletes who have been identified by their sport as contributing to Australia's performance targets and are officially tabled through the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) Athlete Categorisation List.

## 2. IMPORTANT DATES

The scholarship period for the Individual Athlete Program will run from January 2027 to December 2028, with a mid-point review for confirmation of scholarship extension.

The timeline for the selection process is outlined below:

|   |                                              |                         |
|---|----------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 📅 | Closing date for athlete applications        | <b>28 October 2026</b>  |
| 📅 | NSO sent athlete applications to endorse by  | <b>4 November 2026</b>  |
| 📅 | Closing date for NSO application endorsement | <b>20 November 2026</b> |



- ✉ Assessment of applications
- ✉ Notification of application outcome to athletes

December 2026  
December 2026

### 3. GENERAL ELIGIBILITY

Who is eligible for assistance?

***Applications are open to categorised athletes in disciplines/events that are featured in the 2028 Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games programs, 2030 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games and the 2030 Commonwealth Games. Non categorised athletes are ineligible to apply.***

- Athletes can reside in the ACT or surrounding region, however assistance is \*only available to athletes who are registered with a recognised ACT State Sporting Organisation (SSO) that is affiliated with a National Sporting Organisation (NSO) recognised by the Australian Sports Commission. ***ACTAS will send Applications for assistance to athletes respective NSO for endorsement.***
- Applicants must be Australian Citizens and eligible for selection to Australian national teams.
- Individual scholarships are only available to athletes in Olympic, Paralympic and Commonwealth Games sports where ACTAS does not host a high-performance program. In 2026-2028 ACTAS supports programs with the following sports: Athletics, Cycling, Hockey, Rowing and Swimming.
- Individual scholarships are only available to athletes who compete in youth or open competition. In general athletes must be at least 16 years of age. An exception may be made to this in a sport where athletes have been identified by their sport as contributing to Australia's performance targets and are officially endorsed through the AIS Athlete Categorisation process at a very young age e.g. gymnastics, snowboarding or skateboarding. Individual Scholarships are not available for athletes in veterans or masters age groups.

*\* In situations where the sport does not have an ACT SSO or Peak Body an 'exception' to this eligibility criteria will be considered by the Selection Committee.*

### 4. SELECTION GUIDELINES

The Individual Athlete Program is resourced to support a limited number of athletes each year. For the 2027-2028 Individual Athlete Program it is anticipated that up to 20 individuals could be supported. ACTAS has absolute discretion to select less or more than 20 athletes based on available resources and capacity.

The following selection guidelines will be used to assess each application on relative merit. Please note that the criteria outlined below should not be viewed in isolation as all selection guidelines will be considered.



#### Selection Guidelines:

1. Selection in the Individual Athlete Program will be awarded based on the description and justifications as set out in the National Athlete Categorisation Framework (NACF), in priority order:
  - Podium
  - Podium Ready
  - Podium Potential
  - Developing
  - Emerging

\*As outlined [ausport.gov.au/winwell/key-framework-updates](https://ausport.gov.au/winwell/key-framework-updates)

*Further consideration and prioritisation of categorised athletes may be made in line with the National Para Uplift Initiative.*

2. Greatest consideration will be given to applications from athletes who are progressing along their sport's national high performance pathway in events within the following categories, in priority order:
  - Events on the 2028 Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games programs
  - Events on the 2030 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games programs
  - Events on the 2030 Commonwealth Games program
3. Athletes will be measured against the following performance criteria:
  - International Top 3 senior ranking
  - International Top 4-8 senior or youth ranking
  - National Top 3 senior or youth ranking
  - Member of National Senior Squad/Team in team sports
4. If an athlete does not have a ranking sufficient to satisfy the above, he or she must demonstrate progression of performances over time and be judged by ACTAS (through the selection process) as having the potential to achieve such a ranking. For example, an athlete who was injured during the last international season and could not obtain an international ranking would need to demonstrate a suitable performance history from previous seasons.
5. Capacity for ACTAS to 'make a difference' to the athlete's ongoing development.
6. Capacity and willingness of the athlete to utilise ACTAS support and services to enhance their athletic development in the areas identified by their NSO and/or ACTAS.
7. Applications are assessed on merits and will be ranked against each other. Other important criteria against which an application may be assessed include:
  - The athlete's performance and results over the past 2 years.
  - Current/former ACTAS scholarship athlete's usage of ACTAS support and services and commitment to developing as an elite athlete, including their



willingness to take direction from ACTAS Performance Service staff and their personal coach/es. Communication with ACTAS Performance Support staff will also be assessed.

- The assessment of the relevant NSO as to the performance level, national ranking, international ranking, prospect of selection to a national squad and the categorisation of the athlete.
- The number of competitors and countries competing in the sport at an international level.
- The number of participants in the sport and event/category in the ACT, nationally and internationally.
- Public acceptance and the profile of the sport in the ACT, nationally and internationally.
- Other assistance provided to the athlete from within the ACT and nationally.
- An athlete Interview – potential scholarship holders may be requested to present their case for selection to the selection committee.

In general no more than 4 athletes from the same sport will be awarded scholarships within the Individual Athlete Program

## **5. SELECTION PROCEDURES**

### **5.1 Distribution**

The 2027-2028 Individual Athlete Program Application Guidelines and link to the ACTAS online SmartyGrants application service will be sent to the following stakeholders on Wednesday 7 October 2026:

- NSOs where their sport has an event/s featured in the: 2028 Summer Olympics and Paralympics, 2030 Winter Olympics and Paralympics, and 2030 Commonwealth Games programs;
- Interested individuals that have requested program information during 2026;
- Members of the current Individual Athlete Program.

### **5.2 Application Information**

Applications for the 2027-2028 Individual Athlete Program must be submitted via the ACTAS online SmartyGrants application service. A link will be available through ACT Academy of Sport website: [www.sport.act.gov.au/act-academy-of-sport/sports-programs](http://www.sport.act.gov.au/act-academy-of-sport/sports-programs)

Important application notes:

- Hardcopy or email applications will not be accepted.
- A SmartyGrants login must be created to begin an application.



- Sessions may be logged out after 20 minutes. Navigating between pages and saving will reset the session timer. Applicants should ensure they save progress regularly.
- Applicants can press 'save' at any point and log out and a draft application will be saved. Log back in to re-commence the application.
- Applications are unable to be submitted until all the questions are completed and the form is reviewed.
- ACTAS is unable to view applications until they are submitted.
- Once submitted a confirmation email with a copy the application attached will be sent to the email used to register.

### 5.3 Late Applications

- Athlete applications close on 11:59pm, Wednesday 28 October 2026.
- All requests for late applications should be directed to the ACTAS Assistant Director - Individual Athlete Program prior to 5pm, Tuesday 27 October 2026.

### 5.4 Enquiries

All enquiries regarding the 2027-2028 Individual Athlete Program should be directed to:

- ACTAS Assistant Director - Individual Athlete Program.  
Email: [megan.marcks@act.gov.au](mailto:megan.marcks@act.gov.au)

For assistance with technical difficulties whilst completing the application form please contact:

- Business Services - Grants Team  
Phone: (02) 6205 5458 during business hours  
Email: [EconomicDevelopmentGrants@act.gov.au](mailto:EconomicDevelopmentGrants@act.gov.au)

## 6. SELECTION PROCESS

The selection committee will be made up of:

- ACTAS Director, Assistant Directors: Individual Athlete Program (Chair), Sports Programs, and Performance Services.
- The selection committee will convene and review all scholarship applications and recommendations from the ACTAS Assistant Director - Individual Athlete Program in accordance with the selection guidelines. The selection committee may verify any statement of claims, rankings and performances with National Performance Directors, National Head Coaches or High Performance Managers (or equivalent), and will be guided in their decision making process bearing these discussions in mind.



- The ACTAS Director or ACTAS Assistant Director - Individual Athlete Program may also notify an athlete of the selection committee's intention to interview individuals prior to making any final decisions.
- A meeting will be held with the selection committee in November 2026 to finalise the successful applicants.
- If the selection committee is unable to make a majority decision the ACTAS Director has final veto over scholarship selections. Athletes that are categorised but do not gain selection through this process may be considered for financial support by the selection committee pending program resource capabilities.
- The ACTAS Assistant Director - Individual Athlete Program will notify successful and/or unsuccessful athletes in December 2026.
- The ACTAS Assistant Director - Individual Athlete Program will advise respective NSOs with an email of scholarship selection outcomes shortly thereafter.

## **7. ATHLETE INDUCTION AND SERVICE PLANS**

- Athletes nominated for scholarship will be required to complete a number of periodic health assessments, including an ECG and a medical screen prior to commencing their scholarship, these screens will be highlighted in their pre-scholarship requirements email.
- New individual scholarship athletes and their personal coaches, if available, will be required to meet the Assistant Director - Individual Athlete Program prior to commencing training for a personalised induction. Athletes will be required to provide a current certificate for the Sports Integrity Australia E-Learning Anti-Doping Course prior to commencing their scholarship.
- Planning meetings with successful athletes will occur in February 2027 and Individual Athlete Performance Plans (IAPP) agreed to. Athlete's level of service access and support will be determined by the ranking of the athlete against the NACF by NSOs, the scholarship selection committee and the resources available through the program.
- Scholarship athletes do not train in an ACTAS Sport Program Daily Performance Environment (DPE) with an ACTAS Coach. They are offered performance support and health services.

## **8. ACTAS PERFORMANCE SUPPORT AND HEALTH SERVICES**

Performance support services provided by ACTAS include:

### Performance Support - Sport Science

ACTAS offers an integrated performance science program that incorporates services including physiology, nutrition, biomechanics and psychology.

Physiological and biomechanical assessments are conducted to



ascertain the strengths and weaknesses of the athlete in their chosen sport. This information is used to develop an individualised training program and further assessments are performed to monitor athlete progress.

Education sessions ensure that athletes have a sound understanding of the nutritional requirements of their sport. Individual and group psychology sessions are designed to help athletes to understand their brain and how it can be used to enhance performance and improve mental health.

#### Performance Support - Strength and Conditioning

Strength and Conditioning (S&C) programs are constructed with an individualised focus providing athletes with targeted physical development for performance outcomes in their chosen sport.

#### Performance Health Services

Sports medicine coordination is an essential component of service support provided to scholarship athletes. At the beginning of a scholarship period, ACTAS athletes undergo a comprehensive screening program by the ACTAS doctor and ACTAS physiotherapist to identify problem areas and to enable training programs to be adapted to reduce the risk of injury. Ongoing monitoring of the athlete to prevent injury or illness is an integral part of this service.

#### Competition Support

Competition is an integral component in the preparation and assessment of the ability of elite athletes to perform at the highest level. Pending program resources available, ACTAS may provide a small amount of financial assistance with agreed travel, accommodation and sporting equipment for participation in regional, national and international events. ACTAS has absolute discretion about the level of funding support provided.

#### Athlete Wellbeing and Engagement

Athlete Wellbeing and Engagement services provide support to assist athletes in finding their right balance between life activities, training and competition, and the requirements of elite sport. With a focus on increasing athletes overall wellbeing and supporting their developing careers. Services include personal development, career and education, lifestyle management, community engagement, and sport transition support.

