

AUSTSWIM GUIDELINES AQUATICS - ACCESS AND INCLUSION

Background and Terminology

AUSTSWIM encourages aquatic activity for all community members. Aquatics - Access and inclusion programs offer participation opportunities for all people regardless of:

- disability
- age
- chronic condition
- Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) background.

The term 'aquatics - access and inclusion' refers to classes where educational learning outcomes of knowledge, skill and understanding are the focus. AUSTSWIM Teachers of Aquatics - Access and Inclusion (TAI) are responsible for students within these classes. AUSTSWIM teachers are not qualified or responsible for general supervision of an aquatic environment.

AUSTSWIM Aquatics - Access and Inclusion Charter

AUSTSWIM Aquatics - Access and Inclusion guidelines provide best practice for:

1. Aquatic industry accreditation
2. Public and private venues, including hotel/motel, apartments, body corporate, schools, resorts and holiday parks delivering programs to meet the diverse needs of communities
3. Community members visiting pools
4. Scope of the AUSTSWIM TAI in program delivery.

Aquatics - Access and Inclusion Focus

Aquatics - Access and Inclusion programs provide a framework for development, water safety skills and functionality of movement in a vertical and horizontal position for all participants. Knowledge acquisition is based on sound hydrodynamic principles learnt and experienced through the AUSTSWIM Teacher of Aquatics - Access and Inclusion course.

Note: The generic term 'participant' is used throughout this document. This reflects the person attending Aquatics - Access and Inclusion programming that may be a social/recreational user or student within a swimming and water safety lesson.

1. ACCREDITATION AND LICENSING

Training

The Department of Education and Training is responsible for national policies and programs that help Australians access quality Vocational Education and Training (VET).

The AUSTSWIM TAI skill set includes nationally recognised units of competency from the SIS10 Sport, Fitness and Recreation Training Package that is the national framework for skills development for the industry.

Current units of competency for the Aquatics - Access and Inclusion skill set may be found at <http://www.austswim.com.au/Training/AUSTSWIMCourses/Teacher-of-Aquatics-access-and-inclusion.aspx>

The VET skill set includes basic competencies for the Aquatics - Access and Inclusion course. AUSTSWIM Aquatics - Access and Inclusion Licence requirements are, however, over and above the aforementioned skill set. These additional AUSTSWIM requirements are documented on the AUSTSWIM website at <http://www.austswim.com.au/Training/AUSTSWIMCourses/Teacher-of-Aquatics-access-and-inclusion.aspx>

Scope of Accreditation

Successful completion of the AUSTSWIM Teacher of Aquatics - Access and Inclusion course incorporates extended learning elements aligned with ISO 17024 accreditation and AUSTSWIM standards. Teachers who hold this accreditation are licensed and insured to conduct classes for Aquatics - Access and Inclusion participants.

AUSTSWIM encourages teachers to enhance their knowledge, skill and understanding through attendance at annual conferences, internal and external workshops, enrolling in further formal training programs and peer networking and learning opportunities. Ongoing professional development is a requirement when renewing the AUSTSWIM Licence.

Aquatics - Access and Inclusion Class / Session

Aquatics - Access and Inclusion classes can be best described as tailored, formalised aquatic sessions for a specific population group or individual that result in social, aquatic education, water safety and personal survival, and/or health and wellness outcomes. Accessibility and the 'observe, analyse, modify and if necessary 'adjust' teaching strategy is continually implemented throughout the session.

The AUSTSWIM teacher is required to hold the Aquatics - Access and Inclusion accreditation (ISO 17024 accreditation) when leading an advertised session using this format.

Integrated / Mainstream Class

Where students are assessed as appropriate and integrated into mainstream classes, the AUSTSWIM accreditation requirement is Teacher of Swimming and Water Safety. It is, however, suggested that all Teachers gain Aquatics - Access and Inclusion professional development to cater for a diverse range of participants within a class.

The AUSTSWIM TAI does not provide scope for:

- therapeutic treatment or rehabilitative exercise prescription
- independent exercise prescription for high risk participants
- diagnostic opinions
- psychological evaluation or counselling.

Hydrotherapy is a water based physiotherapy program specifically designed for an individual to improve neuro-musculoskeletal function, conducted and supervised by appropriately qualified personnel. Aquatics - Access and Inclusion programs do not replace hydrotherapy sessions provided by the allied health industry but rather act as a stepping-stone to further independent aquatic activity.

Aquatics - Access and Inclusion programming follows an approach that includes physical activity, water safety and personal survival, recreation, socialisation and motor learning to develop control and independence in an aquatic environment.

2. PUBLIC AND PRIVATE VENUES

It is the responsibility of the employer to provide employees/contractors with practices which include a thorough workplace induction, details and protocols for Emergency Management and Risk Assessment. Employees/contractors must be aware of relevant manufacturer warranties and Australian Standards relating to the use and operation of equipment, hoists, other accessories and program equipment as listed in these Guidelines.

At the venue the participant may require special consideration to be given to:

- access to the facility, change rooms, pooldeck, pool, café etc
- communication methods - access to aids that enhance comprehension
- staff ratios ensuring safe and effective class sessions
- equipment and aids that are in good working order
- water and air temperature that comply with Guidelines for Safe Pool Operations (GSPO)
- water depth that is suitable for the specific activity
- adherence to the Disability Discrimination (DDA), Privacy and Racial and Vilification Acts.

The AUSTSWIM teacher should operate within their level of comfort and training in addition to maintaining a duty of care towards participants at all times.

Supervision

The AUSTSWIM teacher is responsible and owes a duty of care to participants in the class, not other users at the facility. Students are not the responsibility of other well-meaning facility users who may not have the knowledge, skill or understanding to assist the participant.

The AUSTSWIM teacher may be considered the sole pool supervisor where class participants are the ONLY participants in the pool. Employers, however, must ensure the AUSTSWIM teacher is competent in:

- facility function
- emergency management
- current water rescue competency*
- current resuscitation and first aid qualifications.

** Perform Basic Water Rescues unit of competency that must be assessed on an annual basis by the employer or Certification for Pool / Surf Lifeguard, Bronze Medallion*

Emergency / Evacuation

After securing the safety of participants in the class, the teacher may be required to assist in any emergency action or processes as and when they arise under the direction of a responsible person, example, facility duty manager, chief or area warden.

It is an employer's responsibility to assess and ensure employees and contractors ongoing competency of all emergency management and current water rescue, resuscitation and, in the case of a sole operator, a mandatory first aid qualification.

Functionality, Class Size and Ratios

It is recommended that a participant assessment is undertaken to determine appropriate program ratios.

Factors influencing and impacting class size and supervision may include:

- class type
- water depth and temperature
- movement functionality and experience of participants
- supervision; additional volunteers, MATE trained or carers
- knowledge, skill and experience of the AUSTSWIM Teacher
- environment / adequate space at least an arm’s length distance between participants.

Class Participant	Maximum Ratio	Water Safety Supervision Requirements
Integrated mainstream class that includes participants from diverse backgrounds (with and without disabilities, CALD). All students follow the same program	1 (TSW) Teacher to 5 students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher of Swimming and Water Safety (TSW) with current competency in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water rescue appropriate to the venue* • Resuscitation • Recommendation to undertake MATE Seminar and or specific population professional development.
The aquatic session is tailored for students who have specific educational needs due to severe learning difficulties, physical disabilities or behavioural problems	1 (TAI) Teacher to 5 students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TSW • TAI with current competency in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water rescue appropriate to the venue* • Resuscitation
Where functionality is assessed as requiring higher support	1 (TAI) Teacher to 2 students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TSW • TAI with current competency in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water rescue appropriate to the venue* • Resuscitation

*water rescue competency appropriate to the depth of water and specific venue conditions; competency renewed annually

Water Quality

Facilities must be maintained in accordance with standards, legislation and guidelines specified by state, local authorities and industry regarding safety, water purity and sanitary conditions.

- Water purification standards for public swimming pools and spa pools are available from state/territory health authorities.
- Industry best practice GSPO detail facility operation standards.
- The person(s) responsible for monitoring water quality must be suitably qualified and comply with legislation requirements.
- Teachers should be aware of pool water quality and report any concerns to the appropriate personnel.

Outdoor Venues

Swimming and water safety programs can be conducted in outdoor pools. Employers and teachers must consider weather conditions and water temperature as these may necessitate an adjustment to class structure and duration. Lessons should not exceed 30 minutes duration and

participants must be kept active in the water and not left sitting or standing on the edge of the pool, as the cooler air temperature may cause rapid loss of body heat or sun rays may have a burning effect. The learning of swimming and water safety must never take precedence over the child's comfort and welfare.

Air and Water Temperature

For optimal learning, the water temperature must be a minimum of 30°C and the air temperature similar to the water temperature (that is, not significantly warmer or colder). This provides an environment that is comfortable, enjoyable and optimal for learning. As previously stated, whether indoor or outdoor, lessons should not exceed 30 minutes duration and participants must be kept active in the water and not left sitting on the edge.

Some participants become cold very quickly, even when the air temperature appears to be warm. Teachers must monitor closely and adapt practices to ensure minimal time out of the water.

In circumstances where air and water temperature cannot be maintained at optimum levels, lessons must be cancelled or appropriate alternative learning options provided.

Information Disclosure and Privacy Act

Medical and other pertinent information that may impact on participation and learning should be disclosed. Parents/carers and adult students have a right to choose whether or not to disclose information. Every effort must be taken to encourage disclosure of information pertinent to or impacting on students taking part in swimming and water safety education programs.

Disclosed information is subject to legislation within the federal Privacy Act and as such is subject to protection controls as it is disseminated to regular and replacement teachers.

3. SCOPE OF THE AQUATICS - ACCESS AND INCLUSION TEACHER IN PROGRAM DELIVERY

Role and Responsibility

The AUSTSWIM teacher must:

- arrive at the class with sufficient time to ensure set up of equipment
- be welcoming
- ensure specialised equipment is in safe work condition (hoists, wheelchairs, slings, batteries etc)
- implement the ‘observe, analyse, modify and if necessary adapt’ teaching strategy for all students
- provide age and ability appropriate activities
- ensure appropriate positioning to enable full scanning of the roped off designated class area at all times.

Participation

It is recommended that the pace and level of involvement in Aquatics - Access and Inclusion programs be consistent with the functional ability and skill of the participant. The degree of participation must never be forced; all participants must at all times feel a level of comfort, control and confidence.

Participants’ rights must be respected at all times. Activities that cause distress to a participant must be modified or removed/abandoned.

All participants in Aquatics - Access and Inclusion programs and activities have the right to:

- strive for success
- participate at a level appropriate to their functional ability and maturity
- think for themselves and be involved in decision making
- take responsibility for their actions
- respect and dignity
- establish new friendships and social connections
- enjoy the aquatic experience.

Learning Environment

Competent, professional, skilled and caring teachers provide positive, constructive and enjoyable activities that enhance functional movement, safer aquatic knowledge, skill and understanding.

A participant’s reaction to swimming and water safety education will depend on a number of factors that may include, but not be restricted to:

- age
- physical characteristics
- intellectual development
- prior experience
- language development
- cognitive development
- degree of socialisation

- cultural background
- health, wellness and functionality.

Carers role and responsibilities

Carers may include family, friends or paid support personnel. Carers should be encouraged and provided with appropriate training and induction (such as the AUSTSWIM MATE program) to provide support and assist Aquatics - Access and Inclusion participants in the aquatic environment.

The carer has a full duty of care to the participant and must be present during the activity or program. Where assessment deems it necessary, in water carer support will be required.

Tailored Aquatics - Access and Inclusion Class

AUSTSWIM advises that classes delivered by AUSTSWIM TAI are not intended for therapeutic or rehabilitation purposes (ie. classes specifically designed for hydrotherapy, pre/post pregnancy classes, cardiac, stroke recovery, back injury or other similar sessions).

Enrolment and Assessment Information

Participants have the right to 'refuse to disclose' personal information. For the safety of participants, teachers and staff it is recommended every participant undertake an assessment prior to participation. When and if medical information is disclosed it must be documented, secure (Privacy Act 1974) and be updated on a regular basis.

Ideally, enrolment and assessment information should include:

- pertinent medical information
- functional ability assessment
- physical support needs
- current and past experience
- rationale and desire for participation
- support network details (family, carers, etc)
- personal contact details
- emergency contact details.

Entry, Exit and Activity

The AUSTSWIM teacher must have visual control of all participants upon entering, during and exiting the class to ensure best practice standards. The pool deck must be clear of risk hazards at all times. Teachers have a responsibility to ensure all entries are undertaken with safety and dignity.

Specific Populations

Access and inclusion participants (eg. people with mobility limitation, neurological, medical, physical, sensory or an intellectual disability) may have defined requirements and stipulated minimum and maximum ratios prescribed by relevant national organisations. AUSTSWIM teachers are encouraged to seek advice from these organisations or the Australian guidelines for aquatic physiotherapists working in and/or managing hydrotherapy pools. AUSTSWIM teachers leading groups for the access and inclusion market are required to have demonstrated

competency with specific population groups during their industry training or gained additional professional development training prior to delivery.

Clothing and Swimwear

Participants and support personnel must wear appropriate swimwear, specifically designed for aquatic activity, which is well fitting so as not to impede movement or safety. Additional garments may be required in some instances. For example:

- Cultural clothing
- Incontinence or lack of bowel control
- Aqua shoes
- Bands for grommets.

Clothing impacts on safety and learning in a water environment. Well-fitting swimwear takes into consideration:

- Student continence:
 - Young incontinent students must be dressed in aqua nappies. Standard nappies are not appropriate.
 - Older incontinent students must be dressed in swimwear that is tight fitting around the top of the thighs.
 - In the event of bowel incontinence, the student must be immediately removed from the water, washed and changed into clean swimwear before returning to the lesson.

Conclusion

Aquatic environments, have the potential for a range of activities including structured programs such as water safety and swimming lessons, aqua exercise, competitive swimming to recreational as well as social sessions with family, friends and community groups.

AUSTSWIM advocates Aquatics - Access and Inclusion education that focuses on the participant's ability of what they can do rather than their limitations.