



# Swim BC 23/24

## CLUB EXCELLENCE PROGRAM

### Introduction

The Swim BC Club Excellence program is aimed at elevating the sport administration practices and performance outcomes of member clubs. The program is intended to help club leaders embrace the importance of accountability, risk management, and governance - essential for clubs to execute well in the modern-day sport environment. It will also report back insight into the demographic and performance outcomes of your club. The primary goal is that the Club Excellence program will provide Swim BC with the assurance that our clubs are operationally sound.

We understand the challenges club leaders face when it comes to mitigating risks related to poor governance and unsafe practices. The continuum of the sport environment presents a difficult balance to strike. That's why it's crucial for clubs to have the right policies and procedural practices in place to ensure the highest standards of safe sport are met.

The Club Excellence aim is to provide clubs with a framework and references to navigate these complex waters. By initiating the program, it's our intent that clubs will fulfill the requirements for organizational accountability, risk management, and governance practices and help move swimming in BC into the new era of sport administrative practices in Canada.

As part of the Club Excellence program, we're also developing the capacity to take an analytical dive into both club registration and competition data. In doing so Swim BC will develop metrics and comparative information that will give club leaders a chance to reflect on various club measures. Ideally, we will provide clubs with important feedback allowing you to assess your progress in areas that generally indicate growth and improvement. Simply put, our goal is to provide you with enough information to answer the question "How are we doing?".

#### Why the focus on policy?

*There are typically two sides to the sport administration equation:*

- (1) **leadership** (strategic direction, operations, club growth and health), and*
- (2) **legal** (governance, policy, HR, and dispute resolution).*

*When the legal side is lacking, it is very hard for leadership to thrive. Uncertainty is prevalent when "rules" and boundaries aren't clear – policies are rules, they create the boundaries of behaviour we want our club members to follow. A "suite" of policies is necessary for club success, and what really helps are aligned policies. Among other benefits, aligned policies foster the acquired expertise in the sport system to operate confidently. Your club has a better chance of success when handling a grievance if your policies are aligned with Swim BC's. The more challenging an issue, the more likely it will move from club level to Swim BC. Operating within the same process in BC gives us a much better chance of success.*

*Over the past two years of required core policies, Swim BC has been able to consult a club's file and have an immediate impact assisting a club president or head coach when they are seeking support managing a complaint or other issue. This type of inquiry occurs often, we're happy to successfully support clubs in these matters.*



## Program Rationale

Over the past few years Swim BC has been working diligently to upgrade and modernize not only the governance practices of Swim BC itself, but also that of its member clubs and related organizations. The major impetus for Swim BC to address this work has been accountability, driven by:



**viaSport** - as the funding agency for amateur sport in BC, this government agency requires a high degree of accountability for the funds Swim BC receives. There is an expectation that Swim BC reflects not only practices of the Provincial Sport Organization (PSO), but also the membership.



**Insurance industry** - Swim BC provides extensive insurance coverage for our membership. Maintaining insurance coverage once was a very simple process, it no longer is. Swim BC is not exempt from the recent issues in sport administration in Canada related to organizations such as Hockey Canada, Gymnastics Canada, Bobsleigh Canada, etc. The application process for insurance is now a lengthy and detailed process where the accountability of membership adherence to policies is not only expected but required.



**The safe sport imperative** - succinctly put, organizational quality supported by strong positive values, adherence to those values and policy driven “rules” provides the framework for healthy club culture. These elements define the “character” of an organization and provide the most beneficial environment for sport participation.



**COVID-19** - one important learning drawn from the pandemic is that organizational resilience is not necessarily built into all clubs, or Swim BC itself. There is a vulnerability in dependency on one or two key individuals to ensure continuance and growth. We wish to build the essential governance acumen that will support a resilience regardless of leadership changes.

## What is Club Excellence?

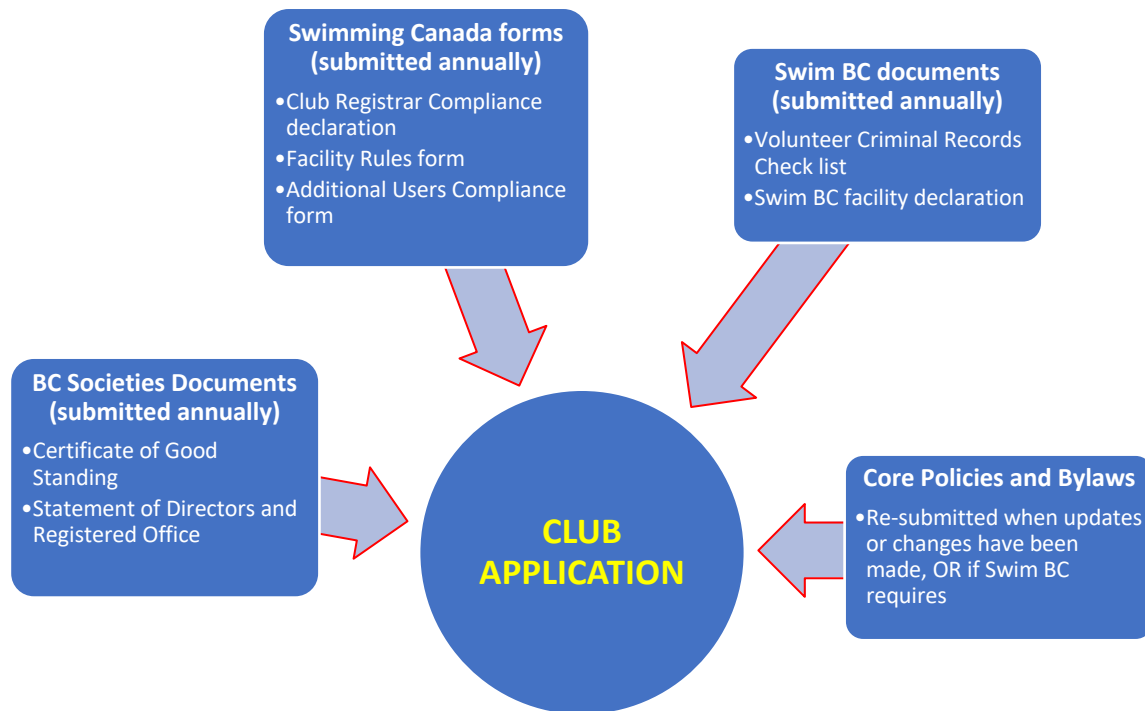
The Club Excellence program is intended to set a high degree of accountability for our membership, to provide feedback and create assessment opportunities. Over the past two years Swim BC has required certain adherence to governance practices through the Club Registration process. While this process has assisted clubs in adapting their organizations, it has not provided important feedback to help clubs assess their status and progress towards the level of accountability a modern sport organization is required to maintain. To address this, we are designing a 3-phase process involving application, reporting and evaluation.

### Phase 1 - Club Application

- This phase replaces the Club Registration process and is intended to be less onerous and repetitive.
- Clubs will now **apply** to Swim BC for membership on an annual basis. This terminology represents a subtle shift in semantics from “registration” to “application”, it signals that a club, to become a member of Swim BC, must provide evidence of adherence to basic standards of governance - BC Societies Act compliance, essential club policies and standards required by viaSport and our insurance providers.
- To initiate the Club Application process, you will be sent a link to a club specific form which will contain some club documents we have in your file.



- Documents that are required on an annual basis will be defined, clubs will be required to attach / drag and drop them into the form.
- If you've updated any core policies or your bylaws, you'll be required to re-submit those. If you haven't, we won't ask you for them again.
- Here's an overview of the Club Application documents we'll require:



## Phase 2 - Club Report

- This phase of the Club Excellence program will further define the areas of organizational accountability and will require submission or reporting of information in the areas of Organizational Readiness; Membership Composition; Financial process; Coaching and Officiating development, Performance Development and Event Hosting.
- These areas depict the operational pillars of your club – through the collection of information Swim BC will be able to provide you with an understanding as to how you're doing in these areas, relative other programs in BC. We'll provide you with comparative statistical information regarding your membership, coaches, officials, and performance factors to help your understanding as to "how you're doing."
- Phase 2 will open for submission in early October, and close in early to mid-November – a period that captures most club's AGM's.
- After club submission, reports will be completed by Swim BC and shared with your club in January.



- Here's the type of information we'll provide for you and some requirements we'll ask you to submit:



### Phase 3 – Club Evaluation

- This process is in development and will be reviewed for launch in 2024/25. We envision this process to be a detailed evaluation of your organization – from governance review (bylaws and policies) to competitive results. Think of it as an “audit” so to speak, and an opportunity for your club to gain some clear understanding of its strengths, weaknesses, and programming gaps.

### Next Steps

- ↳ **Late May** – The **Registration Manual** will be sent to clubs.
- ↳ **Early June** - Club Application (Phase 1) process will open.
- ↳ **Early September** – The Member Registration process will open once the RTR system is re-set; club's will have access to swimmer, coach, official registration if their Club Application is approved and no fees are outstanding.