



Exceptional Coach Competency Challenge Policy

Football Canada is committed to maintaining a high-performance coaching environment aligned with the National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP), where certification reflects the demonstrated competency of coaches in areas such as program design, athlete development, performance analysis, ethical coaching, and competition support.

While formal training and certification pathways represent the standard progression for all coaches, Football Canada acknowledges that, in exceptional cases, individuals may have developed equivalent or superior competencies through elite coaching experience, international involvement, advanced education, or sustained professional practice.

This policy establishes a formal, transparent, and equitable mechanism through which coaches may request recognition of their competencies outside the traditional certification pathway, while ensuring that all decisions uphold the integrity, safety, and performance standards of Football Canada.

Exceptional Coach Clause

Football Canada reserves the right to recognize a coach as meeting or exceeding the competency requirements of a given certification context through an Exceptional Coach Competency Challenge.

To be considered under this clause, a coach must demonstrate:

- A sustained elite level of ELITE coaching experience, and/or
- Advanced education, certification, or professional development in coaching, and
- Clear evidence of applied competency consistent with Football Canada and NCCP performance standards.

Recognition through this process is not automatic and will only be granted where the evidence clearly demonstrates that the coach meets or exceeds all relevant competency expectations for the certification level being challenged.

All challenges will be administered and overseen by the Manager of Coaching and Athlete Development (or designate).

Eligibility and Submission Requirements

Coaches wishing to initiate a challenge must submit a formal application that includes:

- A current coaching résumé outlining relevant experience
- A comprehensive coaching portfolio, which may include:
 - Practice plans and annual training plans
 - Competition plans and support plans



- Evidence of athlete development and progression
- Certifications, education, and professional development records
- References or endorsements (if applicable)
- A written statement of intent, outlining how their experience meets the required competencies

Incomplete applications will not be considered.

Challenge Process

The Exceptional Coach Competency Challenge process will follow these steps:

Step 1 – Application Submission

- The coach submits their application to Football Canada.
- A non-refundable challenge fee of \$100 CAD must accompany the submission.

Step 2 – Administrative Review

- The Manager of Coaching and Athlete Development reviews the submission to confirm completeness and eligibility.
- Applications that do not meet submission requirements may be declined at this stage.

Step 3 – Committee Formation

A Challenge Review Committee will be established, consisting of:

- The Manager of Coaching and Athlete Development (Chair)
- One Football Canada Director or the Executive Director (or designate)
- Three (3) independent Competition Development (Comp Dev) certified coaches who:
 - Demonstrate extensive and credible elite coaching experience
 - Have no conflict of interest with the candidate

Step 4 – Evaluation

The Committee will conduct a comprehensive review of the coach's:

- Coaching history and experience
- Demonstrated competencies aligned with NCCP standards
- Evidence of applied coaching practice at the appropriate performance level

The Committee may, at its discretion:

- Request additional documentation
- Conduct an interview with the candidate
- Request practical demonstration or supplementary evaluation evidence



Step 5 – Decision

- The Committee will determine whether the coach has sufficiently demonstrated the required competency level.
- The outcome will be one of the following:
 - **Approved** – competency recognized at the specified level
 - **Conditionally Approved** – additional requirements must be completed
 - **Not Approved** – competency standard not met

The decision will be communicated to the candidate in writing.

5. Decision Finality and Appeals

To ensure fairness, consistency, and the integrity of the evaluation process, Football Canada must handle this carefully.

The decision of the Challenge Review Committee is final with respect to the assessment of coaching competency and will not be subject to further appeal.

A review may only be requested on the basis of a procedural error in the administration of the process. Any such request must be submitted in writing to Football Canada within fourteen (14) days of the decision.

Governance and Oversight

Football Canada reserves the right to:

- Interpret and apply this policy as required
- Update or revise the process to maintain alignment with NCCP standards and organizational needs
- Refuse any challenge where sufficient evidence of competency is not clearly demonstrated

All decisions will prioritize:

- Athlete safety
- Coaching excellence
- Integrity of the certification system

Note: This policy is intended to supplement, not replace, the National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP) requirements. Coaches are encouraged to pursue the standard certification pathway wherever possible.