

## **The Football Association – Governing Body Endorsement Requirements for Women’s Team Manager**

### **THE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION WOMEN’S TEAM MANAGER – POINTS BASED SYSTEM 2025/2026 SEASON**

The rules and criteria set out in this document will apply for the 2025/26 season and will be effective from 1 June 2025. The criteria will be reviewed across the 2025/26 season in order that revised criteria can be issued in advance of the summer transfer window in 2026.

For any queries regarding these criteria or the application process, please contact Freddie Carter (Player Status Department) at [Freddie.Carter@thefa.com](mailto:Freddie.Carter@thefa.com) (or [GBE@thefa.com](mailto:GBE@thefa.com))

The FA is the approved governing body for Football in England. The FA has the ability (subject to other requirements being met) to issue a Governing Body Endorsement for a player, coach or manager who is intended to participate in any of the following:

- any match that has been organised and/or sanctioned by The FA, FIFA or UEFA;
- any match that has been organised by either the Women’s Super League or the Women’s Championship and that has also been sanctioned by The FA; or
- any match or category of match whereby consent of the FA has been given for that player, coach or manager’s club to play.

Please note that this guidance should be reviewed in conjunction with the relevant advice issued by the Home Office. The FA is not registered to give advice on immigration routes or processes or to advise on an individual’s immigration status and clubs should fully apprise themselves of their duties and responsibilities as sponsors. Information on aspects of immigration policy and law can be found on the Home Office website at [www.gov.uk/browse/visas-immigration](https://www.gov.uk/browse/visas-immigration). You may also wish to seek advice from an Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC) registered advisor or someone who is appropriately qualified but otherwise exempt from such a registration requirement, for example, a qualified solicitor. The UK Visas and Immigration Centre can be contacted on 0300 123 2241.

Clubs are advised to allow sufficient time for entry clearance or permission to stay to be granted. The time taken may vary depending upon where the Manager is making his or her application from. A guide to visa processing times is available on the Home Office website at: [www.gov.uk/visa-processingtimes](https://www.gov.uk/visa-processingtimes).

Please note that an individual’s personal and immigration history may be taken into account when their application is being considered.

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.

In order to obtain the GBE, 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.

In reviewing this criteria, the Football Association confirm we have reread the Code of Practice for Sports Governing Bodies 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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Prior to contacting the Home Office during the annual review of this criteria, the Football Association 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 football in the UK. The Football Association confirms the Irish Football Association, the Scottish Football Association, and the Football Association of Wales have been fully consulted regarding the contents of this document.

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### **GLOSSARY**

**Aggregated FIFA Women’s World Rankings** means the [FIFA](#) Women’s World Rankings for senior women’s international teams aggregated across the preceding two year period and published by The FA.

**Band 1** means the English Women’s Super League, French Feminine Division 1, German Frauen Bundesliga, National Women’s Soccer League, Spanish Women’s Primera Division, Swedish Damallsvenskan, the Vrouwen Eredivisie and the Italian Femminile Serie A.

**Band 2** means Australian W League, Brazilian Feminio Serie A, Danish Elitedivisionen, Japanese WE League, Mexican Liga MX Femenil and Norwegian Toppserien.

**Band 3** means all senior domestic leagues not in Band 1 or Band 2.

**Certificate of Sponsorship** means a certificate assigned to a Manager pursuant to a club’s Sponsor’s Licence.

**Exceptions Panel** means a panel appointed by The FA to consider an application for a GBE in accordance with paragraphs 19 to 26.

**Existing Manager** means a first team manager or first team head coach of a football club who has Overall Responsibility.

**Extended GBE** means a new GBE applied for by a Club in respect of a Manager who has already received a GBE for that Club which is due to expire.

**GBE** means Governing Body Endorsement.

**Home Association** means The Scottish Football Association, the Football Association of Wales and The Irish Football Association.

**ISP** means the International Sportsperson route.

**ISP (long term)** means an application for a period of stay exceeding 12 months.

**ISP (short term)** means an application for a period of stay of 12 months or less.

**Managed** means has been a first team manager or first team head coach and, in that role, had Overall Responsibility.

**Manager** means any first team manager or first team head coach who is not a citizen of the United Kingdom or Ireland and has not acquired permanent residence in the United Kingdom, been granted pre-settled status or settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme.

**Overall Responsibility** means ultimate responsibility and decision making authority for the first team and first team selection. For the avoidance of doubt, Overall Responsibility does not mean sole responsibility for the first team and first team selection. A Manager can have Overall Responsibility even where he or she is advised or assisted by others (for example, assistant managers or assistant first team coaches).

**PBS** means the Home Office Points Based System.

**Prescribed Time** means (a) a cumulative total of at least 36 months within the Reference Period or (b) a consecutive total of at least 24 months within the Reference Period.

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*Guidance: Where the Manager has moved between clubs during the Reference Period, the time spent at those clubs shall be considered ‘consecutive’ for the purposes of limb (b) if:*

- (i) the former club and subsequent club were members of a league in the same Band at the time of the move, or the subsequent club was a member of a league in a higher Band than the former club at the time of the move; and*
- (ii) no more than 7 days passed between the termination of the Manager’s contract with the former club and the commencement of the Manager’s contract with the subsequent club*

**Reference Period** means the five year period immediately prior to the date of the application for a GBE.

**Relevant Interested Parties** means a representative of (i) the league in which the Manager works or will work if the application for a GBE is successful, and (ii) the League Managers Association.

**Season** means the period between 1 June and 31 May (inclusive). For example, a reference to the 2025/26 Season means 1 June 2025 to 31 May 2026.

**Sponsor’s Licence** means a licence obtained from the Home Office under the PBS.

**Stakeholders** means The FA, The FA Women’s Super League, The FA Women’s Championship and The League Managers Association.

**The FA** means the Football Association.

**Top League** means any league in Band 1 or Band 2.

## **GOVERNING BODY ENDORSEMENT REQUIREMENTS**

### **GBE STATUS**

1. Before a Manager is permitted to undertake any employment duties for the club, the club must have obtained a GBE in respect of the Manager and the Manager must have been assigned a Certificate of Sponsorship by that club and secured permission to stay under ISP of the PBS.
2. A club can apply for a GBE for a Manager at any time during the Season. In order to apply for a GBE, a club must hold a valid Sponsor’s Licence under ISP of the PBS. In order to apply for and obtain a valid Sponsor’s Licence, a club must have obtained an endorsement letter for a Sponsor’s Licence from the FA. If a Club’s Sponsor’s Licence is revoked, any Manager who has obtained a GBE in order to play for the Club may have his or her permission curtailed and may have to make a change in employment application which must be granted before the Manager can undertake any employment duties for the new club.
3. Clubs in the FA Women’s Super League or FA Women’s Championship are eligible for a Sponsor’s Licence. Clubs in other leagues within the women’s football pyramid are not permitted to employ Managers unless:
  - a) The Manager has obtained a visa outside the GBE system which permits them to carry out that role for the club (on such terms as they in fact carry out that role); and
  - b) The Manager’s employment by the club complies with the terms and conditions of their visa and any relevant immigration law, including the Immigration Rules (or any successor legislation).
4. If The FA grants an application for a GBE for a Manager in accordance with these criteria, the club is permitted to assign a Certificate of Sponsorship to the Manager for the period covered by the GBE. The GBE must be presented to the Home Office when the club applies for entry clearance on behalf of a Manager, which must be done within three months of a Certificate of Sponsorship being assigned. Any Certificate of Sponsorship and a copy of the Manager’s biometric residence permit must be submitted to The FA by the club within three months of being assigned. Clubs must keep a copy of the relevant page of the Manager’s passport evidencing their entitlement to work and contact details for the Manager, which must be provided to The FA upon request. The club will also have to comply with any other criteria set by the Home Office in order to secure permission to stay under ISP of the PBS.
5. A GBE under ISP of the PBS will be granted for three years or the length of the Manager’s contract (whichever is shorter). A Manager will not be eligible to undertake employment duties for the club beyond the expiry date of the GBE unless the club has applied for and obtained an Extended GBE before the existing GBE has expired in accordance with these criteria and the PBS.

### **Extensions to or transfers of a GBE**

6. An Extended GBE under ISP of the PBS can be obtained for three years or the length of the Manager’s contract (whichever is shorter).
7. A Manager who has been granted a GBE under ISP (short term) of the PBS can apply (in country) to transfer to a GBE under ISP (long term) of the PBS. The club must submit a new application for a GBE and provide a pass certificate, or other written confirmation containing

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an appropriate reference number, from an accredited English language test centre that the Manager has passed the English language test required to secure permission to stay under ISP of the PBS (in addition to the documents listed in paragraph 16).

8. A Manager who has been granted a GBE must submit a new application for a GBE if he or she wishes to take up that role with another club. If the GBE is granted, the Manager must submit a change of employment application to the Home Office, which must be granted before the Manager can undertake any employment duties for the new club.
9. Any application for an Extended GBE (in accordance with paragraph 6), a transfer of a GBE (in accordance with paragraph 7) or a new club application for a GBE (in accordance with paragraph 8) shall be considered as follows:
  - a) If the Manager meets the criteria set out in paragraph 16, a new or Extended GBE will be granted (as appropriate).
  - b) If the Manager does not meet the criteria set out in paragraph 16, the club must submit any information which it considers to be relevant to its application to The FA. The FA will then provide this information to the Relevant Interested Parties by email. The FA and the Relevant Interested Parties shall consider this information, and any other information which they deem to be relevant in their absolute discretion, to determine whether the Manager remains of sufficient quality to be awarded a GBE. The FA and the Relevant Interested Parties shall make a decision by simple majority and if a majority of The FA and the Relevant Interested Parties recommend that the Manager should be awarded a GBE, a new or Extended GBE will be granted (as appropriate).
  - c) The Manager shall not have a new or Extended GBE granted (as appropriate) other than in accordance with paragraphs 9.a) or 9.b) above.
10. If a Manager:
  - a) does not turn up for employment;
  - b) is absent for more than 10 working days without permission;
  - c) has his or her contract terminated during the period that a GBE is effective;
  - d) is no longer sponsored by the club for any other reason; or
  - e) experiences any significant changes in circumstances (such as a change in job title, salary or location of employment),

the club must inform the Home Office within 10 days.

11. The club must also inform the Home Office if there is a change of circumstances at the club within 20 working days. A change in circumstances might include changes of name, address or contact details, changes in structure (including mergers, takeovers and de-mergers), changes in financial circumstances (such as administration, receivership, company voluntary arrangement, debt arrangement scheme, liquidation or sequestration)

### **APPLICATION PROCESS**

12. A club must submit a fully completed application form for a GBE (see Appendix 1) to The FA’s Player Status Department along with any evidence in support of the application.
13. The club must also pay an administration fee of £500 plus VAT for each application within 14 days of the date on which the decision is communicated to the club. Each club shall bear its own costs in respect of any application.

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14. If any information submitted as part of the GBE application process is amended (including the terms and conditions of a Manager’s contract or scope, job description or nature of the role):
  - a) before a GBE has granted and before the Manager has commenced his or her role, the club must inform The FA who may require a new application to be submitted (and a new fee to be paid);
  - b) after a GBE has been granted but before the Manager has commenced his or her role, the club must inform The FA who may require a new application to be submitted (and a new fee to be paid); or
  - c) after a GBE has been granted and after the Manager has commenced his or her role, the club must inform the Home Office via the Sponsorship Management System. The Home Office will confirm whether they require a new application to be submitted (and a new fee to be paid).
15. If a new application is required in accordance with paragraphs 14.b) or 14.c), it will be assessed by reference to the criteria set out in this document and the Club must comply with paragraphs 18-20 of these criteria in respect of the new application. The FA may also inform the Home Office who may curtail the Manager’s right to work.

### **CRITERIA**

16. A Manager will only be granted a GBE if:
  - a) The Manager will have Overall Responsibility for the first team of the applicant club.
  - b) The Manager holds a UEFA professional licence/diploma or equivalent. The FA may consult with any relevant governing body to determine whether a qualification can be considered as an ‘equivalent’.
  - c) The applicant club does not have an Existing Manager (or, if the club does have an Existing Manager, the club has confirmed to The FA in writing that the Existing Manager will not be in post when the Manager commences his or her employment). Where a club has been issued with a GBE for an Existing Manager, a GBE will not be granted in respect of a new Manager until The FA has received written confirmation that the Existing Manager is no longer working in that capacity for the club or will not be in post when the Manager commences his or her employment.
  - d) The Manager has:
    - i. Managed a club in a Top League for the Prescribed Time; or
    - ii. Managed an international team for the Prescribed Time which had an Aggregated FIFA Women’s World Ranking of 40 or above for the entire Prescribed Time.
17. If a Manager is not granted a GBE in accordance with paragraph 16 above, the Club may request that an Exceptions Panel consider the application. If the Club requests an Exceptions Panel, the procedure in paragraph 19 to 26 shall apply.
18. If a Manager is not granted a GBE in accordance with paragraphs 16 or 19 to 26, he or she will have no further opportunity to apply for a GBE and will not be eligible to be the Manager for the applicant club.

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### **EXCEPTIONS PANELS**

19. If a club requests an Exceptions Panel in accordance with paragraph 17, The FA will appoint an independent panel of three members, which shall include one legally qualified chair and two panel members who have relevant experience at the top level of the game (the “**Panel Members**”).
20. A fee of £5,000 plus VAT will be charged for every Exceptions Panel, which must be paid by the club before the application will be considered by the Exceptions Panel.
21. The club will be notified of the identity of the Panel Members and have the opportunity to challenge the appointment of any Panel Member on the basis of an actual or perceived conflict of interest. Each Panel Member shall also have the opportunity to declare an actual or perceived conflict of interest (of him or herself or any other Panel Member) to the Chair or, if the conflict of interest relates to the Chair, to The FA. The Chair, or The FA respectively, shall then determine whether the Panel Member should be excluded from participating in the application. If the Panel Member is excluded from participating in the application, The FA will appoint a replacement Panel Member (to whom this paragraph shall also apply).
22. The Exceptions Panel can request any further information from The FA’s Player Status Department, the applicant club, or any third party (via The FA’s Player Status Department) that it deems necessary, in its absolute discretion, in order to make its decision. If an Exceptions Panel meeting has been convened or is in progress when a request for further information is made, the Chair may adjourn the meeting to allow the information to be gathered. Where it is able to do so, the applicant club or the secretariat will supply the further information to the Exceptions Panel within a reasonable timescale.
23. The Exceptions Panel shall only recommend to The FA that a GBE be granted if it is satisfied that the Manager is of the highest calibre and is able to contribute significantly to the development of the game at the top level in England. In doing so, the Exceptions Panel will have regard to the following (and any other matters that the Exceptions Panel determine to be relevant in its absolute discretion):
  - a) where the Manager was not previously a first team manager or head coach or an assistant first team manager or head coach, the position held by the Manager;
  - b) the league or leagues in which the Manager has Managed during the Reference Period;
  - c) the participation of the club(s) Managed by the Manager during the Reference Period in competitive continental or world competition during the Manager’s tenure;
  - d) the Aggregated FIFA Women’s World Ranking of any international team or teams that the Manager has Managed during the Reference Period;
  - e) the participation of the international team(s) Managed by the Manager in competitive continental and world competition during the by the Manager’s tenure;
  - f) the reasons why the automatic criteria (as set out at paragraph 16) have not been met.
24. The Exceptions Panel will make its decision, based on the papers submitted to it, at an in-person or virtual meeting at which The FA will provide appropriate secretarial support. Each Panel Member has one vote and the decision will be made by a simple majority, with the chair having a casting vote.



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25. If the Exceptions Panel recommends to The FA that a GBE be granted, The FA will consider whether to grant a GBE (but is under no obligation to do so).
26. Written reasons for the decision will be supplied by the Exceptions Panel to the applicant club. Written reasons will also be provided to the relevant league Stakeholder with a redacted copy provided (on a confidential basis) to all Stakeholders.