

WOMEN'S ARTISTIC HANDBOOK

2023 - 2024

A guide to the national Women's Artistic
competitive programme in New Zealand



Gymnastics
NEW ZEALAND

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Introduction to Handbook

This handbook is to provide a guide to the national Women's Artistic Gymnastics (WAG) competitive programme in New Zealand.

Women's Artistic Gymnastics is one of the most popular, celebrated and thoroughly modern sports for women, having undergone more transformation than perhaps any other Olympic sport. With a thrilling combination of daring and grace, gymnasts perform challenging elements on four apparatus – Vault, Uneven Bars, Balance Beam and Floor – with emphasis on agility, artistry, flexibility, power and style.

Gymnastics New Zealand

Gymnastics New Zealand is the national body for Gymnastics and are responsible for working with Technical committees to outline the New Zealand rules and regulations for each one of its codes. Gymnastics NZ staff support clubs in the operational and technical deliver of the sport, this can be through the Relationship Management team, Education Team, Tours, or the office for purchasing stock etc. Clubs are required to be a member of Gymnastics NZ to compete in the National competitive programmes. Please see below the current strategic plan for the organisation.



Gymnastics New Zealand Code of Behaviour

Please refer to the GNZ website for the most up to date version - [Regulations and Policies | GymnasticsNZ](#)

The Gymnastics New Zealand Code of Behaviour applies to anyone involved in the sport of gymnastics in New Zealand, whether they are an athlete or in a paid or unpaid/voluntary capacity with Gymnastics New Zealand or an affiliated club or organisation

1. **Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every individual athlete as a human being.** Treat everyone equally regardless of sex, disability ethnic origin or religion. Respect the talent, development stage and goals of each athlete to reach their desired potential.
2. **Protect athletes from all forms of abuse.** Refrain from any form of verbal physical, or emotional abuse towards athletes. Refrain from any form of sexual or racial harassment, whether verbal or physical. Do not harass, abuse, or discriminate against athletes based on their sex, marital status, sexual orientation, religious or ethical beliefs, race, colour, ethnic origins, employment status, disability, or distinguishing characteristics. Any physical contact with athletes should be appropriate to the situation and necessary for the athlete's skill development. Be alert to any forms of abuse directed towards athletes from other sources while in your care. You must raise any concerns you have regarding the treatment of any athlete by another coach, volunteer, parent etc. in accordance with this code or any other relevant (policies and procedures e.g. Safe guarding and Child Protection Policy).
3. **Provide a safe environment for training and competition.** Adopt appropriate risk management strategies to ensure that the training and/or competition environment is safe. Ensure equipment and facilities meet safety standards. Ensure equipment, rules, training, and the environment are appropriate for the age, physical and emotional maturity, experience, and ability of athletes. Show concern and caution toward sick and injured athletes. Allow further participation in training and competition only when appropriate. Encourage athletes to seek medical advice when required. Provide a modified training programme where appropriate. Maintain the same interest and support toward sick and injured athletes as you would the healthy athletes.
4. **Make a commitment to providing a quality service for all athletes.** Seek continual improvement through ongoing education, and other personal and professional development opportunities. Provide athletes with planned and structured input appropriate to their needs and goals. Seek advice and assistance from professionals when additional expertise is required. Maintain appropriate records.
5. **Maintain a high standard of integrity.** operate within the rules of the sport and in the spirit of fair play, while encouraging athletes to do the same. Advocate a sporting environment free of drugs and other performance enhancing substances with the guidelines of the Drug Free Sport New Zealand and World Anti-Doping Code. Do not disclose any confidential information relating to athletes without their prior written consent.
6. **Be a positive role model for the sport and athletes and act in a way that projects a positive image.** All athletes are deserving of equal attention and opportunities. Ensure the athlete's time spent with you is a positive experience. Be fair, considerate, and honest with athletes. Encourage and promote a healthy lifestyle – refrain from smoking and drinking alcohol around athletes.

7. **Professional responsibilities.** Display high standards in your language, manner, punctuality, preparation, and presentation. Display control, courtesy, respect, honesty, dignity and professionalism to all involved with the sphere of sport – this includes opponents, coaches, officials, administrators, media, parents, and spectators. Encourage athletes to demonstrate the same qualities. Be professional and accept responsibility for your actions. You should not only refrain from initiating a sexual relationship with an athlete but should also discourage any attempt by an athlete to initiate a sexual relationship with you, explaining the ethical basis of your refusal. Accurately represent personal qualifications, experience, competence and affiliation.

SafeSport

Gymnastics NZ is committed to ensuring that our sport is providing positive experiences, for all involved. If anyone has something they think we need to know in the context of athlete well-being, then please get in touch with us via SafeSport@gymnasticsnz.com This email address will be received by our CEO and the independent Chair of the Sport Integrity Unit.

Women's Artistic Programme in New Zealand

The STEPs programme has been developed with the majority of gymnasts in mind. Although it is possible to progress through the programme to an international level, the Women's Artistic Gymnastics Technical Committee (WAG TC) recognises this is not necessarily within all gymnasts' abilities, or even their goal.

STEPS encourages gymnasts to Strive Towards Excellence in Performance at their own level and pace. There are 10 STEPs from beginners to high level gymnasts and, while most gymnasts may not reach STEP 10, it is hoped they will progress to a level at which they can fulfil their dreams as gymnasts. The STEP programme is flexible enough to allow gymnasts to progress further on one, or more, apparatus.

Whilst developing the programme, the WAG TC considered the following to be characteristics of a successful competitive structure:

- Sustainable - it should have longevity, allowing the system to be in place for more than one cycle.
- Progressive - it should allow gymnasts to move up through the system to achieve their potential.
- Comprehensive - it should encompass all ages and abilities of gymnast and their development from beginners to senior or elite athletes.
- Comprehensible - it should be easy to understand by the uninitiated (parents/media/sponsors) and simple to introduce to the coaches, gymnasts and judges.
- Retentive - it should engage gymnasts such that they want to continue in the sport as teenagers.
- Rewarding - it should encourage excellence in technical execution.
- Laudatory - it should reward gymnasts tangibly with certificates, or similar, and have value attached to improvement.

The STEPs programme begins with compulsory exercises which are designed to be achievable by the majority of gymnasts, and encourage them to perform with attention to technical excellence. STEPs 4 to 6 permit a choice of some skills, to account for gymnast’s physical abilities, and allow them to transition to STEPs which have optional exercises based on composition requirements. Again, encouraging gymnasts to perform within their ability, but allowing for faster development on one, or more, apparatus.

STEPS 1 to 8 have age groups to assist in retaining the older gymnasts, whilst giving younger gymnasts a chance to compare themselves against their peers. STEPs also have progression thresholds to ensure gymnasts advance as they are ready.

A Ribbon Award Scheme operates for STEPs 1 to 6, giving gymnasts an instant and tangible recognition of their achievements, with different coloured ribbons signifying the different score targets they have achieved.

STEP – Striving Towards Excellence in Performance

The competitive STEPs cover the gymnast’s development from beginner to high level athlete.

STEP	Competitions available to athletes	Exercise Type
1	Entry level	Compulsory exercises
2	Small Club Competitions	
3	Local Club or Regional Competitions	
4		
5	Local Club or Regional Competitions and are eligible for National Championships	Creative Compulsory exercises
6		Optional exercises
7		
8		
9		
10		
Junior and Senior International		International rules and guidelines

Competition organisers will determine what awards will be offered at their competition, and this should be communicated prior to the event. e.g., they may offer awards for All Around and Apparatus placings, or for All Around placings only.

Progression through the STEPs Programme

It is recommended gymnasts enter at STEP 1 and progress at their own pace up through the STEPs. Before progressing, the gymnast must be physically, mentally and emotionally ready to handle the demands of the training and skills required in the next STEP.

The club and/or coach is responsible for ensuring a gymnast is adequately prepared for the STEP in which she is competing. As each STEP builds upon the foundation of skills and requirements of the previous STEP, the gymnast **must** have **achieved the minimum score before** considering the readiness factors for the next STEP.

This minimum score must have been achieved on two separate occasions. STEPs 1 to 6, both occasions may be from the gymnast’s home province. STEPs 7 to 10, one of these is required to be outside the gymnast’s home province.

Factors which **must** be considered before allowing a gymnast to progress include, but are not limited to:

Factor	Comment
Physical preparation	Does the gymnast have the strength, flexibility and other physical preparation required for the next STEP, including solid foundation of skill development?
Skill readiness	Can the gymnast perform consistently in training, all the elements and requirements to compete the STEP?
Psychological readiness	Is the gymnast ready to handle the psychological demands of the training and requirements for the next STEP?
Stage of development	Regardless of physical preparation and skill level, is the next STEP appropriate given the gymnast’s childhood stage of development and growth?
Outside factors	Is the next STEP appropriate given the gymnast’s obligations, demands, desires and limitations beyond gymnastics? (<i>Family, education, work, extra-curricular, financial etc</i>)

Once all factors have been considered, **and** the prerequisite of a minimum score in the previous STEP has been fulfilled, the gymnast **may** move to the next STEP, but is **not required** to do so. Clubs may also set their own additional criteria for progression to the next STEP.

A gymnast may compete at more than one STEP during a single competitive season, provided she meets the score requirements outlined in Section 2.7 and all readiness factors have been considered. If the gymnast proves herself capable of faster progression by achieving a Distinction, she may move to the next STEP immediately, but only after all readiness factors have been considered.

Progression	
STEPS 1 to 4	Minimum 50.000
	Distinction 56.000
STEPS 5 to 6	Minimum 50.000
	Distinction 56.000
STEP 7	43.000
STEPS 8 to 10	43.000
Junior International	
Senior International	

STEPS Age Divisions

STEPS 1 to 8 are split into age divisions. STEPS 9 and 10 do not have age divisions. The age divisions may compete together, or separately, in the competition programme, but the individual results and awards must be separate for each age division. Teams may comprise gymnasts from either, or both, age divisions within the STEP.

The age division is determined by the age the gymnast will turn during the calendar year. The gymnast must have turned 6 years on 1 January to be eligible to compete. In STEP 1-4, if an age division is at 40 athletes or more, then the division may be split equally into two.

In STEP 7 and 8, if there are 6 gymnasts or less in a competition in total, it is recommended clubs combine the two age groups.

STEP	1st Age Division	2nd Age Division
1	up to 8	9+
2	up to 9	10+
3	up to 10	11+
4	up to 11	12+
5	up to 12	13+
6	up to 13	14+
7	up to 13	14+
8	up to 14	15+
9	No age divisions	
10	No age divisions	
International		
Junior	up to 15	
Senior	16+	

International Athletes

To enter the International Stream, she must demonstrate she is physically and psychologically prepared and must meet minimum criteria. Gymnasts approved by the WAG Technical Committee to compete in the International Stream will compete in accordance with full FIG requirements.

STEPS Badges

STEP Badges are available following qualification at each STEP (1- 10), a gymnast is eligible to purchase the corresponding badge through their club who can purchase them from Gymnastics New Zealand.

Ribbon Awards Scheme

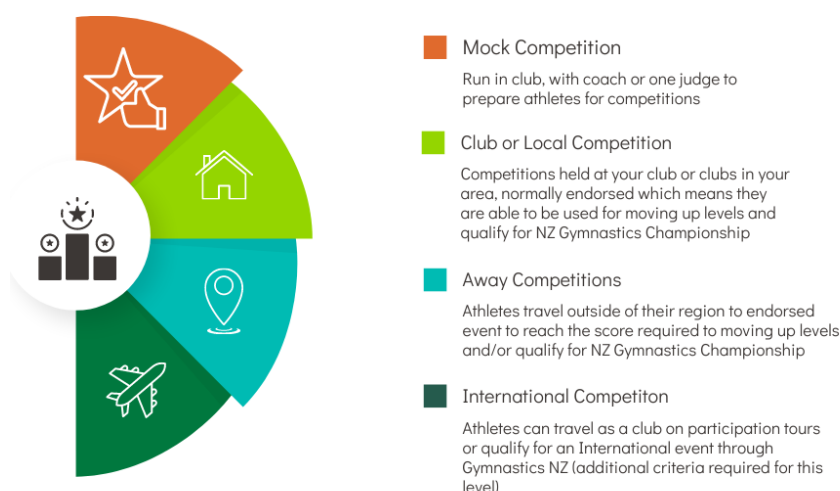
The Ribbon Award Scheme is an incentive performance-based scheme which gives instant recognition to individual achievement, independent of a gymnast's ranking in a competition. It operates in STEP 1- 6. Ribbons may be awarded at club competitions, provided there is compliance with the judging panel requirements.

When competing in a first competition at any STEP, the gymnast will be awarded a ribbon on each apparatus, with its colour determined by the score achieved. As the performances improves to the next score band, they will be awarded the ribbon of the colour for that score band.

A gymnast does not need to be awarded a ribbon if their score decreases from their personal best at any time. i.e., if a gymnast has been awarded a red ribbon at their first competition, they do not need to be awarded a blue or green ribbon at any subsequent competition.

Ribbon Colour	STEPS 1 to 6
Gold	14.000
Red	13.000
Blue	12.000
Green	<12.000

Different Levels of Competitions



Gymnasts Attire – Competition (excluding warm up)

- Gymnasts must wear an appropriate leotard, or unitard (*i.e. a one piece item of clothing with full length leg cover from hips to ankles*) in club or representative colours.
- Gymnasts may also wear fitted shorts, $\frac{3}{4}$ or full length leggings, either under, or on top of a leotard. These must be a single colour, either black, club or representative colour. A small manufacturer's logo not exceeding 4cm in diameter is permitted. A printed club name **is** permitted.
- The leotard, or unitard, may be sleeveless, short or long sleeved, but of appropriate design in keeping with FIG rules. Mesh fabric underlain by a skin coloured fabric is permitted, mesh panels must be discreetly incorporated into the design.
- In the **Team Competition**: the design of the leotard, or unitard, must be identical for all members of the team. Within the team, the gymnasts may choose to wear either the leotard, or unitard, or add fitted shorts or leggings.
- Gymnasts **competing as individuals** (*i.e. not as part of a team*) may wear differing attire, even if they are from the same club.
- Gymnasts may wear gymnastic shoes and/or socks.

- Hand grips, bandages and wrists wraps are permitted. They must be securely fastened, in good repair and should not detract from the aesthetics of the performance. Bandages must be beige, or skin coloured where practicable.
- Loose jewellery (*bracelets or necklaces*) must not be worn, but small stud-type earrings are permitted.
- Hip or other padding is not permitted.
- Hair must be tidy and securely fastened.
- Gymnasts are not required to wear, or display, a competition number.
- For the New Zealand Gymnastics Championship, gymnasts must wear track suits, including track pants, for march on and presentation.
- For Day 2 of the National Championships, gymnasts may wear a leotard, or unitard, of **their own choice, but it must be in their Provincial colours**. Those gymnasts who have represented New Zealand in the **previous 12 months** may wear their New Zealand team leotard.

New Zealand Gymnastics Championships Eligibility

Athlete Eligibility Athlete

To be eligible for selection by their Province for the National Championships, in STEP 5 and 6, the gymnast must achieve the qualification score on two **separate** occasions, one of which must be at a competition outside their home Province. Days 1 and 2 at the same competition do not constitute separate occasions.

In STEP 7 and above, the gymnast must achieve the qualification score on one occasion.

NOTE: There may also be additional Provincial selection policies, which are at the discretion of the province.

2023 Qualification Scores for New Zealand Gymnastics Championships

Progression	Nationals All Around	Nationals Apparatus Specialist
STEPS 5 to 6	50.000	Not eligible
STEP 7	43.000	Not eligible
STEPS 8 to 10	43.000	11.000
Junior International	43.000	Not eligible
Senior International	45.000	VT 12.500 (<i>av of two vaults</i>) UB 11.300 BB - 11.5 FX - 11.7

Score thresholds may be reviewed annually after the National Championships, and prior to the start of the next year.

Equipment Information

Vault (VT)

A 25m run up must develop the necessary power to take off from the springboard, and complete aerial skills before a stable landing.

Balance Beam (BB)

Is 5 meters long and 10cm wide, Gymnastic complete a series of leaps, jumps and turns demonstrate elegance, flexibility, balance and control before a tumbling combination to dismount.

Uneven Bar (UB)

Continuous swings in both directions, above, below and between bars with multiple re grasp elements, precede an acrobatic dismounts.

Floor (F)

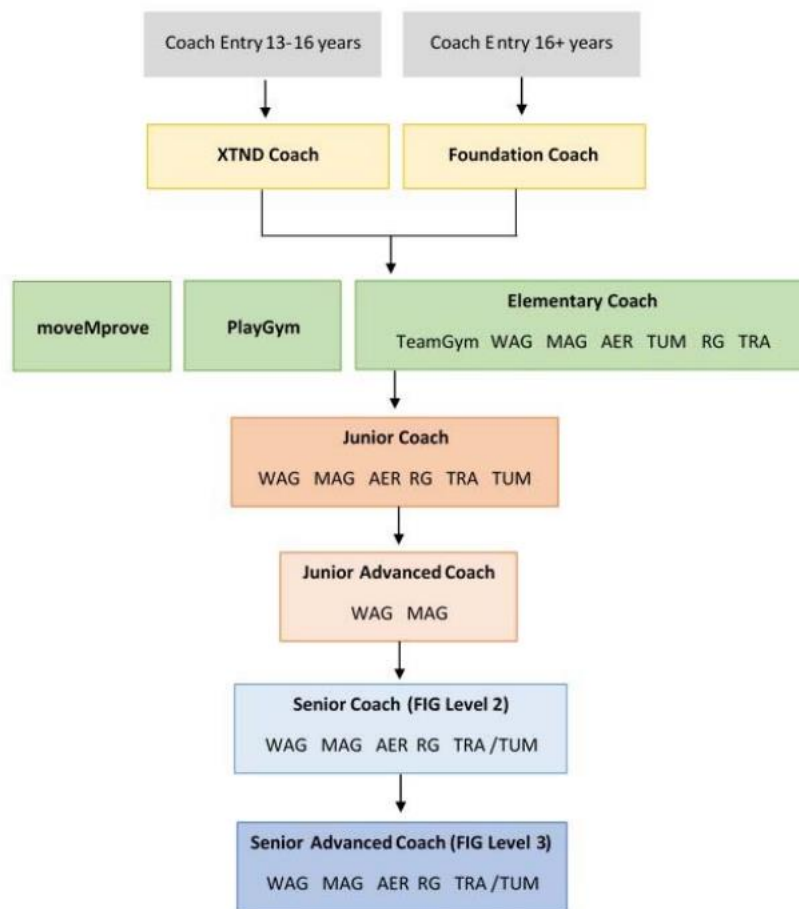
Choreographed to music this acrobatic routine displays, tumbling, strength and balance movements connected with gymnastics artistry.

Competition Equipment Height

Measurements of height are from the floor, not the mat. All Apparatus Norms are published on the F.I.G website in the Rules section. Apparatus specification as F.I.G unless specifically stated here.

	Vault	Beam	Bar	Floor
STEP 1		105cm	HB 250cm and LB 170cm	12m x 2m strip of mats
STEP 2				
STEP 3		115cm		
STEP 4	105cm 115cm OR 125cm			12m x 12m floor area OR 12m x 2m strip of mats
STEP 5	105cm 115cm OR 125cm	125cm	HB 255cm and LB 175cm	12m x 12m floor area
STEP 6				
STEP 7	125cm		If the gymnast requires the rails raised because of her height, then the max diagonal distance becomes 182cm	
STEP 8				
STEP 9				
STEP 10				
Junior and Senior International				

Gymnastics New Zealand Coach Education Pathway



Gymnastics New Zealand aims to meet the professional development need of gymnastics coach and judges by providing theoretical and practical programmes. Courses are offered throughout the country with some being online. Above is the diagram of this pathway, alongside these courses there are other opportunities to engage in workshops, coach developer opportunities, guest speakers and a bi-annual coach connect conferences. All registrations for these courses are through the member clubs.

Coaches Qualifications required for Endorsed Events

Coaches should have a qualification consistent with the level of the gymnasts they are coaching. The following stepped approach is currently in place for the next two years. These requirements will be reviewed annually.

Athlete Level	Competition Level	Minimum Coach Requirements 2023
Elementary	STEP 1-3	Elementary ¹
Elementary	STEP 4	Elementary
Junior	STEP 5-6	Junior ²
Senior	STEP 7+ and International	Advanced ²

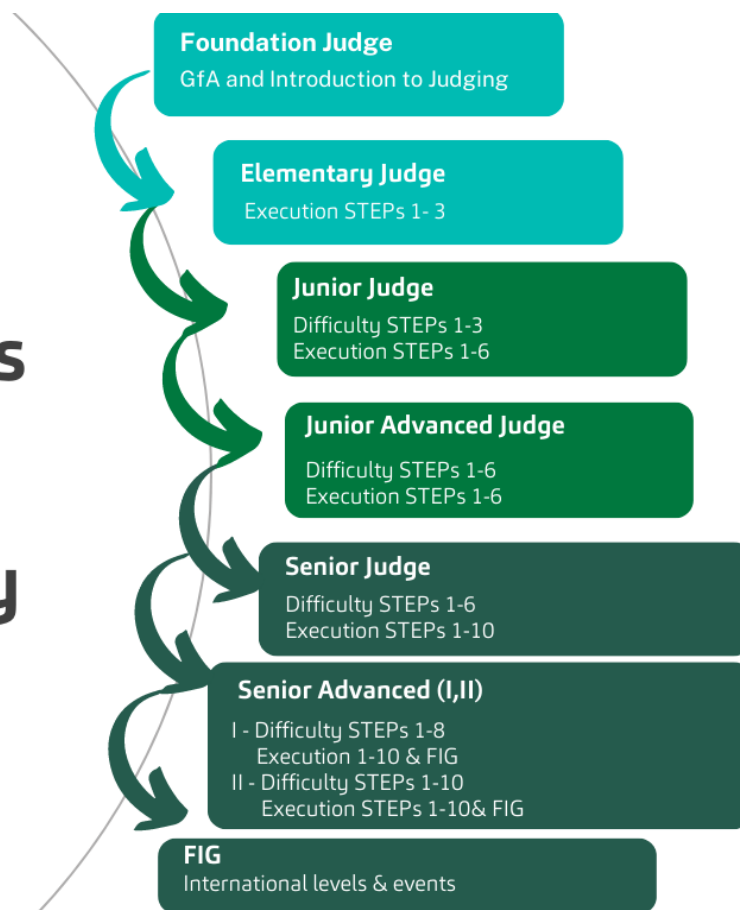
Notes: ¹ The qualification may still be in progress. A second coach for a group at Foundation/XTND may be permitted.

² May be in progress

Coaches Qualifications requirements for 2023 New Zealand Gymnastics Championships

Qualification of Coach	Level/ International
Women's Artistic Junior Coach	STEPS 5 and 6
Women's Artistic Advance Coach	STEPS 7
Women's Artistic Senior Coach	STEPS 8 or higher

Women's Artistic Judging Pathway



How the routines are judged:

Difficulty Judge

The Difficulty (D) Score is defined as the difficulty of the exercise performed. It has a maximum of 5.0 for STEPs 1 to 6 and comprises specific elements, or series of elements, and connections. For STEPs 7 to 10 the maximum D Score depends on the ability of the gymnast. It encompasses components such as Difficulty Value, Composition Requirements and Difficulty Bonus. The gymnast must perform elements unaided to be awarded their value.

Execution Judge

The E judges or execution judges are responsible for taking marks off the gymnast based on any errors such as bent legs, legs apart, falls onto or off the apparatus. There are small, 0.1, medium 0.3 and large errors 0.5 as well as 1.0 mark off for a fall. The E judges add up all their deductions and take it off the total of 10.000. This gives the E or execution score.

The D score, plus the E score gives the final score.

Judges Conflict of Interest

- The parents or guardians or any person who has a direct family relationship to any gymnast shall not officiate as judges on a panel where their child or ward is amongst the gymnasts competing. This veto extends to partners in a relationship with a parent of a competing gymnast.
- The parents or guardians or any person who has a direct family relationship to any gymnast competing shall not be used as secretary/recorder on a panel where their child or ward is amongst the gymnasts competing.
- Exemption to the rules pertaining to judges may be sought from the Women's Artistic Gymnastics Technical Committee.
- Exemption to the rules pertaining to recorders may be sought from the control judge of the competition.

Gymnastics New Zealand Judge Education Pathway

Foundation Judge Qualification

The Foundation Judge course is an online course that serves as an introduction to judging, including qualities and knowledge required to become a judge. Judges learn the basics of how to observe, record and correctly evaluate performance. Judges must be a minimum of Year 9 at school.

Elementary Judge Qualification

- Must be a minimum of 15 years of age.
- Eligible to judge on E Panel for STEPs 1 to 3.
- Judges must complete their Logbook listing the sessions judged, before gaining their full Elementary qualification.
- Judges must complete two years of judging STEPs 1 to 3 routines, and have their Log Book signed off by the WAG National Judging Advisor, before they can progress to the Junior Judge Course.

Junior Judge Qualification

- The Junior Qualification is split into two parts: Junior and Junior Advanced. Junior Judges can judge on E Panel for STEPs 1 to 6 and on D Panel for STEPs 1 to 3.
- Judges must complete their Log Book listing the sessions judged, before gaining their full Junior qualification.
- Judges must have a minimum of two years' experience at Junior level, be competent in judging all apparatus, and be able to act as Head of a Panel at STEPs 1 to 3, before attempting the Junior Advanced qualification.
- Junior Advanced Judges can judge on both D and E Panel for STEPs 1 to 6.

Senior Judge Qualification

- Judges who have proven their competency, with a minimum of two years' experience at Junior Advanced Judge level, will be eligible to attend the Senior Course.

- The qualification is split into two parts: Senior and Senior Advanced.
- A Senior Judge is qualified to judge E Panel for all STEPs and D Panel for STEPs 1 to 6. A Senior judge is expected to have a minimum of two years' judging experience of optional routines, before being eligible for the Senior Advanced qualification.
- Senior Advanced requires judges to have an extensive knowledge of the FIG Code of Points as they will act as both Difficulty and Execution judge.
- The Senior Advanced qualification is split into two levels:
 - Level 1 – qualified to act as D Panel for STEPs 7 and 8 and E Panel for all STEPs.
 - Level 2 - qualified to act as D Panel for STEPs 7 to 10 and E Panel for all STEPs.
- In the first year of qualifying as Senior Advanced, the judge will be appointed as a D2 Panel judge to work under the guidance of the D1 Panel judge. The judge is expected to have two years of experience as Senior Advanced Level 1 judge, before attempting the Senior Advanced Level 2 qualification.

International Judging Qualification (F.I.G Brevet)

- To be eligible to attend the FIG Continental Judges Course (held every 4 years after the Olympics) the judge:
 - should have completed 4 years at Senior Advanced level
 - must have proven their competency as Difficulty and Execution judge,
 - should have experience as a Control Judge for endorsed events at STEPs 5 to 10
 - must have judged at a minimum of 2 National Championships in the previous 4 years
 - must have demonstrated a long term and ongoing commitment to judging in New Zealand
 - must be available to present judging courses and/or act as a mentor to less qualified judges
- Attendance at the FIG course is by invitation only, from the Technical Committee, upon recommendation from a Brevet judge. There is a limited number of places at the FIG course, therefore judges are ranked accordingly based on exam results at Senior Advanced Level 2 and judging commitment over the previous four years.

Judging Panel Requirements

	Judging Panel Requirements
STEP 1-3	Panels of 2 judges: One at Elementary and One at Junior or higher
STEP 4	Panels of 2 judges: One at Elementary and One at Junior Advanced or higher
STEP 5 - 6	Panels of 3 judges: One at Junior and One at Junior, One at Junior Advanced or higher
STEP 7 - 8	Panels of 3 judges: Three at Senior or Senior Advanced
STEP 9 -10	Panels of 3 judges: Three at Senior or Senior Advanced
Junior International	Panels of 3 judges: All F.I.G Brevet qualified
Senior International	Panels of 4 judges: Two F.I.G Brevet qualified and 2 Senior Advanced

Volunteers

Volunteers without a judging qualification are appointed to various tasks on the competition floor to aid the smooth running of the event, e.g., as score inputters and holders, marshals, music players, or announcers. They should be appropriately dressed, thoroughly trained in their roles, punctual for sessions, impartial in their behaviour and attire, and professional in their conduct. It is important that when in a volunteer position you don't communicate to any gymnast on the competition floor/area and phones are left in the competition office.

Functions of the Recorders

When records are required, they are usually appointed by the competition organisers.

Under the supervision of the D1 Judge, they are responsible for:

- Accurately and quickly recording the judges' deductions on the recording sheet,
- Correctly displaying the Final Score,
- Supervising the score holders' accuracy and behaviour.

