

This guidance is to be used for all International Sportsperson governing body endorsement requests made on or after the **23 July 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
- 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 relevant **sports 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 relevant **approved sports governing body** for their sport before you assign the certificate of sponsorship.

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

Sports 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.

Length of endorsement

Governing body endorsements will 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, the Scottish Rugby Union 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.

Section 2: Requirements

This section explains the Scottish Rugby Union requirements under the International Sportsperson route for the 2026 to 2027 season.

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

These requirements are applicable to Scotland.

Consultation

The requirements have been agreed by the Home Office following consultation through the Scottish Rugby Union and the other home nation governing bodies.

Prior to contacting the Home Office during the annual review of this criteria, the Scottish Rugby Union confirms 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 rugby union in the UK.

Review

The requirements will be reviewed annually in June of each year. Clubs or rugby bodies who wish to propose changes for the review process to consider must submit those proposals to the Scottish Rugby Union.

Length of season

The season for rugby union ordinarily runs from September to June.

Requirements

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

Category	Requirement	
Sponsor	The Scottish Rugby Union may act as a sponsor in its own right, or issue a Governing Body Endorsement for a club to become a Sponsor if the club is participating in the following leagues: i. United Rugby Championship	
Migrant	Player	<u>Initial applications</u> In order for a migrant endorsement to be awarded, the player must meet one of the requirements listed below: i. A player must have played in at least one World Rugby ranking international

		match (15-a-side), during the 24 months immediately prior to the date of application from one of the countries listed in the top 12 of the Men's World Rugby Rankings (https://www.world.rugby/rankings) as of the 1st July 2026. ii. A player must have played in at least three World Rugby ranking international matches (15-a-side), during the 24 months immediately prior to the date of application from one of the following countries ranking between 13th to 24th (inclusive) in the Men's World Rugby Rankings (https://www.world.rugby/rankings) as of the 1st July 2026. iii. A player must have played in at least one World Rugby ranking international match (15-a-side), during the 24 months immediately prior to the date of application from one of the countries ranking between 13th to 24th (inclusive) of the Men's World Rugby Rankings (https://www.world.rugby/rankings) as of the 1st July 2026, and have played at least 50% of games, during the 24 months immediately prior to the application in one of the leagues listed in v. below. iv. A player must have played in at least three World Rugby ranking international matches (15-a-side), during the 24 months immediately prior to the date of application for one of the countries listed at 25th or below in the Men's World Rugby Rankings (https://www.world.rugby/rankings), as of the 1st July 2026, and have played in a minimum of 10 full international matches (15-a-side), during their playing career. v. A player must have played in at least
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		75% of matches, during the 24 months immediately prior to the date of application in the following leagues: • English Champ Rugby • English PREM and EPCR Competitions • French Top 14 and EPCR Competitions • French Pro D2 • Japan Rugby League One • Super Rugby • New Zealand National Provincial Championship • Currie Cup Premier Division • United Rugby Championship and EPCR Competitions • Super Rygbi Cymru vi. A player aged 23 or under (on the date of application), must have played in at least 40% of matches, during the 24 months immediately prior to the date of application in the leagues listed in v. above. vii. Should a player aged 23 or under (on the date of application) not have met the criteria as set out in vi. above, they must have played in at least 80% of World Rugby sanctioned U20 international match (15-a-side), during the period in which the player was eligible to participate in such fixtures. ‘EPCR Competitions’ shall mean the EPCR Challenge Cup and the EPCR Champions Cup (including the play-off matches for a position in the Champions Cup). <u>Extension or change of employment application</u>
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		In order for a migrant endorsement to be awarded for an extension or change of employment application, the player must: i. continue to meet the initial application requirements, or ii. have played in at least 75% of matches for their sponsor for the period of their previous permission in one of the following leagues: • English Champ and Premiership Cup • English PREM and EPCR Competitions • United Rugby Championship and EPCR Competitions • Super Rygbi Cymru. Loans (temporary change of employment) A player may move temporarily to another club in the UK on a loan basis. The loaning club shall retain overall responsibility for the player (as the player's employer and sponsor) and the player will be granted permission to move temporarily under the provisions of their current leave, provided that the Certificate of Sponsorship issued by the loaning club is valid for the duration of the loan period. The player must be registered with the relevant governing body and club for whom they are competing, for the duration of the loan period. If the loan is subsequently made permanent, the new club will, at this time, be required to submit a new governing body endorsement application on behalf of the player to the relevant governing body and the player must be approved for a new grant of permission under the International Sports person route by the Home Office, before the player will be eligible to play as a permanent employee of that new club.
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	Director of Rugby/Head Coach	Initial, extension or change of employment applications In order for a migrant endorsement to be awarded to a Director of Rugby/Head Coach, a migrant must meet one of the requirements listed below: • A migrant must have been contracted in a Director of Rugby or Head Coach role to a senior 15-a-side full international team that is currently ranked in the top 12 of the Men's World Rugby rankings https://www.world.rugby/rankings), as of the 1st July 2026 for a minimum of 12 months, during the 48 months immediately prior to the date of application. OR • A migrant must have been contracted in a Director of Rugby or Head Coach role to a U20 or Sevens international team competing in the U20 6 Nations, U20 Rugby Championship, Junior World Cup or World Rugby SVNS Series for a minimum of 12 months during the 48 months immediately prior to the date of application. OR • A migrant must have been contracted in a Director of Rugby or Head Coach role for a minimum of 12 months, during the 48 months immediately prior to the date of application for a team that is currently competing in one of the following leagues: • English Champ Rugby • English PREM • French Top 14 • French Pro D2 • Japan Rugby League One • Super Rugby • New Zealand National Provincial Championship • Currie Cup Premier Division
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		• United Rugby Championship • Super Rygbi Cymru It should be noted that a club/union may have only one migrant endorsement for a Director of Rugby and one for a Head Coach. In addition, no endorsements are available for player/coaches. Applications will only be considered as a player or as a Director of Rugby or Head Coach.
	Assistant Coach / Skills Coach	Initial, extension or change of employment applications In order for a migrant endorsement to be awarded to an Assistant Coach / Skills Coach, a migrant must meet one of the requirements listed below: • A migrant must have been contracted in an Assistant Coach / Skills Coach role to a senior 15-a-side full international team that is currently ranked in the top 12 of the Men's World Rugby rankings (https://www.world.rugby/rankings), as of the 1st July 2026, for a minimum of 12 months, during the 48 months immediately prior to the date of application. OR • A migrant must have been contracted in an Assistant Coach / Skills Coach role to a U20 or Sevens international team competing in the U20 6 Nations, U20 Rugby Championship, Junior World Cup or World Rugby SVNS Series for a minimum of 12 months during the 48 months immediately prior to the date of application. OR • A migrant must have been contracted in an Assistant Coach / Skills Coach role for a minimum of 12 months, during the 48 months immediately prior to the date of application for a team that is currently

		competing in one of the following leagues: • English Champ Rugby • English PREM • French Top 14 • French Pro D2 • Japan Rugby League One • Super Rugby • New Zealand National Provincial Championship • Currie Cup Premier Division • United Rugby Championship • Super Rygbi Cymru It should be noted that no endorsements are available for player/coaches. Applications will only be considered as a player or as an Assistant Coach / Skills Coach.
	Head of Performance	Initial, extension or change of employment applications In order for a migrant endorsement to be awarded to a Head of Performance, a migrant must meet one of the requirements listed below: • A migrant must have been contracted in a Head of Performance role to a senior 15-a-side full international team that is currently ranked in the top 12 of the Men's World Rugby rankings (https://www.world.rugby/rankings), as of the 1st July 2026, for a minimum of 24 months, during the 48 months immediately prior to the date of application. OR • A migrant must have been contracted in a Head of Performance role to a U20 or Sevens international team competing in the U20 6 Nations, U20 Rugby Championship, Junior World Cup or World Rugby SVNS Series for a minimum of 24 months during the 48 months immediately prior to the date of application.

		OR • A migrant must have been contracted in a Head of Performance role for a minimum of 24 months, during the 48 months immediately prior to the date of application for a team that is currently competing in one of the following leagues: • English Champ Rugby • English PREM • French Top 14 • French Pro D2 • Japan Rugby League One • Super Rugby • New Zealand National Provincial Championship • Currie Cup Premier Division • United Rugby Championship • Super Rygbi Cymru In addition, the migrant must hold a degree in Sports and Exercise Science, Performance Analysis or a related discipline. It should be noted that a club/union may have only one migrant endorsement for a Head of Performance role.
Injuries, Absences and Suspension Injuries for a Player Matches/games for which the player was unavailable for selection are to be excluded when calculating the player's appearance percentage. Written evidence supporting this, setting out the games missed and the reason(s), must be provided by the player's National Association or club doctor to the Scottish Rugby Union. Suspensions and Absences for all Migrants 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. Each case will be judged on the individual circumstances and a decision made on this basis.		

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.

Dispute handling procedures

Where an application for either a player to play in a team or a coach to coach a team in one of the leagues covered by the requirements for a governing body endorsement (or for the Scottish Rugby Union itself) as set out for International Sportsperson has been refused on the grounds that the player or 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 the Scottish Rugby Union 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 the Scottish Rugby Union.

A review shall be commenced by the appellant lodging with Scottish Rugby Union Disciplinary Manager, 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;

- 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 £1000. The panel shall have discretion as to whether the deposit is returned.

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

b. The Panel

The panel will be appointed by the Chair of the SRU Discipline Panel. The appointed panel shall consist of:

- (i) a Chairman who shall be legally qualified and independent of the SRU Board, SR Ltd Board, and SRU Executive staff;
- (ii) an SRU Board or SR Ltd Board member; and
- (iii) a suitably experienced rugby person at the discretion of the Chair of the SRU Discipline Panel.

c. Power of the Panel

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

An individual shall have 28 days from the date of the written refusal to submit an appeal in writing to the SRU. An individual may only appeal on the basis that the SRU have not applied the endorsement criteria correctly.

The Panel shall consider the appeal and any evidence submitted in support and shall, as far as practicably possible, within 7 working days of the receipt of the appeal, notify the Player of its decision.

d. The Decision

The panel will make a decision using only the above criteria which shall be final and binding.

Section 3: Process for applying for an endorsement

How to apply for governing body endorsements for International Sportsperson sponsor applications

Sponsors wishing to apply for governing body endorsements should apply in writing to Mr Richard McGhee, Regulatory and Technical Executive, Scottish Rugby Union, Scottish Gas Murrayfield, Edinburgh, EH12 5PJ with full details.

Further information

This information is available on the Scottish Rugby Union website [here](#).

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

Richard McGhee

Regulatory and Technical Executive

Scottish Rugby Union

Scottish Gas Murrayfield

Edinburgh EH12 5PJ

E: richard.mcghee@sru.org.uk

Information on visas and immigration is available on the [GOV.UK](#) website.