

UK ATHLETICS (UKA) GOVERNING BODY ENDORSEMENT REQUIREMENTS

This guidance is to be used for all International Sportsperson governing body endorsement requests made on or after 21 May 2026.

Section 1: Overview of governing body endorsements for the International Sportsperson route of the points-based system

This page provides a brief explanation of what endorsement requirements apply in respect of the International Sportsperson route of the points-based system. The Immigration Rules for the International Sportsperson route can be found at [Appendix International Sportsperson](#).

The International Sportsperson route is for elite sportspeople and coaches who:

- are internationally established and whose employment will make a significant contribution to the development of their sport at the highest level in the UK.
- who will base themselves in the UK.
- will be filling a post that cannot be filled by a suitable British citizen or person who has a right to enter or stay in the UK without restriction.

The application process explained: migrants applying to come to the UK under the International Sportsperson route need to be sponsored by an organisation that has an International Sportsperson sponsor licence.

If you wish to sponsor such migrants, you must have a sponsor licence. Before you apply to the Home Office for a licence you must be endorsed by the **approved governing body** for your sport. This endorsement confirms to the Home Office that the application for a licence is from a genuine sports club (or equivalent) that has a legitimate requirement to bring migrants to the UK as sportspeople. Once licensed, you can assign certificates of sponsorship to a sportsperson or coach with a job offer that allows them to apply for entry clearance or permission to stay in the UK. Each individual must also have a personal endorsement from the **approved governing body** for their sport before you assign the certificate of sponsorship.

An **approved governing body** is one specified in [Appendix Sports Governing Bodies](#) of the Immigration Rules. Such a governing body must be recognised by one of the home country sports councils such as Sport England, and will have been approved by the Home Office before being included in [Appendix Sports Governing Bodies](#) of the Immigration Rules.

Approved governing bodies will work within the Home Office's '[Code of practice for sports governing bodies](#)' and must comply with any immigration regulations, UK legislation and the principles of the points-based system as detailed on the [GOV.UK](#) website.

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Length of endorsement

Governing body endorsements should be issued for a period appropriate to the period of approval for sponsorship, that is:

Type of application	Length of endorsement
Sponsor	Endorsements for sponsors will not have an end date. They will be valid for as long as the sponsor continues to hold a valid sponsor licence.
Migrant	For an initial maximum period of 3 years, with a further extension of a maximum period of 3 years. If the contract is for fewer than 3 years, it will be issued for the length of the contract.

Change of employment

If a migrant is intending to change employer, their new employer must request a new governing body endorsement. The endorsement can be issued for the length of the contract or to the maximum period permitted within the route, whichever is the shorter. The new employer must assign a new certificate of sponsorship to the migrant to allow them to apply to the Home Office for new permission to stay. Permission to stay must be granted before the migrant can start work with the new employer.

Salary

The salary should be agreed as part of the contract between the migrant and the sponsor. This and the other conditions of employment should be at least equal to those normally given to a resident worker for the type of work undertaken.

Supplementary employment

International Sportsperson migrants are eligible to undertake supplementary employment under the Home Office supplementary employment regulations. The 'Supplementary employment' section [Workers and Temporary Workers: guidance for sponsors - Sponsor an International Sportsperson guidance](#) has more information on this.

Compliance with the Code of Practice for Sports Governing Bodies

In reviewing this criteria, UK Athletics confirm we have reread the Code and agree to our roles and responsibilities as set out within. We confirm we have acted in full compliance with the principles of the Code during this annual review.

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Section 2: Requirements

This page explains the UK Athletics (UKA) requirements for the International Sportsperson route. The requirements are effective from 21 May 2026.

Only the roles listed as part of this criteria are eligible for endorsement.

These requirements are applicable to the UK.

Consultation

The following requirements have been agreed by the Home Office following consultation with UKA and the Home Countries, including England Athletics, Welsh Athletics, Scottish Athletics and Athletics Northern Ireland.

Prior to contacting the Home Office during the annual review of this criteria, UK Athletics confirm that full consultation has been carried out, this includes any organisation that could be interpreted as an interested party, such as clubs, bodies, or player associations related to Athletics in the UK.

Review

The requirements will be reviewed annually. The next review will be in April 2027.

Length of season

The season for athletics runs from January to December on an annual basis. There are several seasons for athletics during the year i.e. indoor season, outdoor season and cross-country season. The indoor season is normally in the first quarter of the calendar year. The outdoor season normally spans spring, summer and autumn. The cross-country season normally runs throughout the winter months. Due to the global nature of the international sport the competitions are spread throughout the year. Therefore, there is no natural start or end to the athletics season.

Requirements

The table below shows the endorsement requirements for sponsors and migrants:

Category	Requirement
Sponsor	Governing body endorsements will be available for the following bodies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UK Athletics; • England Athletics; • Scottish Athletics; • Welsh Athletics; • Athletics Northern Ireland.

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Category	Requirement	
Migrant	Coach	<p>Governing body endorsements will be available to salaried coaches if the individual meets all of the following requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is either qualified to UKA Event Specialist standard or holds a non-UK qualification that is at least equivalent to the UKA Event Specialist standard coaching qualification as confirmed by UKA; • has, in the last 10 years, at least 3 years experience working with world class athletes, who have competed at World Athletics Championships and Olympic/Paralympic Games; • has a proven track record working with elite athletes in delivering World and Olympic medals. <p>The sponsor must provide evidence of the individual's previous coaching experience at World Class level, and detail how their employment will make a significant contribution to the development of GB athletes and podium success.</p>
<p>Injuries, Absences and Suspensions</p> <p>Consideration will be given to the following when applying the criteria: injury; a period of maternity or paternity leave; serious illness or any legitimate medical reasons; suspension; international duty; bereavement; or family crisis.</p> <p>In order to obtain the governing body endorsement, the individual must not be subject to a provisional suspension or any unexpired period of ineligibility from playing and/or coaching activities in any jurisdiction as a result of being charged with or found guilty of a corruption offence and/or a doping offence and/or another misconduct offence.</p>		

Further information

This information is available on the UKA website at www.uka.org.uk

For any queries relating to the requirements or the endorsement process please contact:

UK ATHLETICS (UKA) GOVERNING BODY ENDORSEMENT REQUIREMENTS

UK Athletics
Human Resources Department
Athletics House
Alexander Stadium
Walsall Road
Perry Bar
Birmingham
B42 2BE

Telephone: 0121 713 8400

Email: hr@uka.org.uk

Information on visas and immigration is available on the [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) website.

Section 3: Dispute handling procedure

Where an application for a Coach covered by the requirements for a governing body endorsement as set out for International Sportsperson has been refused on the grounds that the Coach fails to meet the published requirements, the sponsor may seek a review of the application. The sponsor will have 28 days to request such a review. In these cases, UKA will refer the sponsor's evidence to an independent panel as set out below.

Where possible the sponsor's supporting evidence will be sent to the panel in advance for their consideration in order to allow an informed decision.

Sponsors should note that, in respect of any application, there will only be one panel available and the decision of the panel is final. Sponsors should therefore ensure that all evidence it wishes to present in support of its application is presented to the panel. If the sponsor has previously made an application that was unsuccessful at panel a further panel cannot be requested for the same player during the season unless his status changes and he meets the requirements whereby a new application can be submitted.

a. The Review

The request for a review may only be made by the sponsor for whom the governing body endorsement has been initially rejected by UKA.

A review shall be commenced by the appellant lodging with the UKA and Governance Director, a notice of appeal within 28 days of the decision appealed against. The notice of appeal shall:

- i. set out details of the decision appealed against and, if the whole of the decision is not appealed against, identify that part of it which is appealed against;

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- ii. set out in full the grounds of appeal and an appellant shall not be entitled to rely in any ground of appeal not set out in the notice of appeal; and
- iii. be accompanied by a deposit of £500. The panel shall have discretion as to whether the deposit is returned.

The procedure for appeal will be in accordance with the Disciplinary Regulations and the Panel shall be comprised as detailed below.

b. The Panel

The panel will be appointed by the Head of HR and Welfare. The appointed panel shall consist of: an independent chairman, one representative of UKA (who has not been involved in the initial decision) and one representative of named further representatives.

c. Power of the Panel

An endorsement request may be refused if the Coach does not meet the relevant criteria set out in this document or fails to provide the mandatory documents. UKA will notify a Coach in writing of any endorsement request which is refused setting out the reasons for refusal.

A Coach shall have 21 days from the date of the written refusal to submit an appeal in writing to UKA. A Coach may only appeal on the basis that UKA have not applied the endorsement criteria correctly.

UKA shall consider the appeal and any evidence submitted in support and shall, within 21 working days of the receipt of the appeal, notify the Coach of its decision.

d. The Decision

The panel will make a decision using the above criteria which shall be final and binding. There are no other grounds of appeal.