**What is the Umpire Academy and who is it for?**

**UMPIRE ACADEMY**

The Umpire Academy is a programme that has been developed to expediate the progress of umpires to their C Award qualification.

The Academy is for those umpires that have been identified as having potential to move quickly through to their C Award. This may be directly from a course, or for those who have already passed Into Officiating, but they must have been identified by a Course Tutor or Mentor

**NB: The Umpire Academy is not for complete beginners**

**What is your commitment and what is involved at each of the sessions?**

The Umpire Academy is a 6-months programme, that looks at different areas of umpiring at each session.

* Fitness, whistle, voice, movement
* Minor Infringements
* Vision
* Obstruction
* Contact/contest
* Mop up, written paper test

To gain the most benefit you must be able to attend all 6 sessions. The sessions are 3 hours long with time spent on both theory and practical.

***NB: If you are unable to attend more than 4 sessions, please do not apply for the Academy.***

**What happens after the Academy?**

Towards the end of the 6-months programme, the Mentors will determine in which league and division they feel you should start umpiring competitive matches. Depending on the age and experience of the umpire, this will either be the Junior League or Oxfordshire Senior League.

The pathway from here is as follows:

* Junior umpires (suggested age 13-15) – Sunday mornings at the Junior League with a Mentor and your Assessor will tell you which division you should start in.
* Adult umpires (age 14 upwards) – Depending on experience, some will be allocated to Sunday mornings at the Junior League with progression to move to the adult Oxfordshire Senior League in Division 3, when Mentors feel they are ready.
* Those who the Assessors feel are ready to umpire Senior games will go straight to the Oxfordshire Senior League starting in Division 4 on Thursday nights or Division 3 on Wednesday nights. Again, this will be dependent on experience.

**The pathway once umpiring competitive matches.**

**Oxon Junior League** **Oxon Senior League**

Less experienced adults or older juniors (14-18) who have not passed Into Officiating Award start, on Thursday nights - Division 4

Junior umpires (c13-15) begin on Sunday mornings depending on where their Mentor says they can start. Either U12, U14 (Div 2 only) or U16 (Div 3 only)

Passed Into-Officiating award move to Wednesday nights Division 3

Progress through the age groups until able to umpire U16s Div.2 and take their Into Officiating award

Progress to Division 2

Progression once passed to move to U16s Division 1 and to make the move to Oxon Senior League – Division 3 Wednesday nights.

Juniors not wishing to progress to the senior league, continue to umpire Division 1 U16s, with a mentor, but will not be able to take their C Award until they have progressed to the senior league and through the senior pathway.

Progress to Division 1 - Monday nights (those deemed almost ready to do C Award)

Sit C Award written paper if have not already done so at the Academy.

Move to umpire Premier games, 2 weeks before C Test. C Test to be taken on Division 1

**All Umpires wishing to progress to the C Award need to understand this pathway and the commitment that is required to get their qualification.**

**Complete beginner**

Juniors (13+) or adults with no knowledge of the rules, no previous knowledge of umpiring.

**Pathway:**

* Into Officiating Course
* Discussions with course tutor as to best action going forward:
  + To take knowledge from course and practise umpiring at club training
  + Club to progress trainee, when they feel they are ready to move forwards to contact Officiating Officer to assess trainee.

**Not a complete beginner**

Junior (13+) or adult with some knowledge of the rules, who have been umpiring at club training nights, and now wish to progress

**Pathway:**

* Either Into-Officiating or C Award Course, depending on experience – discussion with Officiating Officer for ONDB with regards to the best course
* Discussions with course tutor as to best action going forward:
  + To take knowledge from course and practise umpiring at club training.
  + Club to continue to progress trainee, when they feel they are ready to contact Officiating Officer for the ONDB to assess trainee

or

* + Potential as an umpire on the Umpiring Academy
  + Invited to join the Umpiring Academy

**The Pathway for the Umpiring Academy**

The pathway can be as long or as short as an umpire wants it. If the umpire is willing to put in the effort and time required, it is generally possible to pass your C Award from the course date within a year or for some as quickly as 6 months.

For those that are struggling to commit to the various evenings you will be required to umpire on, then it can take you up to 2 years to become qualified. We can give you the knowledge and tools to progress, but ultimately it is the Trainee Umpire’s personal decision with regards to level of commitment. This may mean that you give up time playing to progress your umpiring.

ALL umpires following the Pathway whether through the Academy or not, MUST be available to umpire across the Junior League on a Sunday and/or the adult Oxfordshire Netball League on a Thursday, Wednesday or Monday night. The progression usually takes 6-10 weeks per Division. Hence, if you start at the beginning of one winter season in the Adult league, we would expect you to be taking your C Award by the summer of the same season, having progressed from Division 3 to Division 2 on a Wednesday night, then Division 1 on a Monday, with some sessions in Premier before taking your C Award.

ALL C tests will be taken in Division 1, so umpires must have progressed to a Monday night before taking your C Award test and some sessions in Premier must have been completed.

**Frequently Asked Questions**

1. **I can’t umpire on a Monday night because I play in a team in Division 1.**
   1. All tests must be taken on Division 1 with some experience gained on Premier games a few weeks before your test date. Umpires must be able to commit to a 10-week period to finish off their practice before taking their C Award test.
2. **Can I just umpire early games in Division 1 and still play Division 1 late games?**
   1. Yes, you can, but it will take you twice as long to become qualified. The test programme we’ve run over the past year has shown us that umpiring on a weekly basis, gives you the consistency you need. Umpiring every other week is not enough and those that have chosen to do this, still have not managed to reach the right standard to take their C Award.
3. **I only want to umpire on a Wednesday night.**
4. The mentor programme has been devised to progress umpires through the various stages of the umpire process. Each division will develop these skills, so that you are ready to take your C Award as quickly as possible. As you progress through the divisions the games become faster and more physical and therefore umpiring decisions need to be made much faster, the movement skills of the umpire need to be faster and game management skills need to be developed. You cannot gain this experience only umpiring in the lower divisions.
5. **I’m a beginner umpire; there is no one at my club training who can help me - what do I do?**
   1. If there is no one experienced enough to help you at your club training, we suggest that you contact a more established club and ask if you can get some help. There are clubs out there that are willing to help others. The onus is on each umpire to get the help they need to progress. If as an umpire you want to progress, find the help you need to do so. Speak to the ONDB Officiating Officer who can advise which clubs would be willing to help.
6. **I was advised on my course to go back to club to practise. I have done this what do I do now?**
   1. If you were advised by your course tutor to go back to club to practise and you feel now you have progressed enough to be considered for the Umpire Academy or to start umpiring competitive matches, please contact the ONDB Officiating Officer and advise you wish to be assessed again. They will arrange for a time for you to be seen. This maybe on your club training night or at the Assessor’s club training.

**Testimonials of current & past participants**

*As a netball coach and player, I was really pleased to have the opportunity to join the Umpire Academy. It gave me the structure and focus to concentrate on becoming a qualified umpire. It was hard work, but I was determined to pass as quickly as possible, so I put in the hours and umpired at least weekly over the season. With the support of the Mentors and Assessors, who gave me advice on a one-to-one basis, I was delighted to gain my C Award only 6 months after I had started.****Sue Lyons, Abbey NC – C Award***

*For me, the Umpire Academy worked brilliantly resulting in me passing my C Award in the proposed timeframe.  I did start the academy having already passed my Into Officiating, and having some umpiring experience already definitely helped. It did take a lot of hard work practicing at every opportunity between academies and you definitely get out what you put into it.  When the academy sessions are finished, you are assigned a mentor and matches to umpire and again invaluable help and comments from a highly experienced umpire. When moving divisions, it was good for me to have a different mentor to give feedback from another prospective.  I would thoroughly recommend the academy.  It was well run and fantastic to be taught by such qualified and experienced umpires.*

***Kay Major, Enysham NC – C Award***

*The academy gave me the confidence to get out and umpire in the leagues. It built on the basic skills I learnt on the course and gave me a safe environment to practice with very experienced umpire mentors to provide you with feedback and support. I qualified as a C award umpire just 1 year after taking the into officiating course and I do not think that would have been possible without the academy! As a bonus I really enjoyed it!*

***Georgina Nelson, Yarnton NC – C Award***

*What a great idea. Very well organised training sessions, with clear aims and objectives. Followed up with support from mentors you regularly see, who support you to achieve your qualifications. Mentoring from very experienced and internationally renowned mentor umpires, such as Jo Kelly and Carolyn Davies. Very friendly, easy to approach and with a great attitude to sharing their knowledge. The pathway to achieving your qualifications is well thought out, from course to practical sessions. Would be great to see this rolled out to other counties/nationally. A very positive learning experience.*

***Caroline Kemp, Witney NC - Working towards C Award***

*The academy was informative in several different areas; hand signals, minor/major infringements, gaining a broad understanding of the rules of netball and how to apply these during a game and how to position myself and move around court correctly, plus lots of extra tips from their broad knowledge of being an experienced umpire. The course tutors run professional and informative sessions. I am further benefitting from being assigned a mentor who is extremely helpful, patient and pro-active in helping me work towards my test. As a trainee, you need to commit to the academy totally, which may mean not playing for your team for part of the season, but the wealth of experience and support that is given will help you gain your C award in a much shorter period.****Sara Beswick, Witney NC – Working towards C Award***