

Governing Body Endorsement criteria for sportspeople under the International Sportsperson route and employed by the Scottish Rugby Union

This guidance is to be used for all International Sportsperson governing body endorsement requests made on or after **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
- 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 relevant **approved 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 license.
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 2026-2027 season. This guidance is to be used for all International Sportsperson governing body endorsement requests made on or after 1 July 2026.

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 Celtic Challenge	
Migrant	Player	Initial applications 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 test match (15-a-side), during the 24 months immediately prior to

		the date of application, for one of the countries listed in the top 10 of the Women'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 test matches (15-a-side), during the 24 months immediately prior to the date of application, for one of the countries ranking between 11th to 18th (inclusive) of the Women'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, for one of the unions listed in ii. above, and have played at least 50% of games, during the 24 months immediately prior to the date of application, in one of the leagues listed in iv. below. iv. A player must have played in at least 75% of matches, during the 24 months immediately prior to the date of application in the following leagues: • Premiership Women's Rugby • French Élite 1 Féminine League • New Zealand Super Rugby Aupiki • Australian Super W • South African Women's Premier Division v. A player must have played in at least 75% of World Rugby SVNS Tournaments (7-a-side) during the 24 months immediately prior to the date of application. Extension or change of employment application 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.
	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: ii. A migrant must have been contracted in a Director of Rugby or Head Coach role to a (a) senior male 15-a-side full international team that is currently ranked in the top 12 of the World Rugby rankings for a minimum of 12 months; or (b) a senior female 15 a-side full international team that is currently ranked in the top 10 of the World Rugby rankings for a minimum of 12 months; in each case, during the 48 months immediately prior to the date of application. OR iii. 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 competitions: • Australian Super W • Premiership Women's Rugby • French Élite 1 Féminine League • New Zealand Super Rugby Aupiki • South African Women's Premier Division • English PREM • English Champ Rugby • French Top 14 • French Pro D2 • Japan Rugby League One • Super Rugby • Currie Cup Premier Division • United Rugby Championship • United States MLR • Super Rygbi CymruWorld Rugby SVNS 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: i. A migrant must have been contracted in an Assistant Coach / Skills Coach role to a; (a)

		senior male 15-a-side full international team that is currently ranked in the top 12 of the World Rugby rankings for a minimum of 12 months; or (b) a senior female 15 a-side full international team that is currently ranked in the top 10 of the World Rugby rankings for a minimum of 12 months; in each case, during the 48 months immediately prior to the date of application. OR ii. 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 competitions: • Australian Super W • Premiership Women's Rugby • French Élite 1 Féminine League • New Zealand Super Rugby Aupiki • South Africa Women's Premier Division • English PREM • English Champ Rugby • French Top 14 • French Pro D2 • Japan Rugby League One • Super Rugby • Currie Cup Premier Division • United Rugby Championship • United States MLR • Super Rygbi CymruWorld Rugby SVNS 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: i. A migrant must have been contracted in a Head of Performance role to a: (a) senior male 15-a-side full international team that is currently ranked in the top 12 of the World Rugby rankings for a minimum of 24 months; or (b) a senior female 15 a-side full international team that is

		currently ranked in the top 10 of the World Rugby rankings for a minimum of 24 months; in each case, during the 48 months immediately prior to the date of application. OR ii. 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 competitions: • Australian Super W • Premiership Women's Rugby • French Élite 1 Féminine League • New Zealand Super Rugby Aupiki • South African Women's Premier Division • English Champ Rugby • English PREM • French Top 14 • French Pro D2 • Japan Rugby League One • Super Rugby • Currie Cup Premier Division • United Rugby Championship • United States MLR • Super Rygbi CymruWorld Rugby SVNS In addition, the migrant must hold a degree in Sports and Exercise Science or 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.
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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 Scottish Rugby Union.

Suspension 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 and/or another misconduct 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 Sportspersons has been refused on the grounds that the player or non-playing staff member fails to meet the published requirements, the sponsor may seek a review of the application. The sponsor concerned may only seek a review of the application on the basis that the SRU have not applied the endorsement criteria correctly. The sponsor will have 28 days from the date which a decision is notified 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 following a review by an independent panel, a further panel cannot be requested for the same migrant during the season unless their status changes and they meet 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 the SRU Discipline 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, specifying the basis on which the Sponsor considers that the SRU have not applied the endorsement criteria correctly. An appellant shall not be entitled to rely on any ground of appeal not set out in the notice of appeal; and
- iii. be accompanied by a deposit of £1,000. The panel shall have discretion as to whether the deposit is returned.

The procedure for appeal will be in accordance with the SRU 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 Chair 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

The Panel shall consider the appeal, and any evidence submitted in support, and shall, within 7 working days of the receipt of the appeal, notify the individual of its decision. The Panel may only allow an appeal on the basis that the SRU have not applied the endorsement criteria correctly.

d. The Decision

The Panel will make a decision, solely on the basis of the criteria set out in Section 2, and its decision shall be final and binding.

Section 3: Process for applying for a 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

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Scottish Rugby Union

Scottish Gas Murrayfield

Edinburgh EH12 5PJ

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