

The Football Association - Governing Body Endorsement Requirements for Youth Non-Playing Staff Members

THE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION MEN'S YOUTH NON-PLAYING STAFF - POINTS BASED SYSTEM 2026/2027 SEASON

The rules and criteria set out in this document will apply for the 2026/27 season and will be effective from 15 June 2026. The criteria will be reviewed across the 2026/27 season in order that revised criteria can be issued in advance of the summer transfer window in 2027.

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

The FA is the approved governing body for Football in the 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 Premier League or the English Football League 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. 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 individual is making his or her application from. A guide to visa processing times is available on the Home Office website at: www.gov.uk/government/collections/visa-processing-times

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

Academy has the meaning set out in the Youth Development Rules.

Academy Manager means the official responsible for the strategic leadership and operation of a club's Academy, whose role and responsibilities is set out in the Youth Development Rules.

Certificate of Sponsorship means a certificate assigned to a Youth Non-Playing Staff Member 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 20-27.

Extended GBE means a new GBE applied for by a Club in respect of a Youth Non-Playing Staff Member who has already received a GBE, in a Youth Non-Playing Staff role, for that Club which is due to expire.

Foundation Phase Coach means a coach in the Foundation Phase of the Premier League Games Programme, whose role and responsibilities is set out in the Youth Development Rules.

GBE means Governing Body Endorsement.

Goalkeeping Coach means a goalkeeping coach at an academy, whose role and responsibilities is set out in the Youth Development Rules.

Head of Academy Coaching means an official so defined in the Youth Development Rules, whose role and responsibilities is set out in the Youth Development Rules.

Head of Recruitment means an official so defined in the Youth Development Rules, whose role and responsibilities is set out in the Youth Development Rules.

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.

Lead Sports Scientist means an official so defined in the Youth Development Rules, whose role and responsibilities is set out in the Youth Development Rules.

Lead Strength and Conditioning Coach means the official so defined in the Youth Development Rules, whose role and responsibilities is set out in the Youth Development Rules.

PBS means the Home Office Points Based System.

Performance Analyst means an official so defined in the Youth Development Rules, whose role and responsibilities is set out in the Youth Development Rules.

Relevant Interested Parties means a representative of (i) the league in which the Manager is employed, or will be employed 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 2026/27 Season means 1 June 2026 to 31 May 2027.

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Senior Professional Development Coach means an official so defined in the Youth Development Rules, whose role and responsibilities is set out in the Youth Development Rules.

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

Stakeholders means The FA, The Premier League, The English Football League and The League Manager's Association.

The FA means the Football Association.

Youth Development and Professional Development Phase Coach means a coach in the Youth Development and Professional Development Phase of the Premier League Games Programme, whose role and responsibilities are set out in the Youth Development Rules.

Youth Development Rules means the Premier League and English Football League's Youth Development Rules.

Youth Non-Playing Staff Member means any member of staff fulfilling the role of Appendix 1

GOVERNING BODY ENDORSEMENT REQUIREMENTS

GBE STATUS

1. Before a Youth Non-Playing Staff Member is permitted to undertake any employment duties for the club, the club must have obtained a GBE in respect of the Youth Non-Playing Staff Member and the Youth Non-Playing Staff Member must have been assigned a Certificate of Sponsorship by that club and secured permission to stay under the International Sportsperson route (ISP) of the PBS.
2. A club can apply for a GBE for a Youth Non-Playing Staff Member 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 Youth Non-Playing Staff Member 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 Youth Non-Playing Staff Member can undertake any employment duties for the new club.
3. Clubs in the Premier League or English Football League are eligible for a Sponsor's Licence. Clubs in other leagues within the men's football pyramid are not permitted to employ Youth Non-Playing Staff Members unless:
 - a) The Youth Non-Playing Staff Member 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 Youth Non-Playing Staff Member'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 Youth Non-Playing Staff Member in accordance with these criteria, the club is permitted to assign a Certificate of Sponsorship to the Youth Non-Playing Staff Member 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 Youth Non-Playing Staff Member, which must be done within three months of a Certificate of Sponsorship being assigned. Any Certificate of Sponsorship and a copy of the Youth Non-Playing Staff Member'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 Youth Non-Playing Staff Member's passport evidencing their entitlement to work and contact details for the Youth Non-Playing Staff Member, 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 Youth Non-Playing Staff Member's contract (whichever is shorter). A Youth Non-Playing Staff Member 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.

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Extensions to or transfers of a GBE

6. An application for an Extended GBE or to transfer a GBE may only be made under the GBE criteria pursuant to which the individual was originally endorsed. Where an individual seeks an extension or transfer in respect of a different role (for example, as a Manager), the individual must satisfy the full requirements of the applicable GBE criteria for that role.
7. An Extended GBE under ISP of the PBS can be obtained for three years or the length of the Youth Non-Playing Staff Member's contract (whichever is shorter).
8. A Youth Non-Playing Staff Member 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 an appropriate reference number, from an accredited English language test centre that the Youth Non-Playing Staff Member has passed the English language test required to secure permission to stay under ISP (long term) of the PBS (in addition to the documents listed in paragraph 13).
9. A Youth Non-Playing Staff Member 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 Youth Non-Playing Staff Member must submit a change of employment application to the Home Office, which must be granted before the Youth Non-Playing Staff Member can undertake any employment duties for the new club.
10. Any application for an Extended GBE (in accordance with paragraph 7), a transfer of a GBE (in accordance with paragraph 8) or a new club application for a GBE (in accordance with paragraph 9) shall be considered as follows:
 - a) If the Youth Non-Playing Staff Member's meets the criteria set out in paragraph 17, a new or Extended GBE will be granted (as appropriate).
 - b) If the Youth Non-Playing Staff Member's does not meet the criteria set out in paragraph 17, 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 Youth Non-Playing Staff Member 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 Youth Non-Playing Staff Member should be awarded a GBE, a new or Extended GBE will be granted (as appropriate).
 - c) The Youth Non-Playing Staff Member shall not have a new or Extended GBE granted (as appropriate) other than in accordance with paragraphs 10.a) or 10.b) above.
11. If a Youth Non-Playing Staff Member:
 - 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

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- 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.

- 12. 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

- 13. A club must submit a fully completed application form for a GBE to The FA's Player Status Department along with any evidence in support of the application.
- 14. 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.
- 15. If any information submitted as part of the GBE application process is amended (including the terms and conditions of a Youth Non-Playing Staff Member's contract or scope, job description or nature of the role):
 - a) before a GBE has granted and before the Youth Non-Playing Staff Member 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 Youth Non-Playing Staff Member 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);
 - c) after a GBE has been granted and after the Youth Non-Playing Staff Member 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).
- 16. If a new application is required in accordance with paragraphs 15.b) or 15.c), it will be assessed by reference to the criteria set out in this document and the Club must comply with paragraphs 17-20 of these criteria in respect of the new application. The FA may also inform the Home Office who may curtail the Youth Non-Playing Staff Member's right to work.

CRITERIA

- 17. A Youth Non-Playing Staff Member role will only be granted a GBE if the individual meets the criteria in Appendix 1.
- 18. Where the criteria in Appendix 1 require a Youth Non-Playing Staff Member to have obtained an FA qualification, a GBE will be granted if the Youth Non-Playing Staff Member has provided evidence that he or she has booked onto the relevant course.
- 19. If a Youth Non-Playing Staff Member is not granted a GBE in accordance with paragraph 17 above, the Club may request that an Exceptions Panel consider the application. If the Club requests an Exceptions Panel, the procedure in paragraphs 21-28 shall apply.

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20. If a Youth Non-Playing Staff Member is not granted a GBE in accordance with paragraph 17 or 21-28, he or she will he will have no further opportunity to apply for a GBE, under any GBE Criteria, unless his or her circumstances change and will not be eligible to be the Youth Non-Playing Staff Member for the applicant club.

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EXCEPTIONS PANELS

21. 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**”).
22. 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.
23. 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).
24. The Exceptions Panel can request any further information from the secretariat or the applicant club 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.
25. The Exceptions Panel shall only recommend to The FA that a GBE be granted if it is satisfied that the Youth Non-Playing Staff Member 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) the previous positions held by the Youth Non-Playing Staff Member;
 - b) the league or leagues in which the Youth Non-Playing Staff Member has held positions;
 - c) the equivalent role or roles the Youth Non-Playing Staff Member has held within other sporting industries; and
 - d) the reasons why the automatic criteria (as set out at paragraph 17) have not been met.
26. 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.
27. 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).
28. 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.

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Appendix 1

Roles

Role	Relevant criteria
Academy Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UEFA A Licence • FA Youth Award • FA Advanced Youth Award
Head of Academy Coaching / Head of Coach Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UEFA A Licence • FA Youth Award • FA Advanced Youth Award • Basic First Aid for Sport Qualification •
Youth Development and Professional Development Phase Coach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UEFA A Licence • FA Youth Award • FA Advanced Youth Award (with the age-specific specialist element relevant to the Development Phase which they coach)
Foundation Phase Coach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UEFA B Licence • FA Youth Award • FA Advanced Youth Award (with the age-specific specialist element relevant to the Development Phase which they coach)
Goalkeeping Coach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UEFA B Licence • UEFA Goalkeeping Coaching B Licence
Senior Professional Development Coach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UEFA A Licence • FA Advanced Youth Award • FA Advanced Youth Award (with the age-specific specialist element relevant to the Development Phase which they coach)
Lead Strength and Conditioning Coaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holds at least a bachelor's degree in sport science (or another relevant discipline) from a recognised university; • Hold a current Basic First Aid for Sport Qualification, current EFAiF or an equivalent or higher qualification approved by the Board; and • Hold or be working towards holding British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences accreditation.
Head of Recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FA Talent ID Level 4 for Cat 1 • FA Talent ID Level 3 for Cat 2 • FA Talent ID Level 2 for Cat 3 and 4

*Please note that for any of the qualifications required above The FA may consult with any relevant governing body to determine whether a qualification can be considered as an 'equivalent'.