

TASS SELECTION POLICY 2026-27

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1. PURPOSE OF DOCUMENT

This document outlines the selection process and criteria for athletes seeking nomination to the Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme (TASS) through the British Fencing Performance Pathway.

The purpose of TASS support is to assist athletes with the potential to progress towards international success whilst balancing sporting, educational and personal development commitments

1.1 CONTEXT

The Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme (TASS) is a nationally recognised athlete support programme designed to assist talented athletes in balancing the demands of high-performance sport alongside their education. Through access to specialist support services and practitioner expertise, TASS provides athletes with the opportunity to enhance their development within a structured performance environment.

British Fencing's Talent Pathway aims to identify, develop and support athletes with the potential to achieve success at senior international level. The TASS programme forms an important component of this pathway by providing eligible athletes with access to a multi-disciplinary support network that complements their fencing training and competition programme.

This policy outlines the eligibility requirements, selection criteria, athlete expectations and nomination process for athletes seeking nomination to the TASS programme through British Fencing.

1.2 BACKGROUND

British Fencing has established this policy to provide a clear, transparent and consistent framework for the nomination of athletes to the Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme (TASS).

The introduction of a dedicated TASS Selection Policy provides a strong foundation within the British Fencing Talent Pathway, ensuring that athletes are selected against clearly defined performance standards while recognising the importance of holistic athlete development. The policy supports British Fencing's commitment to developing athletes capable of progressing through the pathway and achieving future success at senior international level.

In addition to competition performance, the TASS programme places significant emphasis on the athlete's ability to engage within a Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) environment. Athletes are expected to actively participate in the support opportunities available through Strength & Conditioning, Nutrition, Sport Psychology, Personal Development and performance lifestyle services, working collaboratively with British Fencing staff and practitioners to maximise their development.

This policy represents the first formal TASS nomination policy developed specifically for the British Fencing Talent Pathway. As such, there is no previous TASS selection policy against which this document has been based or benchmarked. The policy has been developed to align with the principles of the British Fencing GBR Selection Policy whilst reflecting the specific objectives and requirements of the TASS programme.

The overall aim is to ensure that TASS support is allocated to athletes who demonstrate both the performance capability and commitment necessary to benefit from the programme and contribute positively to the British Fencing high-performance environment.

2. ELIGIBILITY

2.1 NOMINATIONS

To be considered for nomination, athletes must:

- Be eligible to represent Great Britain and based in the UK.
- Hold a current British Fencing Compete Membership.
- Be willing to engage fully with the services and support available through the TASS programme.
- Sign the British Fencing TASS Athlete Agreement.

Failure to satisfy these requirements may result in an athlete not being considered for nomination.

2.2 SELECTION CRITERIA

Selection is intended to identify athletes who demonstrate the performance potential, commitment and environment necessary to benefit from TASS support.

Nomination to TASS is not automatic and remains subject to the availability of places and agreement between British Fencing and TASS.

2.2.1 MINIMUM PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

1. International Performance Standard
 - Achieve an individual medal-winning performance at a recognised international competition; or
 - Achieve an average finishing position within the top 8% from nominated international competitions.
2. Athletes must hold a **current BF Compete Membership** at the time of selection and/or the key selection dates. An athlete who does not have a current membership will not be considered for selection.

2.2.2 PARALYMPIC PATHWAY ATHLETES

1. For Paralympic pathway athletes, nomination recommendations may be based on a combination of the following factors, recognising the differing competitive and developmental landscape within para fencing:
 - Holding a current national classification.
 - Demonstrated commitment to training and attendance at British Fencing Development and/or Accelerate Camps.
 - Coach insight and assessment of the athlete's performance potential, development trajectory and future progression.
 - Competition performances and results achieved at Satellite and/or World Cup events.
 - Overall engagement with the British Fencing pathway and commitment to long-term athlete development.

The Selection Panel will consider these factors collectively when making nomination recommendations, and no single factor will necessarily be determinative

2.2.3 ADDITIONAL SELECTION CONSIDERATIONS

Meeting the minimum performance standard does not guarantee nomination.

In addition to meeting the minimum performance standards, athletes must demonstrate a commitment to working within a Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) environment and engaging with British Fencing pathway staff, including the Talent Pathway Coordinator and Performance Athlete Support Coordinator. Athlete engagement history may be considered as part of selection and future nomination decisions.

The selection panel may also consider:

2.2.4 BRITISH FENCING RANKINGS

- Current position on the relevant BF ranking list.
- Performance trajectory and consistency of results.

2.2.5 TRAINING ENVIRONMENT

- Suitability of the athletes' training programme.
- Access to appropriate coaching and competition opportunities.

2.2.6 LOCATION AND ACCESSIBILITY

Given the importance of regular service engagement, consideration will be given to:

- Proximity to the designated TASS delivery site.
- Ability to attend scheduled support sessions.
- Practical access to TASS services including travel requirements.

2.2.7 FUTURE POTENTIAL

Consideration may also be given to:

- Demonstrated rate of improvement.
- Potential for future international success.
- Commitment to long-term athlete development.

2.3 SELECTION PANEL AND PROCESSES

The TASS Selection Panel will be responsible for reviewing eligible athletes and making nomination recommendations.

The panel will consist of:

- Head of Talent (Chair)
- Talent Pathway Coordinator (TPC)
- Performance Athlete Support Coordinator (PASC)

- Head of Olympic Performance (Olympic pathway athletes)
- Head of Paralympic Performance (Paralympic pathway athletes)

The Selection Panel will consider all available performance data, athlete engagement records, development potential, ranking information and eligibility criteria when making nomination decisions.

Meeting the minimum qualification standards does not automatically guarantee nomination.

The Selection Panel reserves the right to consider the overall balance of the programme and the athlete's ability to engage effectively with the support environment.

2.4 SELECTION AVAILABILITY AND DISCRETION

2.4.1 AVAILABLE PLACES

British Fencing will nominate up to:

- 20 Olympic pathway athletes
- 4 Paralympic pathway athletes

The number of nominations may be reduced at the discretion of the Selection Panel where insufficient athletes meet the required standards or where the panel determines that nomination would not align with the objectives of the TASS programme.

2.4.2 RESOLVING TIES

Where two or more athletes are deemed equally eligible for nomination and insufficient places remain available, the Selection Panel will consider the following factors:

- Attendance and engagement at British Fencing Talent Pathway and Performance Camps.
- Accessibility to, and ability to engage with, the designated TASS delivery site and support services.
- Position on the relevant British Fencing National Ranking List.
- Previous engagement with British Fencing pathway activities, support services and MDT practitioners.
- Demonstrated commitment to athlete development and progression within the British Fencing Talent Pathway.

The Selection Panel may consider these factors individually or collectively when determining the final order of nomination.

2.4.3 PANEL DISCRETION

The Selection Panel reserves the right to exercise discretion when making nomination decisions.

This may include:

- Nominating an athlete who has not fully achieved the published minimum performance standard where there is compelling evidence of future potential, exceptional circumstances, injury recovery or significant performance trajectory.
- Deciding not to fill all available nomination places where the panel believes that the athletes under consideration do not demonstrate the necessary performance level, commitment or engagement required to benefit from the programme.
- Taking into account factors relating to athlete welfare, development needs, programme fit and long-term potential.

Any discretionary decision will be made collectively by the Selection Panel and documented as part of the selection process.

3. ATHLETE EXPECTATIONS

3.1.1 MULTI DISCIPLINARY TEAMS

Athletes must actively participate as members of a Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) and work collaboratively with all practitioners supporting their development.

This includes regular and meaningful engagement with:

- Strength & Conditioning practitioners
- Sports Nutrition practitioners
- Sport Psychology practitioners
- Personal Development and Lifestyle support staff
- The Talent Pathway Coordinator
- The Performance Athlete Support Coordinator
- Any additional practitioners assigned through TASS or British Fencing

3.1.2 EXPECTATIONS

Athletes are expected to

- Attend scheduled appointments, workshops and reviews.
- Respond to communications in a timely manner.
- Complete agreed actions arising from MDT meetings.
- Maintain an up-to-date Individual Development Plan where required.
- Demonstrate a proactive approach to their development both on and off the piste.
- Contribute positively to the MDT process and athlete review meeting

3.2 FAILURE TO ENGAGE

Engagement with the TASS programme and MDT support team is a condition of continued involvement within the British Fencing Talent Pathway.

Athletes who fail to engage satisfactorily with the programme may be subject to review by the British Fencing Pathway Team.

Examples of non-engagement include, but are not limited to:

- Repeated failure to attend scheduled appointments.
- Failure to engage with Strength & Conditioning, Nutrition, Sport Psychology or Personal Development services.
- Failure to engage with the Talent Pathway Coordinator and/or Performance Athlete Support Coordinator.
- Failure to respond to reasonable communication requests.
- Failure to complete agreed development actions or athlete reviews.

Where engagement is deemed unsatisfactory, British Fencing reserves the right to:

- Place the athlete under formal review.
- Remove the athlete from the TASS programme.
- Remove the athlete from the British Fencing Talent Pathway.
- Reduce or withdraw access to pathway support services.
- Take future engagement history into account when considering nominations for TASS, UK Sport, British Fencing or other athlete support awards.

3.3 ATHLETE AGREEMENT

All nominated athletes must sign the relevant Athlete Agreement before their nomination can be confirmed.

The Athlete Agreement will set out:

- Athlete responsibilities
- Expected standards of behaviour
- Code of conduct requirements
- Service engagement expectations
- Reporting and communication requirements

Failure to sign or comply with the Athlete Agreement may result in withdrawal of the nomination or award.

4. ATHLETE REVIEW AND CONTINUATION

4.1 ANNUAL ATHLETE REVIEW

All athletes receiving support through the TASS programme will be required to participate in an annual End of Year Review.

The review process may include:

- A formal athlete review meeting.
- Assessment of competition performances and progression against agreed objectives.
- Feedback from members of the athlete's Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT).
- Review of engagement with TASS services and British Fencing pathway activities.
- Consideration of the athlete's development trajectory and future potential.

Failure to attend the End of Year Review without an approved reason may affect an athlete's eligibility for future nomination.

4.2 RE-NOMINATION AND CONTINUED SUPPORT

Continuation on, or re-nomination to, the TASS programme is not automatic and will be subject to available places within the programme.

To be considered for continued support, athletes will normally be required to demonstrate:

- Achievement of the published qualification standards outlined within this policy.
- Evidence of progression and continued development within the British Fencing Talent Pathway.
- A performance trajectory indicating future potential for international success.
- Satisfactory attendance and engagement with British Fencing pathway activities, camps and reviews.
- Positive engagement with TASS practitioners and support services, including Strength & Conditioning, Nutrition, Sport Psychology and Personal Development.
- Effective participation within the MDT process.
- Compliance with the Athlete Agreement and British Fencing Codes of Conduct.

The Selection Panel may also consider exceptional circumstances, including injury, illness or other factors that have materially impacted an athlete's performance during the review period.

4.3 WITHDRAWAL FROM THE PROGRAMME

British Fencing reserves the right to recommend the removal of an athlete from the TASS programme where there is evidence of:

- Failure to engage with the TASS programme or MDT practitioners.
- Repeated failure to attend agreed appointments, reviews or support sessions.
- Unsatisfactory feedback from TASS practitioners or British Fencing pathway staff.
- Failure to meet agreed development objectives without reasonable justification.
- Breaches of the Athlete Agreement, Codes of Conduct or other relevant policies.
- Behaviour that negatively impacts the performance environment or reputation of British Fencing or TASS.

Where removal is being considered, the athlete will normally be informed of the concerns and given an opportunity to respond before a final decision is made.

Any decision regarding continued support, re-nomination or removal from the programme will be made by the Selection Panel and ratified by the Head of Talent.

5. REVIEW OF POLICY

British Fencing reserves the right to review and amend this policy where required to reflect changes in TASS requirements, funding arrangements or athlete pathway priorities.

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Owner: British Fencing Pathway Programme

Version History

Version Number	Date Updated	Updated by	Comments
v0.1			First draft

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