

AFC  
REFEREE  
ACADEMY



# AFC REFEREE ACADEMY

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## MESSAGE FROM THE AFC PRESIDENT



*Dear friends,*

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the Asian Football Confederation's (AFC) Referee Academy, which was launched in November 2017 in Kuala Lumpur.

The AFC has set out its Vision and Mission to be the world's leading Confederation and our referees have a key role to play in realising our future ambitions for Asian football.

The Referee Academy, which is one of the world's leading facilities in this area, represents a significant step forward in developing our Continent's future officials. It exemplifies, in every way, our aspirations to see them grace the world's biggest stages.

Our officials – both men and women – continue to stand alongside with the world's best. The AFC will spare no effort as we look to grow the pool of AFC referees at world-class level and extend our development support to the AFC Member Associations.

With the emphasis on talent identification and development, the Referee Academy is driven by a comprehensive syllabus, delivered by the industry's best instructors and administered in a conducive, state-of-the-art environment.

As part of our efforts to ensure equal opportunities and cohesive development across the continent all our Member Associations has been given the chance to nominate two candidates for the Academy. I am pleased to note that the positions are open to both men and women officials.

The Academy has been designed to ensure our officials are nurtured with the tools, education and resources to meet the demands of modern refereeing and to ensure Asia continues to produce world-class officials.

I urge all our Member Associations to seize the opportunity presented by the Referee Academy. Together, I am confident that we can take Asian football to even greater heights.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Salman'.

Shaikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa  
**AFC President**

## 2. INTRODUCTION

Devised within the framework of the AFC Special Programmes, the AFC Referee Academy opened its doors on November 15, 2017 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

The Academy began its journey from the conceptualisation phase in 2015 to the implementation stage in 2017, reinforcing the AFC Vision and Mission of becoming the world’s leading confederation and its ambition of increasing the number of AFC referees officiating on the world’s biggest stages.

The institution sees the AFC take on a pioneering role globally in talent development and underlines its desire to enhance the quality of Asian refereeing by extending educational support to its Member Associations (MAs).



## 3. THE AFC REFEREE ACADEMY’S PROGRESSION

Since the AFC Referee Academy’s launch in November 2017, four batches of young referees have begun their journey to the AFC Elite Panel.

**157**

TOTAL PARTICIPANTS

90 current students and  
67 graduates



**BATCH 2017**

33 (30 males, 3 females)

**BATCH 2018**

34 (31 males, 3 females)

**BATCH 2019**

40 (35 males, 5 females)

**BATCH 4**

50 (41 males, 9 females)

**57**

REFEREES

Registered in the  
FIFA International List



**36**

OUT OF 47

Member Associations  
represented



Note: data as of May 2023

## 4. REFEREES' TESTIMONIAL

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*Batch 2018*

### **Torphong Somsing (THA)**

The AFC Referee Academy is an open new world for football referees. We have learnt about the philosophy and spirit of the laws. At the same time, the AFC Referee Academy also creates guidance in referee decision making and game management in many different dimensions. I have learnt to adapt the laws of the game correctly and at an appropriate time. I have gained valuable experience throughout the period and I am assured that I will be able to manage the game and lead my referee team efficiently.

*Batch 2019*

### **Amir Saman Soltani (IRN)**

The AFC Referee Academy is a remarkable opportunity for the development of referees in various aspects of psychology, fitness, refereeing knowledge, match management, and experience with unique teaching materials. Personally, I have gained a more professional attitude since being an Academy referee and I have made significant progress in every way. The online and onsite courses of the Academy under the supervision of the best FIFA and AFC technical, fitness, and psychology instructors are an interesting and useful experience for all referees.



*Batch 4*

### **Hanin Merhi (LBN)**



Being an AFC Referee Academy member gave me the opportunity to experience a beneficial journey that developed my knowledge and skills. It gave me the space to learn, discover and practice the best strategies that have been reflected in the improvement of my refereeing career. In addition, it enhanced my leadership skills, and developed my character through discussing multiple and important topics such as game planning, body language, command presence, and positioning, that contributes to manage any incident on the field. Cooperation with our instructors motivate us to bring out the best version of ourselves by working on our strength and weaknesses. Applying all the methods we learned helped me in improving my game control and lead my games successfully. The AFC Referee Academy is a beneficial journey that everybody should get advantage from.

## 5. PROGRAMME FEATURES



### Continuous refereeing education

- The AFC Referee Academy is the world's first educational institution to provide referees with continuous education at the Confederation level.

### Road to the AFC Elite Panel

- The AFC Referee Academy identifies potential talents for the AFC Elite Panel.

### AFC top educators

- The AFC's top educators, both in the continent and around the globe, have been engaged to design a holistic refereeing education programme, addressing specific needs and developing the required skills to officiate at top-level competitions.

### Enhanced support to the AFC MAs

- The AFC Referee Academy provides all AFC MAs with equal opportunities to high quality refereeing education.

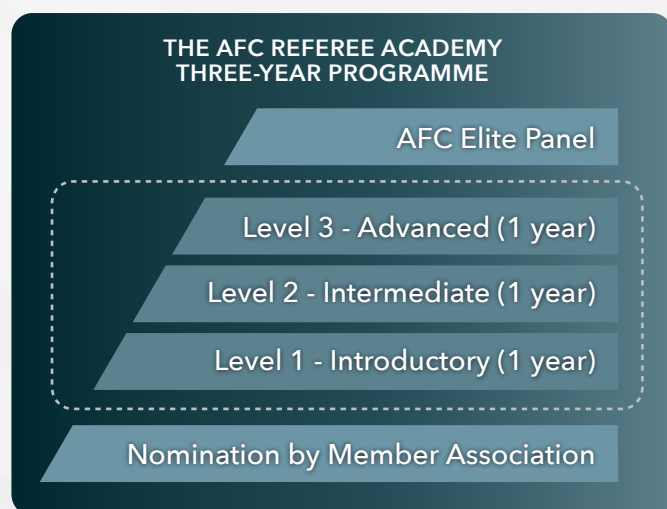
## 6. PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

### 6.1. Objectives

- To provide an elite environment in which referees have the necessary time and space to develop.
- To create an environment where all aspects of the Academy programme are challenging, developmental and inspirational.
- To offer a three-year Coaching Programme supported by Technical Education, Sports Science, Sports Psychology, Social/Emotional Programmes, including match practice and performance assessment.
- To support the development of educationally rounded referees who are independent decision makers both on and off the field.
- To provide a bank of high-performing referees capable of delivering highly credible and successful refereeing performances at MA, AFC and FIFA levels.

### 6.2. Structure and Activities

- The AFC Referee Academy curriculum consists of a three-year programme:
  - Level 1 – Introductory (one year)
  - Level 2 – Intermediate (one year)
  - Level 3 – Advanced (one year)



There are three profiles of curricular activities

- On-site modules at the AFC Headquarters (five days per module)
  - Two modules for Level 1
  - Two modules for Level 2
  - Two modules for Level 3
- Online modules conducted remotely
  - Two online modules for Level 1
  - Two online modules for Level 2
  - Two online modules for Level 3

- Remote activities monitored by AFC referee educators
  - Video assessment of performances in MA Leagues
  - Regular tutorials with the Academy groups of applied learning
  - Self-analysis of match performance
  - Self-fitness training

### 6.3. Areas of Knowledge

- Technical
- Fitness
- Psychological
- Social/Emotional

### 6.4. Passing Criteria

#### Attendance

- A minimum attendance of 75% is required

#### English

- Demonstrate basic proficiency in the English language to be able to participate in the programme

#### Performance

- Assessment of Domestic League Matches in MA's top leagues and AFC Competitions. Key criteria that will be considered includes, but is not limited to, the following areas:
  - Technical performance
  - Player/Game Management
  - Fitness, Movement & Positioning
  - Teamwork

### 6.5. AFC Educators and Specialist Support

Our selected AFC Referee Educators are very much experts in their field, highly respected and have a vast amount of knowledge and refereeing experience at the highest level of the game.

The use of external speakers, professional and specialist support from the world of football and from other sports will truly enhance the development of the AFC Academy Referees.

The collaboration with National Institutions and Professional Bodies will allow us to use state of the art technology in physical performance measurement as well as keeping abreast the most up to date educational trends and in both mental health and psychological development.

## 7. MEMBER ASSOCIATION (MA) SUPPORT

Critical to the success of match officials in the AFC Referee Academy are the strong partnership and collaboration with MAs in devising a development plan for their referees which supports and maximises their potential to become an AFC Elite Referee.

MAs play a dual role by providing a key contact point for the AFC Referee Academy staff members, as well as providing appropriate development support and refereeing experience at the national level for their referees. By working together, we will ensure that each referee is sufficiently supported throughout their time in the AFC Referee Academy.

It is recommended that MAs should continue to monitor their referee's progress and development, including providing performance data from time to time for their referees to the AFC Referee Academy.

It is important for MAs to have regular meetings with their Academy referees to check their progress and to discuss their strengths and/or any areas where further development is required. The AFC Referee Academy would welcome the opportunity to discuss and offer support to MAs to ensure that the referee's development is aligned and targeted during their time in the Academy.

The AFC Referee Academy approach is very much a supportive one and we want to ensure that all referees have an equal opportunity to maximise their potential during their time in the Academy.



### Support for Referees

MAs are encouraged, confidentially, to share their feedback or concerns with the AFC Referee Academy, such as the referee's professional/personal life that may affect their participation in the Academy programme. There may be times where a referee may not be able to participate due to their personal circumstances. The AFC Referee Academy is open to provide a flexible approach to their education by allowing the referee to defer their participation in the programme, including the opportunity to join a different Academy Batch Intake, in order for them to complete their studies when they are ready to return to refereeing.

### Deferment

The AFC Referee Academy will ensure, to the greatest extent possible, that any student who requires a deferment from the programme due to certain circumstances (e.g. pregnancy, personal issues, etc) will be accommodated to allow them to complete their programme of study while maintaining our Academy standards.

Depending on the reason for the deferment, students may be afforded the opportunity to take a leave of absence from their studies and fitness checks. The AFC Referee Academy can also offer the opportunity to join a different Academy Batch Intake in order to complete the programme when the student is ready to return to refereeing.

Applications for deferment will be considered on a case-by-case basis subject to review by the AFC Referees Department.

## 8. ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

### General Requirements

- ✓ The AFC Referee Academy is open to a maximum of two participants per MA
- ✓ At this stage, the programme is only open to men and/or women referees (not assistant referees)
- ✓ Participants must be already officiating at the highest competition/division of the MA
- ✓ If not already nominated, participants must have the potential to be nominated for the international referees list within next three years
- ✓ The MA must appoint an ARA MA Liaison Officer

### Age Limit

- ✓ Participants must be above 23 years old as at 1st January of the year of nomination, but below the age of 29 as at 1st January of the year of nomination(1)

### Fitness

- ✓ Participants must have passed the following fitness tests within three months prior to the nomination:
  - o FIFA Fitness Test (for category 1 referees);
  - o Yo-Yo Intermittent Test Level 1 (men: 17.4; women: 16.4)

### Medical

- ✓ Participants must pass a medical examination endorsing their ability to officiate

### English

- ✓ Participants must have a basic level of spoken and written English
- ✓ The submission of any official English language certificate (eg. IELTS, TOEFL, etc.) is an asset





## 9. APPLICATION AND SELECTION PROCESS

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- All interested applicants are required to submit the completed Application Form on the AFCAS system.
- Applications shall be evaluated by the AFC Referees Department based on their fulfilment of the entry requirements.
- All successful applicants will be notified by the AFC Referees Department.  
NB- The AFC Referees Department reserves all rights in respect to the selection and shortlist of applicants, at its discretion, and shall not be obliged to provide any reason for non-acceptance or rejection of applications.

## 10. EXPENSES

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- MAs shall bear the cost of international/domestic travel and incidentals for successful applicants.
- The AFC shall bear all other expenses relating to accommodation, local transportation and all other related approved expenses of successful applicants in the programme.
- Applicants shall be responsible for all costs associated with the preparation and submission of their application. The AFC shall not be responsible for any costs incurred by the applicants as a result thereof, regardless of the conduct or outcome of the selection process.

## 11. ENQUIRIES

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All interested applicants are advised to review the terms and entry requirements contained herein and make all necessary clarification before submitting their applications to the AFC.





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