

Swim: Learn to Swim and Water Safety



Activity scope

This document relates to student participation in Learn to Swim and Water Safety as a curriculum activity.

The following information is based on the [Workplace Health and Safety Queensland](#), Department of Justice and Attorney-General Information guide for owners, operators and controllers of public swimming pools.



Facilities include municipal, commercial or school swimming pools. A pool is defined as an artificially created pool of water, either indoors or outdoors with a water-filtering/circulation system.

Special considerations

- At least two adults are to be present.
- At least one adult **must** hold the minimum qualifications as outlined below under minimum activity-specific qualifications for supervisors.
- At least one adult **must** be ready at all times to enter the water and be competent to assist a student. At no time should an adult leader rely solely on students to recover a swimmer in difficulty.
- Prior to the commencement of the school swimming program, a safety induction session outlining risk management for the activity should be conducted with adults involved in the delivery of the Learn to Swim program.
- When teaching students swimming and water safety e.g. skills in floating, basic competitive and lifesaving strokes or survival skills in a water environment, the following adult to student ratios are recommended:
 - **For children less than 5 years old** 1:5
 - *This is 'in the water supervision', i.e. one adult in the water for every 5 students*
 - **For beginners**, with little or no swimming experience 1:10
 - *This is 'in the water supervision', i.e. one adult in the water for every 10 students*
 - **For intermediate swimmers**, who have basic skills and can swim 25m 1:12
 - **Advance learn to swim**, students who can swim 50m 1:15
 - *This ratio is for teaching swimming and water safety – for training of squads refer to [Swim: Training guideline](#) to determine appropriate supervision.*
 - **For students with special needs**, the ratio will vary but may be as high as 1:1 based on risk assessment of student need and ability.

Minimum activity-specific qualifications

- **For the adult taking overall responsibility for swimming and water safety:**
 - a [Bronze Medallion](#) or equivalent (e.g. Pool Lifeguard), **OR**
 - a statement of attainment from a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) or governing sporting body covering the *SISCAQU202A Perform basic water rescue or equivalent* unit of competency, **OR**
 - Competence (demonstrated ability) to recognise, prevent and respond to emergency in, on and around the swimming pool. A teacher could demonstrate competency through all of the following:
 - current first aid qualifications including Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) or immediate access to first aid facilities, including qualified personnel
 - identify a rescue plan and appropriate rescue aids
 - identify a person in difficulty



- demonstrated capacity to undertake a non-swimming and swimming rescue exercise at the facility or comparable aquatic environment (e.g. rope throw rescue, swim to the centre of the pool and retrieve a weighted object from the deepest part of the pool).
 - Please note:** Competency is to be assessed annually and considers the aquatic environment that the activity is taking place in to ensure currency and relevancy.
- In circumstances where one person holds both Bronze Medallion or equivalent **and** CPR qualifications and is involved in an emergency situation, another adult present will be required to ensure students exit the water safely and manage effective supervision of students.
- **For the adult teaching swimming and water safety:**
 - a Swimming and Water Safety Teacher qualification from an RTO or governing sporting body, **OR**
 - Competence (demonstrated ability) in the teaching of Learn to Swim and Water Safety.
- **For the adult teaching swimming and water safety for specialised groups:**
 - for children less than 5 years old, a statement of attainment from an RTO or governing sporting body covering *SISCAQU311A Foster the development of infants and toddlers in an aquatic environment* unit of competency
 - for students with special needs, a statement of attainment from an RTO or governing sporting body covering *SISCAQU312A Assist participants with a disability during aquatic activities* unit of competency.

Minimum activity-specific equipment/facilities

- Flotation and reaching aids (reaching aids may include light-weight poles, noodles or ropes with a float attached).
- Sufficient space where learners can stand in water no more than shoulder depth.
- Whistle.
- Schools should seek confirmation from the swimming pool facility regarding the provision of water quality advice, emergency action plans, rescue processes and roles and availability and qualifications of supervisory personnel on site.
- Consider the use of goggles.
- Consider the use of swimming caps, especially for long hair.
- Ensure that chemicals and machinery are kept in locked areas away from student access.
- Store teaching aids separately from chemical stores and plant rooms.

Activity-specific hazards/risks and suggested control measures

- Ensure that there is at least one adult outside the water at all times, ready to perform rescue if required (the number of adults required depends on student numbers).
- Where grouping is used to provide for a wide range of abilities, it is recommended that there be one adult per group.
- Build safety checks (e.g. a buddy system or roll checks) into lesson procedures.
- Where close supervision is necessary, the number of students in the water at any one time should be limited.
- Avoid lengthy and fatiguing training sessions harmful to a student's health and welfare.
- Diving activities **must** be supervised at all times.
- Ensure that the [Board of Swimming Australia Pool Depth guidelines](#) are followed, **assumes a level of competence:**
 - less than 0.9 metre – **absolutely NO dive entry**
 - 0.9 metre to less than 1 metre – concourse dive (providing concourse is not more than 0.2 metre above the water surface)
 - 1 metre to less than 1.2 metres – concourse or platform dive (providing concourse or platform is not more than 0.4 metre above the water surface)
 - 1.2 metres or more – platform dive (as long as the platform is not more than 0.75 metre above the water surface)
 - 1.5 metres recommended for learner divers.
- Undertake a risk assessment regarding the appropriateness of allowing swimmers to dive into the pool from a flat or elevated (blocks) position. Consider not allowing diving.

- Instruct students regarding safe movement around and inside the pool.
- Ensure there is a clearly defined emergency procedure that is appropriate to the conditions at each water venue.
- Define the boundaries of the safe swimming area. It is recommended that a rope or floats be used.
- Ensure that school pool gates are locked when pool is not in use.
- All students in the water must be in the line of sight of at least one adult at all times.
- Adopt signals for assistance required.
- Modify activities to match the skill and fitness levels of students (age and ability levels of the students and the degree of difficulty of the activities should be considered).
- Students must not enter the water until instructed to do so by the teacher or leader.
- Restrict underwater swimming to short-duration activities under close supervision.
- Consider the temperature of water.
- Ensure that the water depth is adequate for the activity.
- Observe any warnings regarding water quality.
- Ensure if flotation aids are used, that they are checked for correct fit.

Useful activity-specific links

- Australian Swimming Coaches and Teachers' Association
<http://www.ascta.com>
- Australian Water Safety Council
<http://www.watersafety.com.au/>
- AUSTSWIM
<http://www.austswim.com.au/>
- Board of Swimming Australia Pool Depth Guidelines
<http://www.qld.swimming.org.au/assets/console/customitem/attachments/SALPoolDepthGuidelines.pdf>
- Get Active Queensland Accreditation Program
<http://www.nprsr.qld.gov.au/community-programs/education-training/accreditation-program/index.html>
- Royal Life Saving
<http://www.royallifesaving.com.au/>
- School Swimming Pools - Operation and Management
<http://ppr.det.qld.gov.au/corp/infrastructure/facilities/Pages/School-Swimming-Pools---Operation-and-Management.aspx>
- Swim Australia
<http://www.swimaustralia.org.au/>
- Swimming Australia
<http://www.swimming.org.au>
- Vocational Education and Training
<http://training.gov.au>
- Workplace Health and Safety Queensland – Managing drowning risks at publicly accessible pools
http://www.deir.qld.gov.au/workplace/publications/alerts/drowning_risks/index.htm

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