1. OVERVIEW

The Athlete Assistance Program (AAP) is a program of the Federal Government administered by Sport Canada. It is more commonly referred to as the Carding Program. The Athlete Assistance Program (AAP) is aimed at enhancing the Canadian high performance sport system. The AAP assists international calibre athletes with their training and competition needs, through the provision of a living and training allowance and, where applicable, tuition expenses. The AAP is also intended to assist carded athletes in dealing with the increasing demands of high performance sport and to enhance their personal and career development both during, and following, their athletic careers.

Currently, Synchro Canada is eligible for the equivalent of 20 senior cards. Please note that Sport Canada will review the card quotas for all sports following the 2016 Olympic Games, this exercise may affect the number of cards available to Synchro Canada.

**Athlete eligibility**

To be eligible for carding, the athlete must meet AAP’s athlete eligibility requirements (Sport Canada AAP Policy Section 2.3 – see link at bottom of this document), be a member in good standing of a 2017 Synchro Canada National Team, will have paid all outstanding fees to Synchro Canada prior to the carding cycle and must meet the criteria set out in this document.

Athletes who are ill or injured or absent at the time of a National Team Selection or Sport Canada carding nomination will follow the process outlined in Appendix I or II.

An athlete who attends a University full-time outside of Canada will not be eligible for carding.
Nomination process
Normally, the eligible athletes are nominated to the AAP in December. Since the final team nomination in the Junior and 13-15 categories is made into the new year, the athletes eligible for Development cards may be nominated to the AAP later (eg by May).

2. CRITERIA

Athletes will be nominated for carding based on the following, prioritized criteria. For further clarity, throughout this document, the term ‘prioritized criteria’ means that all athletes eligible to be carded within a category will be considered and nominated for carding (subject to the maximum number of cards specified) before athletes in the next category will be considered.

2.1. Senior International Criteria (SR1/SR2)

Sport Canada establishes the international criteria used to award Senior Cards (SR1, SR2). These criteria are based on international performance at Olympic Games (on Olympic year) or World Aquatic Championships in Olympic events. Sport Canada reserves the right to review and revise these criteria with appropriate notice.

Athletes who placed in the top 8 and top ½ of the field at the 2016 Olympic Games will be eligible for nomination for a Senior International Card (to a maximum of 10 cards). Athletes who meet the international criteria are eligible to be nominated for two consecutive years, with the card for the first year referred to as SR1 and the card for the second year referred to as SR2. The nominations for both card level is contingent on the athletes being selected to the 2017 Centre of Excellence Athlete Pool by Synchro Canada and are subject to a training and competitive program approved by Synchro Canada and Sport Canada being maintained.

2.2 Senior National Criteria (SR/C1)

The availability of SR/C1 cards is subject to the total number of cards available under the Sport Canada card quota and the number of cards awarded in the Senior International cards category. Eligible Senior Cards will be nominated based on the following prioritized criteria:

a) Athletes who are members of the 2017 Centre of Excellence Athlete Pool, and who were members of the 2016 Olympic Team or the 2015 FINA World Championships Team (including all events and alternates).

b) Other athletes who are members of the 2017 Centre of Excellence Athlete Pool.
Within each criterion the athletes will be prioritized as per their 2017 Centre of Excellence ranking.

Senior Cards awarded to athletes who meet the National Criteria for Senior Cards for the first time are called C1 Cards and are funded at the Development Card level.

If an athlete carded at the National Senior level does not progress to fulfilment of the International Criteria within five years of first being awarded a SR card, the athlete may no longer be eligible to receive AAP funding from Sport Canada. After such time, Sport Canada will require a comprehensive thoroughly documented review of the athlete’s performance over the past five years in order to demonstrate progress toward performance equivalent to top 8 and top half at the World Championships or Olympic Games, which then warrants nomination of “Senior National” card status for an additional year. This process must be followed for all subsequent years that the athlete is nominated at this level.

2.3. Development Card (D)
The availability of Development (D) Cards is subject to the total number of cards available under the Sport Canada Quota and the number of cards awarded in the Senior International and Senior National criteria. D Card nominations must be a member of a national team – either Senior or Junior.

Should fewer cards be available than the number of National Team athletes, the following priority in nominating development cards shall be:

a) Junior Duet & Solo events
   - The highest placing duet & solo athletes selected to compete at the Junior World Championships July 2016.
   - If there is not enough carding months to provide support for the complete carding cycle, the carding months will be split equally between the 3 athletes.
   - Should a non-even number of months be available, the athlete with the highest placing from the final Figure results at the Junior World Championships will be recommended for the additional month.
   - Should only the minimum number of months required for carding (4 months) be available, the ranking from the Junior World Championships would be used to allocate the carding nomination.
   - Athletes may not be recommended for less than 4 months of carding support (this is a Sport Canada policy)

b) Junior Team event
   - After the application of criteria 3.3 a), the remaining months of carding support will be allocated as equally as possible to the
members of the Junior team events at the Junior World Championships July 2016, who were not on the duet team or the top solo.

- Should a non-even number of months be available, the athlete(s) with the highest placing from the final Figure results at the 2016 Junior World Championships will be recommended for the additional month(s).
- Athletes may not be recommended for less than 4 months of carding support (this is a Sport Canada policy).

To be eligible for the category in points 2.3 a) and b) athletes must participate completely at the Centre of Excellence trials in November 2016.

All athletes will sign an agreement with Synchro Canada and will agree to follow the Junior national team program. An athlete who is unable to fulfill his obligation with the junior national team will not be eligible for carding.

c) Cadet duet and solo (13-15)
- The highest placing duet & solo athletes selected to compete at the 2016 UANA Championships.
- If there are not enough carding months to provide support for the complete carding cycle, the carding months will be split equally between the 3 athletes.
- Should a non-even number of months be available, the athlete with the highest placing from the final figure results at the 2016 UANA Championships will be recommended for additional months.
- Athletes may not be recommended for less than 4 months of carding support (this is a Sport Canada policy).

d) Cadet Team (13-15)
- In the event that cards still remain, members of the 2016 National 13-15 Team will be eligible for nomination based the final Figure results from the 2016 UANA Championships.
- Athletes may not be recommended for less than 4 months of carding support (this is a Sport Canada policy).

Additional information about the Sport Canada AAP program (policies and procedures) is available at:

APPENDIX I

CARDING ALLOCATIONS IN RELATION TO INJURED AND ILL ATHLETES

a) If a Senior athlete who has demonstrated National Team potential is unable to compete in the appropriate National Team Selection due to injury or illness (confirmed by a COE doctor’s written notice), but is selected based on past performance by the National Team Head Coach, the athlete shall be placed at the bottom of the respective National Teams ranking and receive AAP funding according to the AAP Carding Criteria.

b) If an athlete is injured or ill at the time of Sport Canada carding nominations and is unable to train with the National Team program for less than 90 days, the athlete will continue to be nominated as per the AAP Carding Criteria under the following process:
   - In cooperation with the treating physician and the athlete, Synchro Canada’s National Team Doctor will set a realistic return date for the athlete based on her health and recovery. The athlete will have access to the AAP funding up until her return date.
   - If Synchro Canada’s National Team doctor is satisfied with the athlete’s recovery by her return date and confirms her readiness for the National Team training program, the athlete will continue to receive her AAP funding for the remainder of the carding cycle.
   - If the athlete is unable to return to the National Team training program by the set return date, the athlete’s AAP funding will be allocated to her replacement, and if a replacement is not applicable, the remainder of the AAP funding will be allocated to the next best athlete based on the AAP Carding Criteria.

c) If an athlete is injured at the time of Sport Canada carding nomination and is unable to train with the National Team for 90 days or more, she will not be nominated during the annual review of the AAP conducted by Synchro Canada and Sport Canada.

d) Any injury or illness that occurs following the AAP review will be addressed using the AAP Policy and Procedures document (section 9).
APPENDIX II

CARDING ALLOCATIONS IN RELATION TO RETURNING ATHLETES

a) For an athlete who has competed as a member of the National Team previously but does not compete in the appropriate National Team Selection due to any reason other than injury or illness, but is selected based on past performance by the National Team Head Coach as per the approved selection criteria policy, an appropriate card may be held pending the completion of the applicable selection criteria requirements by the athlete.

Approved by Synchro Canada Board of Directors – October 24, 2016