



IRISH FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

Club Licensing Manual for Participation in the UEFA Women's Champions League

Based on the UEFA Club Licensing and Financial Fair Play
Regulations, Edition 2018

TIMETABLE AND DEADLINES FOR CORE PROCESS

BY

10 December 2020

Licensing documents prepared and issued to the concerned licence applicants.

21 December 2020

Submission deadline for receipt of completed application form from licence applicants.

February - March 2021

Club Audits (relating to Sporting, Infrastructure, Personnel & Administrative and Legal criteria) and Stadium Infrastructure Inspection Visits completed by Licensing Administration. Within the audit report the licence applicant is given a 14-day **submission deadline** for receipt of further documentation to address “non-conformities” relating to the Sporting, Infrastructure, Personnel & Administrative and Legal criteria. Once received, outstanding documents are logged by the Licensing Administration and forwarded to the respective ‘expert’ for review.

31 March 2021

Conclusion of expert review period for documents relating to Sporting, Infrastructure, Personnel & Administrative and Legal criteria.

31 March 2021

Submission deadline for documents related to the Financial criteria (and return of all documentation from the licence applicant unless as earlier date is specified).

1 April – 16 April 2021

Expert Review Period for documents related to the Financial criteria.

18 April 2021

Submission of Management Representations Letter
Preparation of Report to the Licensing Committee

23 April 2021

Licensing Committee Decision.

24 April 2021

Notification of licensing decisions to applicants.

7 May 2021

Licensing Appeals Committee meeting (if required).

31 May 2021

Notification of decisions to IFA Board and UEFA.

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1. INTRODUCTION

This Manual was issued by the Licensing Committee in accordance with Article 12 (2) of the IFA Articles of Association. Any issued UEFA Club Licence is based on this Manual and applies for participation in the UEFA club competitions during licence season 2021/22.

This Manual is divided into two main sections.

The first addresses and details the roles of the *licensor*, the *licence applicant* and the *licensing bodies*; it also explains the *core process* that is applied.

The second section categorises in five chapters the *club licensing criteria* that have to be fulfilled. They are as follows: sporting criteria, infrastructure criteria, personnel and administrative criteria, legal criteria and financial criteria. Each criterion is graded according to its level of importance ("A", "B" or "C").

Licence applicants are advised to read through the objectives and benefits of each criterion as several criteria requirements are specific to the development of football in Northern Ireland but also includes some "musts" that UEFA has laid down to standardise the quality of football in Europe.

1.1 SCOPE OF APPLICATION

This Manual governs the IFA (Irish Football Association) club licensing system for participation in the UEFA club competitions. In this respect, IFA grants its UEFA Club Licence in accordance with this Manual. The UEFA Club Licence is a *sine qua non* condition to enter the UEFA club competitions.

The UEFA Club Licence grants access to the UEFA club competitions and to the domestic club competitions recognised by IFA. Clubs willing to participate in the UEFA club competitions during the licence season must apply for and be granted the UEFA Club Licence issued by IFA in accordance with this Manual.

This Manual governs the rights, duties and responsibilities of all parties involved in the IFA club licensing system for participation in the UEFA club competitions and defines in particular:

- a) the minimum requirements to be fulfilled by the Irish Football Association (IFA) in order to act as the licensor for its clubs, as well as the minimum procedures to be followed by the licensor in its assessment of the club licensing criteria;
- b) the licence applicant and the UEFA Club Licence required to enter the UEFA club competitions;
- c) the minimum sporting, infrastructure, personnel and administrative, legal and financial club licensing criteria to be fulfilled by a club in order to be granted the UEFA Club Licence by IFA as part of the admission procedure to enter the UEFA club competitions.

In this Manual, the use of the masculine form refers equally to the feminine.

1.2 OBJECTIVES FOR THE IFA CLUB LICENSING SYSTEM FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE UEFA CLUB COMPETITIONS

This Manual aims:

- a) to further promote and continuously improve the standard of all aspects of football in Northern Ireland and to give continued priority to the training and care of young players in every club;
- b) to implement the UEFA 10 Point Plan and club Anti-Racism/ Anti-Sectarianism Policies as an integral part of football development in Northern Ireland;
- c) to adapt clubs' sporting infrastructure to provide players, spectators and media representatives with suitable, well-equipped and safe facilities;
- d) to ensure that clubs have an adequate level of management and organisation;
- e) to improve the economic and financial capability of the clubs, increasing their transparency and credibility;
- f) to place the necessary importance on the protection of creditors and to ensure that clubs settle their liabilities with employees, social/tax authorities and other clubs punctually;
- g) to introduce more discipline and rationality in club football finances;
- h) to protect the integrity and smooth running of the UEFA club competitions for one season; and
- i) to allow the development of benchmarking for clubs in financial, sporting, legal, personnel, administrative and infrastructure-related criteria throughout Northern Ireland;

1.3 LEGAL BASIS

The licensor has jurisdiction to govern the IFA club licensing system by virtue of Article 3(3) of the IFA Articles of Association.

2. PROCEDURE

2.1 CRITERIA GRADUATION

2.1.1 PRINCIPLE

- 2.1.1.1 The club licensing criteria described in this Manual are graded according to criteria importance.
- 2.1.1.2 The different grades have been defined as follows:
- a) **“A”- criteria – “ESSENTIAL”**: If the licence applicant does not fulfil any A-criteria, then it cannot be granted the UEFA Club Licence.
 - b) **“B”- criteria – “MUST”**: If the licence applicant does not fulfil any B-criteria, then it is sanctioned as specified in 2.1.1.3 below by the IFA but can still receive the UEFA Club Licence.
 - c) **“C”- criteria – “BEST PRACTICE”**: C-criteria are best practice recommendations. Non-fulfilment of a C-criterion does not lead to any sanction or to the refusal of the UEFA Club Licence.
- 2.1.1.3 Sanctions for the non-fulfilment of any “B”- criteria shall be determined by the Licensing Committee. The catalogue of sanctions consists of a caution, a fine and the obligation to submit evidence or fulfil certain conditions by a certain deadline.
An appeal against a sanction imposed by the Licensing Committee may be lodged before the Licensing Appeals Committee.
- 2.1.1.4 All violations of this Manual other than those referred to in 2.1.1.3 above shall be sanctioned by the competent body in accordance with the IFA Articles, Competition Rules and Regulations.

2.1.2 APPLICATION OF THE UEFA CLUB LICENSING SCHEME

- 2.1.2.1 Subject to 4.6 below, the IFA club licensing system for participation in the UEFA club competitions is implemented only for the top division clubs in Northern Ireland that play in the Northern Ireland Football League (NIFL) Women’s Premiership and which can qualify for the UEFA club competitions on sporting merit.
- 2.1.2.2 The IFA club licensing system for participation in the UEFA club competitions applies only for those clubs who wish to participate in the UEFA club competitions.

2.2 COMPLIANCE AUDITS BY UEFA

2.2.1 PRINCIPLE

- 2.2.1.1 UEFA and/or its nominated bodies/agencies reserve the right to, at any time, conduct compliance audits of the Irish Football Association and, in the presence of the latter, of the licence applicant/licensee.
- 2.2.1.2 Compliance audits aim at ensuring that the Irish Football Association as well as the licence applicant/licensee have fulfilled their obligations as defined in these regulations and that the UEFA Club Licence was correctly awarded at the time of the final decision of the Irish Football Association.
Non-observance of the minimum mandatory requirements may result in sanctions defined by the competent UEFA body according to the nature and the gravity of the violation.
- 2.2.1.3 Compliance audits apply to all requirements of this Manual, including, but not limited to, any and all documentary evidence or facts presented, any nominations of teams, resources or personnel, any safety inspection reports, any financial or legal submissions made or any findings as a result of a site/stadium inspection.

3. LICENSOR

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter defines the licensor and the decision-making bodies.

3.2 LICENSOR DEFINITION

3.2.1 WHO IS THE LICENSOR?

- 3.2.1.1 The Irish Football Association (IFA) is the licensor.
- 3.2.1.2 The IFA governs its club licensing system, appoints the appropriate licensing bodies and controls the necessary processes and requirements.
- 3.2.1.3 The IFA guarantees the licence applicants full confidentiality with regard to all non-public information given by the licence applicant during the licensing process. Within the Irish Football Association, the Licensing Administration and the decision-making bodies are permitted to communicate and disclose information submitted by a licence applicant to all relevant statutory bodies, panels or commissions of the IFA/ NIFL. A confidentiality agreement shall be concluded between the IFA and the licence applicant.
- 3.2.1.4 Anyone involved in the licensing process or appointed by the IFA must sign a confidentiality clause and an independence declaration before assuming his tasks.

3.2.2 DECISION-MAKING BODIES (LICENSING BODIES)

- 3.2.2.1 The IFA has established the two following decision-making bodies:
 - a) Licensing Committee, acting as the first instance body; and
 - b) Licensing Appeals Committee, acting as the second instance/appeals body.
- 3.2.2.2 The decision-making bodies shall be independent from each other. They shall receive administrative support from the Licensing Administration.

3.2.3 LICENSING ADMINISTRATION

- 3.2.3.1 The licensor must appoint a licensing manager who is responsible for the licensing administration.
- 3.2.3.2 The tasks of the Licensing Administration (LA) include:
 - a) preparing, implementing and further developing the IFA club licensing system for participation in the UEFA club competitions;
 - b) providing administrative support to the decision-making bodies;
 - c) assisting, advising and monitoring the licensees during the season;
 - d) informing UEFA of any event occurring after the licensing decision that constitutes a significant change to the information previously submitted to the licensor, including a change of legal form or legal group structure;
 - e) serving as the contact point for and sharing expertise with the licence applicants/licensees, the licensing departments of other UEFA member associations and with UEFA itself;
 - f) all other tasks in respect of the management and administration of the IFA club licensing system for participation in the UEFA club competitions.
- 3.2.3.3 The LA must have the necessary resources available.

- 3.2.3.4 The LA is led by a Licensing Manager and includes experienced experts in the fields covered by the five types of club licensing criteria (sporting, infrastructure, personnel and administrative, legal and financial).
- 3.2.3.5 At least the financial expert of the Licensing Administration must have a financial background and a diploma in accountancy/auditing as defined by the CCAB (Consultative Committee of Accountancy Bodies), i.e. ICAEW, ICAS, ICAI, ACCA, CIMA or CIPFA, or must have several years' experience in the above matters (a "recognition of competence").
- 3.2.3.6 All persons involved in the licensing process must comply with confidentiality rules regarding information received during the licensing procedure. The IFA shall set up the necessary confidentiality clauses and independence declarations in this respect.

3.2.4 LICENSING COMMITTEE (LC)

- 3.2.4.1 The LC decides whether the UEFA Club Licence should be granted to an applicant on the basis of the documents provided in accordance with this Manual by the submission deadlines set by this Manual as per the Core Process. The LC shall also decide on the withdrawal of any UEFA Club Licence awarded.
- 3.2.4.2 The Board of the Irish Football Association decides on the composition of the LC, which is made up of seven members. The members of the LC are appointed by the IFA Board. Members of the LC must not belong simultaneously to the executive body of the IFA or NIFL or be part of the management personnel of an affiliated club.
- 3.2.4.3 The quorum of the LC shall be 3 members. The chairman has both a deliberate vote and the casting vote in the case of the LC being unable to reach a majority decision.
- 3.2.4.4 The decision must always be put in writing and include the reasoning in the case of a licence refusal as well as the conditions for lodging an appeal before the Licensing Appeals Committee.
- 3.2.4.5 The IFA may appoint its administrative staff, with the exception of the Licensing Manager and other members of the Licensing Administration who cannot be members of the LC.
- 3.2.4.6 The LC has the authority to review the club licensing criteria and to deal with any matter not provided for in this manual.

3.2.5 LICENSING APPEALS COMMITTEE (LAC)

- 3.2.5.1 The LAC will only review decisions made by the Licensing Committee and will not rehear the case or review fresh evidence.
- 3.2.5.2 The LAC decides on appeals submitted in writing against LC decisions to grant, refuse or withdraw the UEFA Club Licence.
- 3.2.5.3 For the avoidance of doubt, the decision of the Licensing Appeals Committee is final; no further appeal may be lodged under IFA Articles of Association.

Appeals may only be lodged by:

- a) a licence applicant, who received the refusal from the LC;
 - b) a licensee whose UEFA Club Licence has been withdrawn by the LC; or
 - c) the Licensing Manager, acting on behalf of the licensor.
- 3.2.5.4 The LAC makes its decision based on the decision of the LC and all the admissible evidence provided by the appellant with its written request for appeal and by the set deadline. The decision must be put in writing and include the reasoning in the case of a licence refusal.
 - 3.2.5.5 The Board of the Irish Football Association decides on the composition of the LAC, which is made up of seven members. The members of the LAC are appointed by the IFA Board.

- 3.2.5.6 The quorum of the LAC shall be 3 members. The chairman has both a deliberate vote and the casting vote in the case of the LAC being unable to reach a majority decision.
- 3.2.5.7 Members of the LAC must not belong simultaneously to the executive body of the IFA or NIFL or be part of the management personnel of an affiliated club.

3.2.6 REQUIREMENTS OF MEMBERS OF THE DECISION-MAKING BODIES

- 3.2.6.1 The decision-making bodies must have at least one qualified solicitor/barrister holding a qualification recognized by The Law Society of Northern Ireland (or equivalent) and one qualified financial expert holding a qualification recognised by the CCAB (Consultative Committee of Accountancy Bodies), i.e. ICAEW, ICAS, ICAI, ACCA, CIMA or CIPFA.
- 3.2.6.2 Members of the decision-making bodies must not act simultaneously as Licensing Manager, must not belong simultaneously to a statutory judicial body of the IFA, must not belong simultaneously to the executive body of the IFA or NIFL, must not belong simultaneously to the management personnel of an affiliated club and must act impartially in the discharge of their duties.
- 3.2.6.3 Members are appointed for two years and may be re-appointed for additional periods of two years, by the IFA Board.
- 3.2.6.4 All members of the decision-making bodies must comply with confidentiality and independence rules regarding information received during the licensing procedure. The IFA shall set up the necessary confidentiality clauses and independence declarations in this respect.
- 3.2.6.5 In addition to the requirements set out above, the IFA may establish further conditions to be satisfied by members of the decision-making bodies (academic, professional training, experience, etc.) to ensure that they perform their functions to high professional standards. These additional conditions shall be communicated to the licence applicants by the IFA in advance.
- 3.2.6.6 Members of both decision-making bodies shall not be connected with or be representatives of licence applicants.
 A member must in all cases automatically abstain if there is any doubt as to his independence from the licence applicant or if there is a conflict of interest.
 The independence of a member may not be guaranteed if he or any member of his family (spouse, child, parent or sibling) is a:
 - a) member;
 - b) shareholder;
 - c) business partner;
 - d) sponsor;
 - e) consultant
 of the licence applicant. The foregoing list is illustrative and not exhaustive.
- 3.2.6.7 The IFA may establish further criteria regarding the independence of members. These other criteria shall be communicated to the licence applicants in advance.

3.2.7. PROCEDURE OF DECISION MAKING

The decision-making bodies must operate according to the following procedural rules, which apply to the decision-making process:

a) Deadlines

Deadlines are those defined in the core process outlined in this Manual and must be respected.

b) Equal Treatment

Fundamental procedural rights shall be guaranteed to any party during the licensing process, particularly the right to equal treatment and the right to a fair hearing, which includes, but is not limited to, the right to speak, the right to consult the case file and the right to have a reasoned decision.

c) Representation

Licence applicants shall have the right to representation (legal or otherwise) before the Licensing Appeals Committee ONLY, except as directed by the LC in line with step 12 of the Core Process.

d) Right to be Heard

Taking into account c) above, all licence applicants shall have the right to be heard by the decision-making bodies.

The identities of the people acting on behalf of the licence applicant shall be verified, and these people shall be instructed to tell the truth and shall be informed that they shall be sanctioned by the IFA competent bodies, should they present false information or represent a false or misleading position (whether positively or by omission).

e) Time Limit to Appeal and time limit for requests

The time limit to appeal is 4 (four) days after the date of the LC meeting at which the decision appealed against was taken, unless for any reason it was not made known to the appellant at such meeting in which case it must be within 4 (days) days after the date on which the decision was intimated in writing to the licence applicant/licensee.

Time limits are triggered when notified as above and shall begin on the day following notification.

f) Form of Appeal

The appeal must be submitted in writing. The statement of the appeal must mention:

- The decision appealed against
- The grounds for the appeal (facts and/or law)
- The pleadings (including applicable procedural complaints)

g) Submission of Appeal

The submission of the appeal must be made by Royal Mail Special Delivery Letter. Such letters must be addressed to the Chief Executive of the Irish Football Association, National Football Stadium at Windsor Park, Donegall Avenue, Belfast BT12 5LW.

Such letter must be dispatched (confirmation of which should be retained by the appellant should evidence be needed) in accordance with (e) above.

h) Cost of Appeal

An appeal deposit fee of £250 must be submitted in accordance with (e) and (g) above and made payable to the Irish Football Association returnable to the appellant (i.e. the licence applicant which received the refusal from the LC or the licensee whose UEFA Club Licence has been withdrawn by the LC) should the appeal be upheld.

i) Effects of an Appeal

An appeal submitted in compliance with (e – h) above shall have a delaying effect on any direct or consequential effect of the original decision.

j) Evidence

Any evidence or facts which are to be used by the appellant to support its case must be referred to in the appeal statement and, where appropriate, supporting documentation must be provided and lodged in accordance with e - h above.

Evidence, or facts, not presented in line with the Core Process and not placed before the LC will not be considered by the LAC when reaching its decision.

k) Burden of Proof

The appellant shall have the burden of proof.

l) Hearings / Deliberations

Any evidence, facts, documents, contentions or allegations must be made in advance of a hearing and must also be presented in the presence of the competent decision-making body.

After all parties are satisfied with their presentations, the competent decision-making body shall deliberate in camera and, in general, immediately after the hearing.

m) Decision

The decision-making bodies shall issue their decisions in writing. Their decisions shall mention:

- The place and date where and when the decision was issued
- The names of the decision-making body in question
- The parties concerned
- The pleadings of the parties
- The reasons for the decision in fact and in law
- The judgement (including where applicable the distribution of costs)
- If applicable, the possibility of lodging an appeal before the LAC and the conditions for such an appeal (deadline, form, etc.)

n) Conflict

Where there is a conflict between the IFA Articles/ Standing Orders and this Manual in respect of licensing matters, this Manual shall prevail.

4. LICENCE APPLICANT AND UEFA CLUB LICENCE

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter defines the legal entities that can apply for the UEFA Club Licence and the UEFA Club Licence necessary to enter the UEFA club competitions.

The legal entity applying for the UEFA Club Licence is the licence applicant. Once the licence applicant has been granted the UEFA Club Licence by the licensor, it becomes the licensee.

4.2 CIRCLE OF LICENCE APPLICANTS

4.2.1 AUTHORITY TO DEFINE LICENCE APPLICANTS

- 4.2.1.1 The IFA defines the licence applicants according to its Articles of Association, rules and regulations and the following provisions in accordance with UK law. Furthermore, the FIFA and UEFA Statutes as well as relevant regulations must also be taken into account.

4.2.2 STATUS OF FOOTBALL CLUBS

- 4.2.2.1 The status of a football club (professional, semi-professional or amateur) is not relevant to the issuance of the UEFA Club Licence.

4.2.3. LEGAL FORM OF FOOTBALL CLUBS

- 4.2.3.1 The legal form of a football club is not relevant to the issuance of the UEFA Club Licence.

4.3 DEFINITION OF LICENCE APPLICANT AND THREE-YEAR RULE

4.3.1 PRINCIPLE

- 4.3.1.1 A licence applicant may only be a football club, i.e. a legal entity fully responsible for the football first team participating in national and international club competitions which:

- a) is a registered member of the IFA and the Northern Ireland Football League (hereinafter: registered member).

The membership must have lasted – at the start of the licence season – for at least three consecutive years. Any change to the legal form, legal group structure (including a merger with another entity or transfer of football activities to another entity) or identity (including headquarters, name or colours) of a licence applicant during this period to the detriment of the integrity of a competition or to facilitate the licence applicant's qualifications for a competition on sporting merit or its receipt of the UEFA Club Licence is deemed as an interruption of membership within the meaning of this provision¹.

¹ In respect of the UEFA Club Licence, an exception to this 'three-year-rule' may be granted by UEFA. For more details on the principle and process in respect of the exception policy, refer to Annex I (in particular, § A 1 d), 2-4 and § B 1,2, 4-8) of the UEFA Club Licensing and Financial Fair Play Regulations.

- 4.3.1.2 Only a registered member in line with 4.2 and 4.3.1.1 above can apply for/ receive the UEFA Club Licence. Individuals may not apply for/ receive the UEFA Club Licence.
- 4.3.1.3 The licence applicant is fully responsible for the participation of its first squad in domestic and international football club competitions as well as for the fulfilment of the club licensing criteria. The licence applicant is, in particular, responsible for ensuring the following:
- a) that the IFA is provided with all necessary information and/or documents relevant to proving that the licensing obligations are fulfilled, as these obligations relate to the sporting, infrastructure, personnel and administrative, legal and financial criteria set out under Chapters 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 respectively;
 - b) that the IFA is provided with any other document relevant for decision-making. This includes information on the *reporting entity/entities* in respect of which sporting, infrastructure, personnel and administrative, legal and financial information are required to be provided. In turn, the IFA must assess whether, in respect of each licence applicant, the selected reporting entity/entities is appropriate for club licensing purposes;
 - c) that any event occurring after the submission of the licensing documents to the IFA representing a significant change to the information previously submitted is promptly notified to the licensor (including a change of the licence applicant's legal form, legal group structure or identity). This constitutes an A-criterion. Compliance with this criterion shall be assessed by the IFA on an ongoing basis.

4.4 UEFA CLUB LICENCE

4.4.1 PRINCIPLE

- 4.4.1.1 The UEFA Club Licence must be issued according to the provisions of this Manual.
- 4.4.1.2 The IFA shall issue an invitation to the football clubs concerned to apply for the UEFA Club Licence punctually and in writing. The licence applicant must submit a written application to the IFA. In this application, the licence applicant must, in particular, declare that it will fulfil the obligations of the IFA club licensing system for participation in the UEFA club competitions and accept and respect the Core Process and its applicable deadlines.
- 4.4.1.3 Only licence applicants which fulfil the club licensing criteria set out in this Manual at the deadlines defined by this Manual may and shall be granted the UEFA Club Licence by the IFA.
- Clubs which qualify for the UEFA club competitions on sporting merit must obtain the UEFA Club Licence issued by the IFA according to this Manual, except where 4.6 applies.
- 4.4.1.4 The UEFA Club Licence expires without prior notice at the end of the season for which it was issued.
- 4.4.1.5 The UEFA Club Licence may be withdrawn by the decision-making bodies if:
- a) any of the conditions for the issuing of the UEFA Club Licence are no longer satisfied; or
 - b) the licensee violates any of its obligations under this Manual.
- 4.4.1.6 As soon as a UEFA Club Licence withdrawal is envisaged, the IFA must inform the UEFA Administration accordingly.
- 4.4.1.7 If a licensee has its UEFA Club Licence withdrawn, a decision concerning the possible elimination of the licensee from the UEFA club competition in question is made by the competent UEFA body.
- 4.4.1.8 The UEFA Club Licence cannot be transferred.

4.5 **ADMISSION TO UEFA CLUB COMPETITIONS**

4.5.1 **PRINCIPLE**

- 4.5.1.1 The licensee must further fulfil all the requirements according to the relevant UEFA club competition regulations to be admitted to the relevant UEFA club competition.
- 4.5.1.2 The admission process falls under the sole jurisdiction of UEFA and its competent bodies.
- 4.5.1.3 The competent bodies of UEFA make the final decision regarding the admission of a licensee to participate in any UEFA club competition.
- 4.5.1.4 Such decisions are subject to all the statutes-based jurisdiction of UEFA, including the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) in Lausanne (Switzerland).

5. CORE PROCESS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter defines the assessment process (hereinafter: core process) of the IFA club licensing system for participation in the UEFA club competitions.

5.1.1 PRINCIPLE

- 5.1.1.1 In this Manual, the IFA defines the core process for the verification of the club licensing criteria (sporting criteria, infrastructure criteria, personnel and administrative criteria, legal criteria and financial criteria) and for the control of the correct issuance of the UEFA Club Licence to the licence applicants.

The core process must be certified against the Club Licensing Quality Standard on an annual basis by an independent body approved by UEFA.

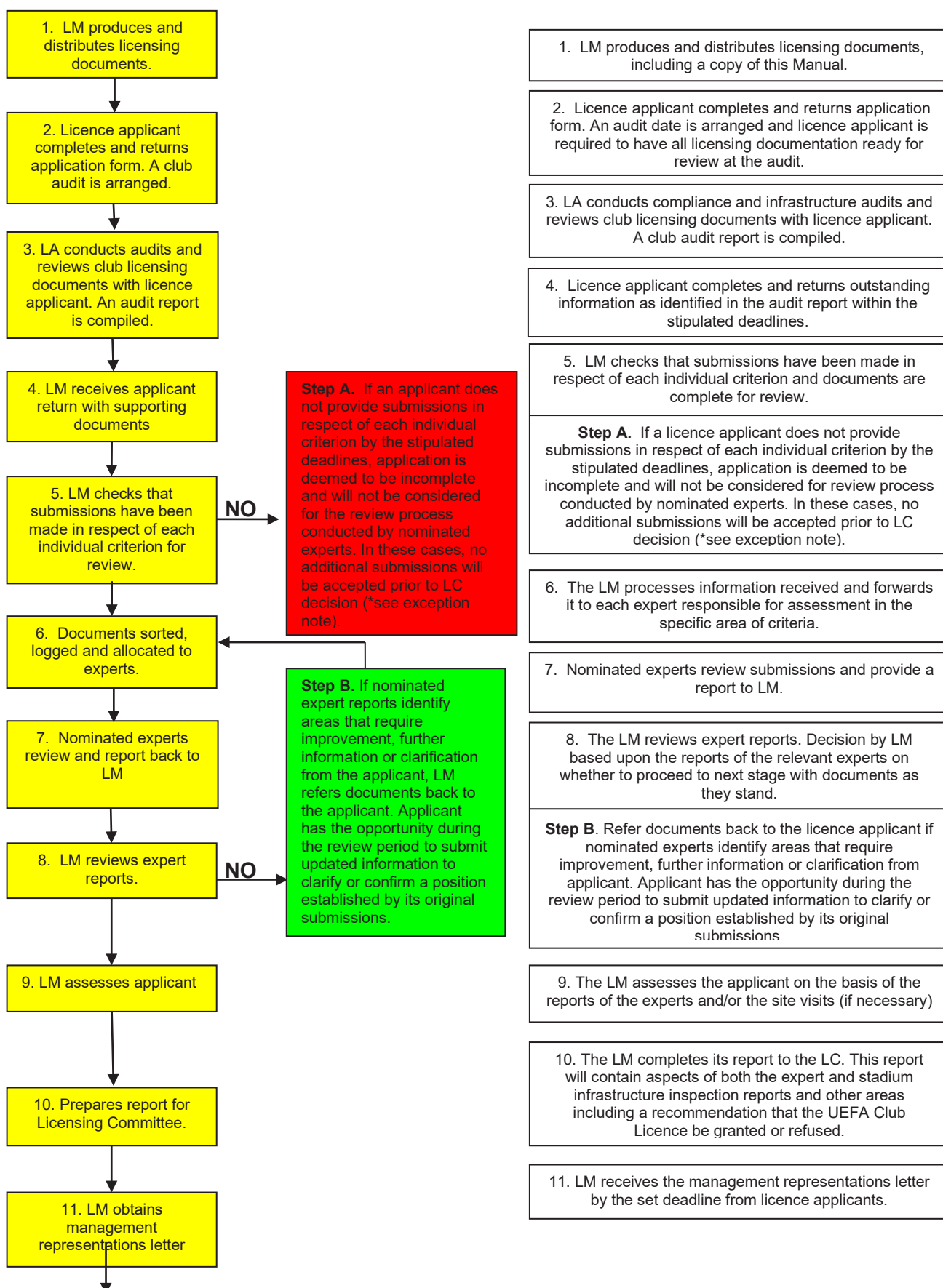
The core process starts on 6 November 2020 with the distribution by the Licensing Manager of the licensing documents to the concerned licence applicants and ends on 31 May 2021 with the submission of the list of licensing decisions to UEFA by the licensor.

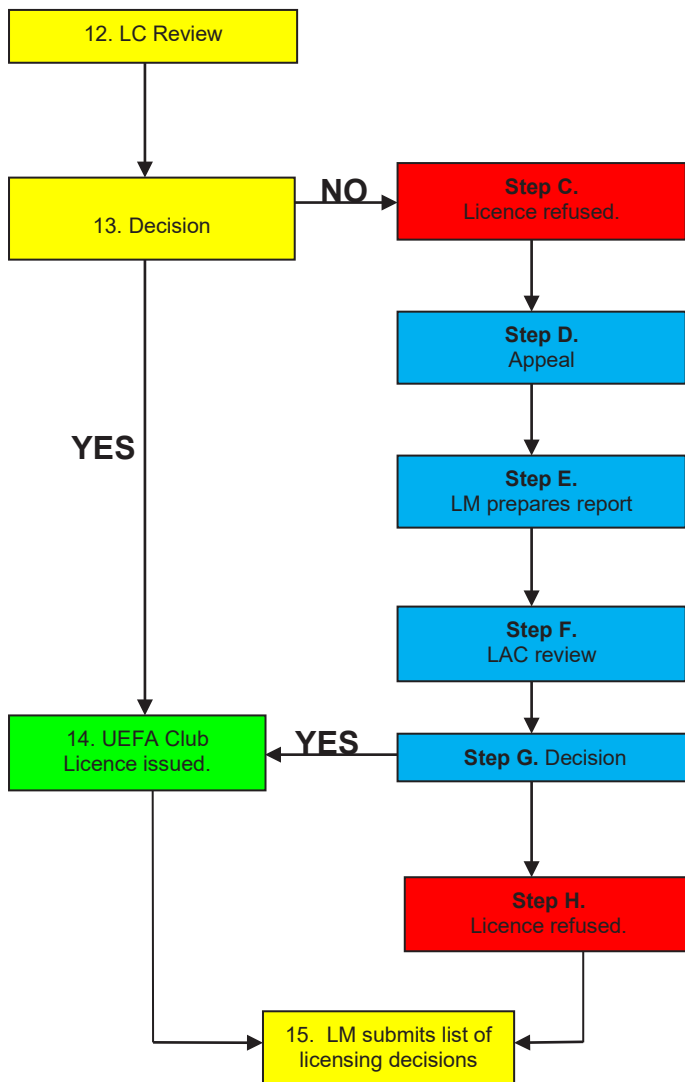
- 5.1.1.2 The core process is described below and is aimed at:

- a) helping the IFA in establishing an appropriate and efficient licensing process according to its needs and organisation;
- b) agreeing on the main requirements that the IFA must comply with to issue the UEFA Club Licence necessary for entering the UEFA club competitions;
- c) ensuring that the decision on the granting of the UEFA Club Licence is made by an independent body (LC or LAC);
- d) ensuring that the decision-making bodies receive adequate support from the Licensing Administration;
- e) ensuring that licence applicants understand and respect the process and deadlines that must be followed to be issued the UEFA Club Licence.

- 5.1.1.3 The IFA must submit to UEFA the list of licensing decisions by 31 May 2021.

CORE PROCESS





12. The LC shall sit to consider in full submissions. The LC may request a hearing with the licence applicant, this in particular in the case of the existence of a major economic event.

13. LC takes a decision whether to issue the UEFA Club Licence or not.

Step C. The UEFA Club Licence is refused, applicant is advised with reasons outlined and given the option of going through the appeals process.

Step D. Applicant lodges an appeal. Evidence, or facts, not presented in line with the core process and not placed before the LC will not be considered by the LAC when reaching its decision. LAC notified and meeting date set.

Step E. LM produces a report and dispatches this to the Licensing Appeals Committee.

Step F. LAC meets and considers the appeal.

Step G. LAC takes a decision whether to issue the UEFA Club Licence or not on or before 31 May.

14. UEFA Club Licence granted which may or may not detail areas for future attention.

Step H. UEFA Club Licence refused. Appellant notified of decision.

15. LM communicates to
(i) IFA Board and
(ii) UEFA
the list of licensing decisions.

1. The Licensing Manager (LM) produces and distributes the licensing documents.
2. Licence applicant completes and returns application form. An audit date is arranged between the Licensing & Administration and the licensing applicant. Licence applicant is required to have all licensing documentation relating to Sporting, Infrastructure, Personnel & Administrative and Legal criteria ready for review by the Licensing Administration at the audit.

Financial documentation must be provided directly to the licensor by a submission deadline of 31 March 2021.

3. Licensing Audit

Licensing Administration agrees an audit date with the licence applicant and visits the club ground to conduct audit. The audit will be carried out as follows:

- A USB flash drive with uploaded documentation must be presented at the audit and will be retained by the Licensing Administration for transfer of data. Where original documents are provided, copies will be taken and originals returned to the licence applicant.
 - All licensing templates and supporting documentation required under sporting, infrastructure, personnel & administrative and legal criteria (with the exception of financial criteria – submission deadline of 31 March) will be reviewed by the Licensing Administration.
 - An infrastructure inspection of the ground will be carried out in accordance with the infrastructure criteria detailed in UEFA Stadium Infrastructure Regulations Edition 2018.
 - Non-conformities will be identified in an audit report by the Licensing Administration in terms of outstanding templates/ supporting documents. The Licensing Administration provides guidance on tackling the non-conformities and agrees activity to remedy these.
4. Following the issuance of the audit report, the licence applicant is given 14 days to address non-conformities within the report. All required documentation must be returned to the Licensing Administration within the stipulated deadlines as stated within the audit report. Special dispensation on the 14-day return date may be granted to address physical infrastructure non-conformities.
 5. The Licensing Manager checks that the documents returned by the licence applicant are complete for review and that they are returned within the stipulated deadlines.

Decision
Two alternatives: step (A) or step 6

- A.** If an applicant does not provide submissions in respect of each individual criterion by the stipulated deadlines, then its application is deemed to be incomplete and will not be considered for review process conducted by nominated experts. In these cases, no additional submissions will be accepted prior to LC decision.

**Exception Note: Applicants will be permitted to seek an extension to the submission deadlines in exceptional circumstances only (circumstances to be assessed and a determination made by the LC) and provided such an extension request is lodged in writing to the licensor in advance of the applicable deadline.*

Extension requests not lodged in this manner will not be considered.

The duration of any extension request granted by the LC will not exceed the last day of the applicable review period.

6. If the documents are complete and sent within the stipulated deadlines, the Licensing Manager sorts the information received, records it and forwards it to the appointed experts with responsibilities for that particular area for review (e.g. legal documents will be forwarded to the legal expert, financial information to the financial expert, etc.).
7. The nominated experts receive the licence applicant's documents from the Licensing Manager, review the documents, check the fulfilment of the criteria and then submit report back to the Licensing Manager.
8. The Licensing Manager verifies that the reports of the experts are complete and reviews the reports and the opinion of the experts.

Decision
Two alternatives: step (B) or step 9

- B.** If nominated expert reports identify areas that require improvement, further information or clarification from the applicant, the Licensing Manager refers documents back to the applicant. The licence applicant then has the opportunity during the review period to submit updated information to clarify or confirm a position established by its original submissions.

9. The Licensing Manager assesses the licence applicant on the basis of the reports of the expert and/or stadium infrastructure inspection visits if necessary.
10. The Licensing Manager prepares the report for consideration of the Licensing Committee (LC). This report will contain aspects of the expert and site inspection reports and other areas including a recommendation that the UEFA Club Licence be granted or refused.
11. LM receives management representations letter from licence applicant stating whether or not any events or conditions of major economic importance have occurred; this is to be included in a report to the LC.
12. The LC receives the report of the Licensing Manager within the agreed deadline, reviews it, asks the Licensing Manager for further explanations and documents if necessary and makes the decision whether to grant the UEFA Club Licence or not. The LC may request a hearing with the licence applicant; this in particular is in the case of the existence of a major economic event.

Two alternatives: step C or step 14.

- C.** After careful review of the licence applicant's documents and of the report of the Licensing Manager, the Licensing Committee refuses to grant the UEFA Club Licence. The refusal details the areas of non-compliance and the licence applicant is given the possibility of lodging an appeal before the Licensing Appeals Committee (LAC).
- D.** The licence applicant lodges an appeal in accordance with 3.2.7. Evidence, or facts, not presented in line with the core process and not placed before the LC will not be considered by the LAC when reaching its decision.
- The LAC is notified and the meeting date is set.
- E.** The Licensing Manager produces a report and delivers it to the LAC. The report details areas of concern and the reasons for the refusal.
- F.** The LAC meets and considers the appeal.
- G. Decision of LAC.**

Two alternatives: step H or step 14.

- H.** After careful review of the licence applicant's documents and of the report of the Licensing Manager, the LAC refuses to grant the UEFA Club Licence.
14. After careful review of the licence applicant's documents and of the report of the Licensing Manager, the decision-making body issues the UEFA Club Licence. The issuance of the UEFA Club Licence is subject to the condition that the licence applicant fulfils all 'A'- criteria defined in this Manual. The issued UEFA Club Licence may or may not detail areas for future attention of the licence applicant.
15. The Licensing Manager receives the reports of the decision-making bodies. On the basis of the decisions made by the decision-making bodies, he prepares the list of licensing decisions. The list of licensing decisions is sent to UEFA by 31 May 2021 at the latest.

TIMETABLE AND DEADLINES FOR CORE PROCESS

BY

10 December 2020

Licensing documents prepared and issued to the concerned licence applicants.

21 December 2020

Submission deadline for receipt of completed application form from licence applicants.

February - March 2021

Club Audits (relating to Sporting, Infrastructure, Personnel & Administrative and Legal criteria) and Stadium Infrastructure Inspection Visits completed by Licensing Administration. Within the audit report the licence applicant is given a 14-day **submission deadline** for receipt of further documentation to address “non-conformities” relating to the Sporting, Infrastructure, Personnel & Administrative and Legal criteria. Once received, outstanding documents are logged by the Licensing Administration and forwarded to the respective ‘expert’ for review.

31 March 2021

Conclusion of expert review period for documents relating to Sporting, Infrastructure, Personnel & Administrative and Legal criteria.

31 March 2021

Submission deadline for documents related to the Financial criteria (and return of all documentation from the licence applicant unless as earlier date is specified).

1 April – 16 April 2021

Expert Review Period for documents related to the Financial criteria.

18 April 2021

Submission of Management Representations Letter
Preparation of Report to the Licensing Committee

23 April 2021

Licensing Committee Decision.

24 April 2021

Notification of licensing decisions to applicants.

7 May 2021

Licensing Appeals Committee meeting (if required).

31 May 2021

Notification of decisions to IFA Board and UEFA.

6. SPORTING CRITERIA

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The future of football is reliant on having a broad basis of footballers available who have the necessary skills and motivation to become professional players. Therefore, it is important to promote the development of youth programmes at a club level to attract into football more and better-educated boys and girls who not only play the game but are also supporters.

All licence applicants must declare themselves an equal opportunities club that will not tolerate any form of sectarianism, racially offensive behaviour or chanting.

Most personnel of the licence applicant will in one capacity or another have to interact with young players in the development programme during their tenure. In the interest of both the licence applicant and the young players it safeguards, clubs should ensure that all personnel attend a child protection course and complete an appropriate vetting check.

This manual stresses the importance of youth education and requires therefore higher quality standards for licence applicants applying for a UEFA licence. This is in line with the objective of promote the training of new local talent in order to safeguard the future of football.

6.2 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the sporting criteria are that:

- licence applicants invest in quality-driven development programmes;
- licence applicants support football education and encourage non-football education of their development players;
- licence applicants foster medical care of their development players;
- licence applicants embrace the core values of good relations within their structures and adhere to principles that encourage and welcome diversity and equality;
- licence applicants apply fair play on and off the pitch (including a common understanding of refereeing matters among all those involved in a match such as referees, players, coaches and officials).

6.3 BENEFITS FOR LICENCE APPLICANTS

The purposes of the sporting criteria are to produce football talents for the licence applicant's first squad, develop and promote women's and community football whilst also fostering good relations among footballers and supporters alike. Players that are developed in-house normally fit more easily into the first team squad since they have partly trained with it and know its tactics; they lack only experience. Several top clubs in Europe already boast young talent who play regularly for their first team. These players, if trained by the licence applicant itself, are also crucial in the identification process between fans and their team.

If licence applicants can foster "Good Relations" among their supporters and players, they will be doing their part to develop and promote a football culture that is more tolerant, dynamic, vibrant and inclusive; ultimately this can increase participation in football from all demographics.

6.4 CRITERIA

6.4.1 "A" CRITERIA

No.	Grade	Description
S.01	A	<p>DEVELOPMENT TEAMS</p> <p>The licence applicant must at least have the following development teams within its legal entity, another legal entity included in the reporting perimeter or a club affiliated to its legal entity:</p> <p>a) at least one women's youth team within the age range of 12 to 17;</p> <p>The development teams in the above age ranges must participate in official competitions or programmes which are recognised by the IFA and which are played over the course of a season at national, regional or local level.</p> <p>All development players affiliated with the licence applicant must be registered with the IFA and/ NIFL in line with the <i>FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players</i>.</p> <p>Development teams in children's football are not obliged to take part in official competitions. For these teams' suitable events should be organised (mini-tournaments, youth gatherings on local level, etc.) to provide fun and give them the opportunity to gain experience playing with other children teams. No mandatory registration of these players with the IFA is required.</p>
S.02	A B	<p>MEDICAL CARE OF PLAYERS</p> <p>The licence applicant must establish and apply a policy to ensure that:</p> <p>a) all players eligible to play for its women's senior team undergo a yearly medical examination in accordance with the relevant provisions of the UEFA Medical Regulations.</p> <p>b) all players above the age of 12 undergo a yearly medical examination in accordance with the relevant provisions defined by its licensor in line with its domestic legislation.</p>
S.03	A	<p>REGISTRATION OF PLAYERS</p> <p>All the licence applicant's players, including youth players above the age of 10, must be registered with the IFA and/or NIFL in accordance with the relevant provisions of the FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players.</p>
S.04	A	<p>WRITTEN CONTRACT WITH PROFESSIONAL PLAYERS</p> <p>All licence applicants' professional players must have a written contract with the licence applicant in accordance with the relevant provisions of the FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players.</p>
S.05	A	<p>COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT</p> <p>A dedicated Community Relations Liaison Officer (CRLO) must be appointed by each licence applicant to liaise with the IFA Community Relations Officer.</p> <p>An "Anti-Racism/ Anti-Discrimination Policy" must be developed and applied by each licence applicant and must include, but not be limited to, the elements in the UEFA 10 Point Plan, as per the UEFA Safety and Security Regulations, Edition 2019.</p> <p>All licence applicants must declare themselves as an equal opportunity entity that will not tolerate any form of sectarianism, homophobia, discrimination, racially offensive behaviour or chanting and commit to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removing any offensive graffiti from the ground

No.	Grade	Description
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making public address announcements condemning offensive language and acts • Acting to prevent the sale of racist, sectarian or homophobic literature inside and around the ground • Taking disciplinary action against players who engage in racist, sectarian or homophobic abuse. <p>The licence applicant must provide a volunteer policy to be sent to michael.carvill@irishfa.com for approval before final submission.</p> <p>All licence applicants must include copies of their:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anti-discrimination Policy • Equal Opportunities Policy • Club Volunteer Policy • Community Engagement Programmes <p>In addition, job descriptions and contact details for the appointed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Relations Officer • Disability Access Officer <p>must be completed on the templates provided.</p> <p>The Community & Volunteer Engagement criteria must be submitted for assessment to the IFA Community Relations Officer, chris.wright@irishfa.com</p>
S.06	A	<p>CHILD PROTECTION AND WELFARE</p> <p>The licence applicant must adopt the Irish FA Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and Procedures in their entirety and communicate this to all club members. Licence applicants will be required to evidence the following:</p> <p>In respect of this criterion, licence applicants must liaise directly with the IFA Safeguarding Service Delivery Manager:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The appointment of a Club Child Welfare Officer (CWO) (and Deputy where possible) who will be responsible for developing and promoting safeguarding best practice within the club. Contact details of the CWO should be made available to all club members. • The CWO must complete the Irish FA's Safeguarding Children and Young People in Football Safeguarding awareness training and CWO training within 6 months of taking up post. The CWO must complete an Enhanced Disclosure Check through the Irish FA and AccessNI. These should be renewed every 3 years. • The CWO must ensure all staff, coaches and volunteers engaged in regulated activity complete an AccessNI Enhanced Disclosure Check through the Irish FA. All checks must be renewed every 3 years. • Staff, coaches and volunteers who engage in regulated activity roles must complete, and where appropriate, evidence the Irish FA's Safeguarding Children and Young People in Football Safeguarding awareness training. Training must be renewed every 3 years. <p>In respect of this criterion, licence applicants must liaise directly with the IFA Safeguarding Service Delivery Manager:</p> <p>kevin.doyle@irishfa.com or 07889 057992</p>

6.4.2. “B” CRITERIA

No.	Grade	Description
S.07	B	REFEREEING MATTERS AND LAWS OF THE GAME The licence applicant must prove that at least the captain (or his replacement) and the head coach (or the assistant coach) of the first squad have attended a session or an event on refereeing matters provided by the IFA or with its collaboration during the year prior to the licence season. The criterion is fulfilled if those persons have attended the session or event.

7. INFRASTRUCTURE CRITERIA

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Several regulations, guidelines and directives refer to criteria which relate to the stadium and the associated safety and security. Due to the immense number of documents there has often been some uncertainty surrounding infrastructure requirements.

Based on these experiences a decision was made to streamline the infrastructure approach for UEFA club competitions by creating the specific *UEFA Stadium Infrastructure Regulations*, which include all minimum standards as “must-requirements” in one single document.

As part of this new approach each single stadium needs to be “approved” or “certified” against the UEFA minimum standards and classified according to a given category. UEFA is responsible for this approval process and its Football Operations Unit will provide the necessary assistance, monitor the approvals and organise spot-checks on national level.

7.2 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the following infrastructure criteria are that:

- licence applicants have an “approved” stadium available for playing UEFA club competitions matches. The criterion I.01 shall provide spectators, players, media and press representatives with a well-equipped, safe and comfortable stadium;
- licence applicants have suitable training facilities for their players to help them improve their football skills.

7.3 BENEFITS FOR LICENCE APPLICANTS

With the new streamlined approach, the licence applicants and the stadium owners will know exactly which “UEFA level” their stadium currently achieves. UEFA shall inspect and “approve” the stadium which will then be classified into one of the given quality categories. Reading the relevant UEFA regulations, a licence applicant and/or an owner of an “approved” stadium may easily verify which UEFA club competition and/or phases of such a competition the stadium may host. The assessment report is an important tool and forms the basis for any improvements and necessary developments to get higher classification in the future.

This approach allows the stadium owner in cooperation with the licence applicant to clearly plan and invest in missing requirements, which nowadays are necessary to host people at attractive and entertaining events. Therefore, each licence applicant, together with the stadium owner and the local community, shall provide a stadium that is attractive, safe and secure, easily accessible by car (including parking facilities) and/or public transport, has comfortable seats with a close view of the pitch, has clean hospitality facilities and shops, is equipped with hygienic and spacious toilets for both sexes, provides communication installations and has seats and toilets for disabled spectators.

Higher quality standards and better facilities are creating more business opportunities and therefore more income for the owner and/or the licence applicant, which helps to finance investments in stadium facilities. Finally, the comfort of a stadium is an important element in terms of having a large crowd to support the licence applicant’s first squad on the pitch.

7.4 CRITERIA

7.4.1. "A" CRITERIA

No.	Grade	Description
I.01	A	<p>APPROVED STADIUM FOR UEFA WOMEN'S CHAMPIONS LEAGUE</p> <p>The licence applicant must have a stadium available for the UEFA Women's Champion's League. The licence applicant either:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> owns the stadium, or if it does not own the stadium, must provide a written contract with the owner(s) of the stadium or with owners of different stadia it will use. This contract must guarantee the use of the stadium for the licence applicant's UEFA home matches during the licence season. <p>The stadium must be based within Northern Ireland, be approved by the IFA and fulfil all minimum requirements defined in the UEFA Stadium Infrastructure Regulations and be classified at least as a UEFA category 1 stadium.</p> <p>Assessment of this criterion will be conducted as an official site inspection(s).</p>
I.02	A	<p>STADIUM SAFETY</p> <p>a) General Safety Certificate – Certificated Grounds</p> <p>Under the Safety of Sports Grounds (Northern Ireland) Order 2006, any certificated ground (i.e. a designated ground or a ground with one or more regulated stands) MUST be issued with a General Safety Certificate by the relevant certifying authority (i.e. district council).</p> <p>A General Safety Certificate is issued for an indefinite period but should be reviewed by the relevant district council annually, or more frequently if required.</p> <p>Following a review and where amendments are made by the council, an updated General Safety Certificate must be re-issued to the certificate holder. This in turn, must be promptly forwarded by the licensee/ licence applicant to the licensor. If there are no alterations, the council should re-sign and date the signature page (only) contained within the existing certificate and issue (the single page only) to the certificate holder. As above, this should be promptly forwarded to the licensor.</p> <p>For certificated grounds, match planning and organisation arrangements should comply with the terms and conditions of the General Safety Certificate issued by the relevant district council. Written confirmation that the licence applicant is continuing to operate within the requirements of the legislation without any significant breaches of the terms and conditions must also be obtained from the relevant district council.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>b) Third-party Ground Safety Certifications – Non-certificated Grounds/ Parts of Grounds</p> <p>Grounds, or parts of a ground which are not subject to certification (i.e. the part of a ground which is outside the area of the regulated stand(s) and any associated escape route from same), under the Safety of Sports Grounds (Northern Ireland) Order 2006, must provide appropriate third-party safety confirmations for the ground (or part thereof) covering structural, electrical, fire and mechanical safety. These confirmations must be on the relevant IFA issued template documentation only and must be obtained from, and approved by, suitably qualified persons who hold valid and appropriate third-party certification. Evidence of such certification must be provided.</p>

No.	Grade	Description
		<p>The third-party safety confirmations should cover the period up to and including 31 May 2022 (the end of the season for which the licence is to be granted). If such confirmations are provided for a longer period of time, the additional period covered should be to 31 May of any subsequent licence season.</p> <p>Where the validity period of any third-party safety confirmation does not extend to 31 May 2022, it remains entirely the responsibility of the licence applicant to ensure that an updated, current, valid third-party safety confirmation template remains on file with the Club Licensing and Facilities Unit at all times.</p>
I.03	A	<p>STADIUM EVACUATION PLAN</p> <p>The licence applicant must have in place an evacuation plan which ensures that the whole ground can be evacuated in the case of an emergency. The plan must be developed specific to the ground of use and should be formulated in co-operation with the Police Service of Northern Ireland, the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service and the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service whilst the licence applicant/ ground management should also seek input from any other agency/ body which could provide a meaningful input.</p> <p>The stadium evacuation plan for:</p> <p>a) a certificated ground (i.e. designated ground or ground which contains one or more regulated stands) must be incorporated within the club's contingency plans and comply with the terms and conditions of the General Safety Certificate.</p> <p>Note that in the case of a ground with one or more regulated stands, the evacuation plan must also incorporate the part of the ground which is not subject to certification (i.e. the part of the ground which is outside the area of the regulated stand(s) and any associated escape routes from same).</p> <p>b) a non-certificated ground must be submitted directly to the licensor.</p> <p>In respect of a non-certificated ground, or part of a ground which is outside the remit of the General Safety Certificate, the licence applicant/ ground management must be mindful that an evacuation plan is only one element of contingency planning. It is recommended that an assessment of the risk of any incident occurring at the stadium which might prejudice safety or disrupt normal operations should be carried out and a structured and progressive response formulated into a wider contingency plan.</p>
I.04	A	<p>TRAINING FACILITIES – AVAILABILITY / APPROVED INFRASTRUCTURE</p> <p>The licence applicant must have training facilities available throughout the year.</p> <p>The licence applicant either:</p> <p>a) owns the training facilities, or</p> <p>b) if it does not own the training facilities, must provide a written contract with the owner(s) of the training facilities it will use. This contract must guarantee the use of the training facilities by all teams of the licence applicant, taking into account its youth development programme, during the licence season.</p> <p>The licence applicant must have available training facilities which comply with the requirements set by the IFA and should as a minimum include:</p> <p>a) outdoor training facilities to include one full size grass or synthetic pitch with floodlighting;</p> <p>b) indoor facilities;</p>

No.	Grade	Description
		c) two dressing rooms of a size for 18 persons with 4 showers; and d) one suitably equipped medical room. It is also recommended that training facilities are equipped with defibrillators.
I.05	A	STADIUM – GROUND RULES Each stadium must issue ground rules and affix them to the stadium in such a way that the spectators can read them. These rules must as a minimum (REFER TO ANNEXE F): a) Admission rights b) Abandonment or postponement of events c) Description of prohibitions and penalties, such as entering the field of play, throwing objects, use of foul or abusive language, racist behaviour, etc. d) Restrictions with regard to alcohol, fireworks, banners etc. e) Seating rules f) Causes for ejection from the ground. Ground rules must be placed in an area visible to supporters accessing the stadium. This requirement will be assessed as part of an official site inspection.

8. PERSONNEL AND ADMINISTRATIVE CRITERIA

8.1 INTRODUCTION

Nowadays a football club is not only a sports club but a commercial enterprise that has an interdependent relationship with several other parties. The members, the supporters, the media, the sponsors, the suppliers, the commercial partners, the local community and in some cases the shareholders of the football club are increasingly involved and interested in the development and results of a football club.

It is pertinent that professional support be sought from specialists from various economic and professional fields and industries (e.g. marketing, finance, entertainment, media, etc.). This is because a professional staff can share its knowledge and experience of club affairs and supporters and will be in a better position to satisfy the needs and demands of club participants and stakeholders who must be treated as clients.

In this respect, football clubs need advice from professionals, experienced, well-educated and innovative people who can bring different skills and know-how into the club and help to satisfy the additional needs and demands of today's football.

Football clubs already operate in a competitive sporting environment but off the field they are also involved in economic competition. Clubs must strengthen their profitability in the long term and look for new and different sources of revenue in addition to the existing ones, i.e. TV, gate receipts, sponsorships, etc; this will enable them to become more independent of the income they receive from their sporting success and will have greater possibilities of functioning as a financially successful entity.

The following requirements constitute a first and right step towards a better and more professional future for the clubs.

We believe that clubs should find their own strategy, according to their strength, demands and market possibilities, and do their utmost to achieve their objectives step by step.

8.2 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the personnel and administrative criteria are that:

- licence applicants are managed in a professional way;
- licence applicants have available well-educated, qualified and skilled specialists with a certain knowledge experience;
- the players of the first and other squads are trained by qualified coaches and supported by the necessary medical staff.

8.3 BENEFITS FOR LICENCE APPLICANTS

Professional, well-educated and experienced staff is of key importance to run a licence applicant in an efficient and effective manner. Being professional at all levels and in all functions does not mean that licence applicants must recruit only full-time staff. Our intentions are clear in this respect and our focus is on professional manner and how the function is done by persons appointed for it. Each criterion in this chapter is important for the smooth and successful running of the licence applicant, and every licence applicant shall be able to afford these functions in financial terms. The professionalism will also be improved if licence applicants define clear profiles for these functions, which include the main activities, the main responsibilities (technical, financial and decision-making power, if applicable) and the requirements for the job (education, working experience, technical know-how, IT-skills, human competences, language skills and others including football know-how).

It is up to the competent decision-making body of the licence applicant to look for people who meet the set requirements and to engage those candidates that meet the defined profile (e.g. full-time, part-time and volunteer).

Qualified coaches are the basis for high quality of education within the football teams. In order to achieve this objective, licence applicants need the support of the Irish Football Association to establish a coaching education programme. To improve the football skills of development teams as well as the first squad in all aspects (technically, tactically and physically), trained and qualified coaches are needed. Each development player who dreams of becoming a professional footballer is entitled to the best-qualified coaches from the youngest age. Other skills (e.g. psychological training, media training, social skills, language skills, etc.) are necessary and must be achieved through specific training organised by the Irish Football Association with a view to issuing the relevant coaching diplomas. This is not only desirable but is a must.

The implementation of the *UEFA Coaching Convention* throughout Europe offers an opportunity to attend coaching diploma courses at different levels and to achieve the corresponding UEFA coaching diploma. The UEFA Pro, UEFA A and UEFA B coaching diploma offer “free movement of coaches” within the UEFA member associations as part of the *UEFA Coaching Convention*.

Additional support from specialists in safety and security matters will then ensure that matches are organised as safe events.

8.4 CRITERIA

8.4.1 “A” CRITERIA

No.	Grade	Description
P.01	A	<p>CLUB SECRETARIAT</p> <p>The licence applicant must have an appropriate office space in which to run its administration. It must also ensure that its office is open to communicate with the IFA and the public and contains, as a minimum, the following administrative equipment: phone, email facilities and a website.</p> <p>The licence applicant must have available an appropriate number of skilled secretarial staff according to its needs to run its daily business.</p>
P.02	A	<p>ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGER</p> <p>The licence applicant must have appointed a manager who is responsible for running its operative matters linked to women’s football.</p>
P.03	A	<p>CLUB MEDICAL DOCTOR</p> <p>The licence applicant must have appointed at least one doctor who is responsible for medical support of the women’s senior team during matches and training as well as for doping prevention.</p> <p>The doctor must be registered with the General Medical Council and hold a qualification and/or demonstrate experience in pre-hospital immediate care, including as a minimum life support and trauma management.</p> <p>The doctor must provide:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Copy of registration with General Medical Council (GMC); 2. Copy of medical insurance coverage from the Medical Protection Societies, Medical Defence Association or equivalent. <p>The doctor must be registered with the IFA.</p>
P.04	A	<p>PHYSIOTHERAPIST/ SPORTS THERAPIST</p> <p>The licence applicant must have appointed at least one physiotherapist/ sports-therapist being responsible for injury assessment, treatment, rehabilitation and prevention for the women’s senior team.</p> <p>The physiotherapist/ sports-therapist must be registered with the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC)/ Society of Sports Therapists or equivalent* and must also provide a copy of his medical insurance coverage.</p> <p>*The professional body must confirm that a member has undergone relevant training and has the necessary skills, knowledge and experience to satisfy the purpose and responsibilities of this role.</p> <p>The appropriate body of the licence applicant (Board/ Committee) must have made the appointment.</p> <p>The physiotherapist/ sports-therapist must be registered with the IFA.</p>
P.05	A	<p>FIRST TEAM MANAGER</p> <p>The licence applicant must have appointed a First Team Manager who is responsible for (and recognised as being responsible for), as a minimum, football matters, team selection, tactics and management of the women’s senior team.</p> <p>The First Team Manager must:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) hold a valid UEFA A coaching licence or any valid non-UEFA coaching diploma which is equivalent to the UEFA A coaching licence and recognised by UEFA as such.

No.	Grade	Description
		In addition, the First Team Manager is also responsible for instructing the players and other technical staff in the dressing room and the technical area before, during and after matches; as well as carrying out expected media activities.
P.06	A	<p>YOUTH COACH</p> <p>The licence applicant must have appointed at least one qualified coach who is responsible for all football matters related to the youth team(s) as defined in S.01.</p> <p>The First Team Manager cannot fulfil this role.</p> <p>The Youth Coach must as a minimum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) hold a valid UEFA B coaching licence or any valid non-UEFA coaching diploma which is equivalent to the UEFA B coaching licence and recognised by UEFA as such; or b) have already started and attended the UEFA B coaching licence course and be working towards completion in a reasonable timeframe. Simple inscription to the UEFA B coaching licence course is not sufficient to meet this criterion.
P.07	A	<p>COMMUNITY RELATIONS LIAISON OFFICER</p> <p>A dedicated Community Relations Liaison Officer (CRLO) must be appointed by each licence applicant to liaise with the IFA Football for All team (the licence applicant should cross reference with the requirements of S.05).</p>
P.08	A	<p>RIGHTS AND DUTIES</p> <p>The appointment of staff members defined in P.01 to P.07 must have been made by the appropriate body of the licence applicant and the post holder must have his role, responsibilities, rights and duties defined in writing.</p> <p>Confirmation of the above must be provided on club-headed paper and duly authorised on behalf of the Board/ Management Committee of the licence applicant.</p>
P.09	A	<p>DUTY OF REPLACEMENT DURING THE LICENCE SEASON</p> <p>If a function defined in criteria P.01 - P.07 becomes vacant during the licence season, the licensee must ensure that, within a period of a maximum of 60 days, the function is taken over by someone who holds the required qualification. Licence applicants must be mindful of the applicability of 4.4.1.5 in this regard.</p> <p>In the event that a function defined in criteria P.01 - P.07 becomes vacant due to illness or accident, the licensor may grant an extension to the 60-day period only if reasonably satisfied that the person concerned is still medically unfit to resume his duties. Any extension request must be submitted in writing to the licensor.</p> <p>Should a function defined in criteria P.01 - P.07 becomes vacant in the 60-day period prior to 31 May 2021 (that being the deadline for submission of the list of licensing decisions to UEFA), the UEFA Club Licence could still be granted provided that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The function was previously held by a person fulfilling the relative qualification requirements stipulated in P.01 - P.07; • The function must not remain vacant, but an interim replacement must be appointed at the moment of the licensing decision • A replacement having the required qualifications must be appointed within 60 days of the function becoming vacant. <p>Each replacement must be notified to the IFA by the licence applicant/ licensee within 7 working days after it occurred.</p> <p><i>Compliance with this criterion shall be assessed by the licensor on an ongoing basis.</i></p>

9. LEGAL CRITERIA

9.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter defines the minimum legal criteria for licence applicants.

9.2 CRITERIA

9.2.1 “A” CRITERIA

No.	Grade	Description
L.01	A	<p>DECLARATION IN RESPECT OF PARTICIPATION IN THE UEFA WOMEN’S CHAMPIONS LEAGUE</p> <p>The licence applicant must submit a legally valid declaration confirming the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The licence applicant confirms it has read and fully understood the <i>IFA Club Licensing Manual for Participation in the UEFA Women’s Champions League</i>, as well as its Annexes, Templates, Application Form, Confidentiality Agreement and Contract and agrees to abide by and comply with the requirements and conditions contained therein. 2) The licence applicant confirms it has the authority to submit this declaration by virtue of its own statutes, constitutions and rules. 3) The licence applicant confirms that all licensing documents submitted to the IFA are complete, accurate, up to date, duly certified where necessary and submitted in a timely manner. The licence applicant accepts that the licensor will base its decisions on the documentation submitted by the licence applicant to the Licensing Administration as part of the application only and that previous submissions, documents or information provided to the IFA for any other reason or as part of any other application will not be deemed to have fulfilled any of the licensing requirements herein unless otherwise agreed in writing between the parties herein. 4) The licence applicant confirms that it fully authorises the Licensing Manager, the Licensing Administration, the decision-making bodies, the UEFA Administration and the UEFA Organs for the Administration of Justice to examine all documentation pertaining to its application for the UEFA Club Licence and to its appeal (if applicable) and any relevant document and to seek clarification, further evidence, explanations and all other information from any relevant public authority or private body in accordance with national law. 5) The licence applicant agrees to respect at all times and recognises as legally binding the rules, statutes, articles, regulations, directives and decisions of FIFA, UEFA, the Irish Football Association and the Northern Ireland Football League as well as the jurisdiction of the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) in Lausanne (Switzerland) as provided for in the relevant articles of the UEFA Statutes. 6) The licence applicant confirms that it will abide by and observe the club licensing regulations of the IFA and the UEFA Club Licensing and Financial Fair Play Regulations. 7) It will be accountable for any consequences of an entity included in the reporting perimeter not abiding by and observing 5) and 6) above. 8) The licence applicant understands that the Licensing Committee is empowered to take the first instance decision on its UEFA Club Licence application and that the Licensing Appeals Committee is empowered to take the final decision on

No.	Grade	Description
		<p>whether the UEFA Club Licence is issued. It accepts the powers of these two decision-making bodies as outlined in this Manual(s) and agrees to be bound by the decisions of these two decision-making bodies. The licence applicant further recognises and agrees that evidence, or facts, not presented in line with the core process and not placed before the Licensing Committee will not be considered by the Licensing Appeals Committee when reaching its decision.</p> <p>9) The licence applicant confirms that it is legally based in the territory of the IFA and will play its home matches only within that territory. It accepts that a change in its designated stadium is subject to a decision of the competent body responsible for the respective competitions.</p> <p>10) The licence applicant confirms that it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the right to use the name and brands of the club and agrees not to change the name of the club for advertising/promotional purposes; and • Agrees to accept no clauses in contracts with television, sponsors or other commercial partners that could restrict the licence applicant in its freedom of decision or affect its management. <p>11) The licence applicant accepts that only member clubs of the IFA as defined in this Manual can apply for and obtain the UEFA Club Licence and that members who are individuals cannot apply for or obtain the UEFA Club Licence. It further accepts that licence applicants only can appeal and be a party to appeal proceedings.</p> <p>12) The licence applicant accepts that it must be fully responsible for and have the sole control over all the football activities that are related to the participation in national and international football competitions, as well as for the club licensing requirements.</p> <p>13) The licence applicant accepts that it must be the sole beneficial owner of all the licence applicant's players' contracts and must have sole control of football activities. The licence applicant understands that it is responsible for ensuring that compensation paid to players arising from contractual or legal obligations and all the revenues arising from gate receipts are accounted for in the books of the licence applicant.</p> <p>14) The licence applicant accepts that it is responsible for ensuring that all of its players are registered with the IFA and, if non-amateur players, have a written player's labour contract with the licence applicant.</p> <p>15) The licence applicant confirms it has provided evidence (if any) with the IFA application form of any relationships (financial or otherwise) between the licence applicant and any other legal entities that are wholly owned, associated or affiliated to the licence applicant. The licence applicant confirms it will inform the IFA of any such relationships which are formed during the life of the UEFA Club Licence.</p> <p>16) The licence applicant confirms that it will promptly inform the IFA about any significant change, event or condition of major economic importance.</p> <p>17) The licence applicant confirms its acceptance of the form of confidentiality agreement provided by the Licensing Administration.</p> <p>18) The licence applicant accepts that the Licensing Administration has the right to make public statements where the licence applicant formally applies for the UEFA Club Licence or subsequently withdraws its UEFA Club Licence application at any time during the process and/or for the purpose of communicating details of any sanction applied by the Licensing Committee to any licence applicant.</p>

No.	Grade	Description
		<p>19) The licence applicant confirms that it will only play in competitions recognised and endorsed by the IFA at national level and will only participate in competitions at international level that are recognised by UEFA or FIFA. For the avoidance of doubt this does not relate to friendly matches.</p> <p>20) The licensor or its nominated bodies have the power to carry out spot checks on licence applicant by attending at the licence applicant or grounds without prior notice and shall be entitled to examine all documentation relating to licensing requirements and to carry out checks on any aspect of club licensing requirements.</p> <p>21) The licence applicant acknowledges that UEFA reserves the right to execute compliance audits at national level in accordance with the <i>IFA Club Licensing Manual for Participation in the UEFA Women's Champions League</i>.</p> <p>22) The licence applicant accepts that the licensor reserves the right to seek clarifications and/or assurances in relation to any and all creditors/ debtors and/or assets/ liabilities identified (or subsequently made known). This may include documentation where available.</p>
L.02	A	<p>CURRENT CONSTITUTION AND RULES</p> <p>The licence applicant must provide a copy of its current Memorandum and Articles of Association or, in the event that the licence applicant is a private members club or an unincorporated body/ association, a copy of its current Constitution and Rules.</p>
L.03	A	<p>NAME, REGISTERED ADDRESS AND LEGAL FORM</p> <p>The licence applicant must provide confirmation of its full legal name, address of headquarters and legal form (whether a legal company, limited liability company (by share), limited liability company (by guarantee), private members club or unincorporated association). An extract from a public register must be provided.</p>
L.04	A	<p>BOARD OF DIRECTORS/ MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS</p> <p>The licence applicant must provide a list of its Board of Directors (Limited Company) or Management Committee (Unincorporated Association), identifying its authorised signatories and detailing the signing rules in place.</p>
L.05	A	<p>MEMBERSHIP OF IFA/ CLUB RETURN</p> <p>The licence applicant must be an affiliated member of the Irish Football Association and fulfil the conditions of membership defined in the Articles of Association and regulations of the Irish Football Association.</p> <p>This must be demonstrated by submission of the Club Return (this shall include the name and registered address of the licence applicant).</p>
L.06	A	<p>BOARD MEETING MINUTES</p> <p>The IFA may request relevant excerpts from the licence applicant's executive body (e.g. Board / Committee) meeting minutes in order to clarify and / or confirm statements or assertions made by the licence applicant regarding its UEFA Club Licence application.</p>

No.	Grade	Description
L.07	A	<p>INSURANCE</p> <p>The licence applicant must furnish evidence of public and employers liability insurance.</p> <p>Registration requires confirmation that licence applicants as a minimum have Employers' Liability Insurance for £10 million Indemnity and Public/ Product Liability Insurance for £2 million Indemnity.</p> <p>The documentation from a bona fide insurer must be provided to satisfy the above.</p>

All legal documentation/ declarations must be executed by the relevant competent signatories no more than three months prior to the deadline for its submission to the licensor.

10. FINANCIAL CRITERIA

10.1 INTRODUCTION

This Manual provides a level of requirements to be met by licence applicants who wish to compete in the UEFA club competitions and hence benefit from the exposure and revenue this level of competition can generate.

The financial criteria relates to:

- *Historic financial information* about a club's financial performance and position; and
- *Overdue payables* towards football clubs, employees and social/tax authorities.

The financial criteria to be met for participation in the 2021/22 licence season are set out in this chapter. This means that financial information in respect of the *financial year* ending in 2020 will form part of the information to be assessed by the IFA for licence applicants to obtain the UEFA Club Licence for the 2021/22 licence season.

10.2 OBJECTIVES

The financial criteria aim principally to:

- Improve the economic and financial capability of the clubs;
- Increase a club's transparency and credibility;
- Place the necessary importance on the protection of creditors; and
- Safeguard the continuity of international club competitions for one season.

10.3 BENEFITS

Implementation of the financial criteria will help deliver both short and long-term improvements for licence applicants, the IFA and for the football family in general.

For the **football family** the financial criteria shall help to:

- Safeguard the continuity and integrity of club competitions for one season;
- Increase the transparency and credibility of clubs' financial operations and, thereby, of Northern Irish football in general;
- Improve confidence in the financial viability of the football industry;
- Create a more attractive market for the game's commercial partners and investors;
- Provide the basis for fair competition, because competition is not just about the teams' on-the-pitch but off it as well.

For the **IFA** the financial criteria shall help to:

- Improve its understanding of the financial position and prospects of its member clubs;
- Enhance its ability to be proactive in assisting its member clubs with financial issues; and
- Provide a starting point for club benchmarking at a national level.

For the **licence applicants**, compliance with the financial criteria shall help to:

- Improve standards and quality of financial management and planning activities;
- Enable better management decision-making;
- Enhance clubs' financial and business credibility with stakeholders;
- Improve financial stability; and
- Enhance revenue generating ability and cost management.

10.4. ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

10.4.1 THE CRITERION

No.	Grade	Description
F.01	A	<p>ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS</p> <p>The licence applicant must prepare and submit a set of annual financial statements covering a period of at least 12 months in respect of the statutory closing date prior to the deadline for submission of the application to the licensor (31 March 2021).</p> <p>The annual financial statements shall be based on the UK legislation for incorporated companies and are to be prepared by a qualified accountant (external to the club) as defined by the CCAB (Consultative Committee of Accountancy Bodies), i.e. ICAEW, ICAS, ICAI, ACCA, CIMA or CIPFA.</p> <p>The layout of the financial statements is a matter for each licence applicant but must consist of, as a minimum:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a balance sheet; a profit and loss account.

10.4.2. REPORTING PERIOD

The licence applicant must prepare and submit to the IFA its audited annual financial statements in respect of its most recent statutory closing date prior to 31 March 2021 (i.e. the deadline for submission of the financial documents to the licensor).

CONSOLIDATION/ COMBINATION REQUIREMENTS

Consolidated financial statements are the financial statements of a group in which the assets, liabilities, equity, income, expenses and cash flows of the parent and its subsidiaries are presented as those of a single company.

Combined financial statements are those that include information about two or more commonly controlled entities without information about the controlling entity.

10.4.3. LICENSOR'S ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES AND DECISION

PRINCIPLE

The licensor defines the assessment procedures, ensuring equal treatment of all clubs applying for a licence. It assesses the documentation submitted by the clubs, considers whether this is appropriate and determines to its reasonable satisfaction

whether each criterion has been met and what information, if any, is needed for each licence to be granted.

ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

It is the responsibility of the licensor to assess the annual financial statements to form a basis for the licensing decision.

In respect of the annual financial statements, the licensor must perform the following minimum assessment procedures:

- a) Assess and consider the annual financial statements submitted to form a basis for the licensing decision.

The UEFA Club Licence must be refused:

- 1) if the annual financial statements are not submitted to the IFA within the defined deadline.
- 2) if the licence applicant submits, within the defined deadline, annual financial statements that do not meet the minimum requirements for the content and accounting.

10.5. NO OVERDUE PAYABLES TOWARDS FOOTBALL CLUBS ARISING FROM TRANSFER ACTIVITIES

10.5.1 THE CRITERION

No.	Grade	Description
F.02	A	<p>NO OVERDUE PAYABLES ARISING FROM TRANSFER ACTIVITIES</p> <p>The licence applicant must prove that as at 31 March 2021 it has no overdue payables (as defined in 10.8.5 below) towards other football clubs as a result of transfers undertaken prior to 31 December 2020.</p> <p>Payables are those amounts due to football clubs as a result of transfer activities, including any amount due upon fulfilment of certain conditions, training compensation and solidarity contributions as defined in the FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players, and any joint and several liability decided by a competent authority for the termination of a contract by a player.</p> <p>The licence applicant must prepare and submit to the licensor a transfers table. It must be prepared even if there have been no transfers/loans during the relevant period.</p> <p>All transfer and loan activities <u>into</u> the licence applicant only must be listed.</p>

10.5.2. REPORTING DATE

Regardless of the statutory closing date of a licence applicant, the criterion is to be assessed as at 31 March preceding the licence season.

10.5.3 INFORMATION TO BE PREPARED BY THE LICENCE APPLICANT

10.5.3.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE CONTENT OF THE TRANSFERS TABLE

For the purpose of criterion F.02, payables are those amounts due to football clubs arising from transfer activities. These include training compensation and solidarity contributions as defined in the FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players, as well as any amount due upon fulfilment of certain conditions.

10.5.3.2. TRANSFERS TABLE

The licence applicant must disclose:

- a) all new player registrations (including loans) in the 12-month period up to 31 December 2020, irrespective of whether there is an amount outstanding to be paid at 31 December 2020.

- b) all transfers for which an amount is outstanding to be paid as at 31 December 2020, irrespective of whether they were undertaken in the 12-month period up to 31 December 2020 or before; and
- c) all transfers subject to a claim pending before the competent authority under national law or proceedings pending before a national or international football authority or relevant arbitration tribunal.

The transfers table must contain the following information as a minimum (in respect of each player transfer, including loans):

- a) Player (identification by name and date of birth);
- b) Date of the transfer/ loan agreement;
- c) Name of the football club that formerly held the registration;
- d) Transfer (or loan) fee paid and/or payable (including training compensation and solidarity contribution) even if payment has not been requested by the creditor;
- e) Other direct costs of acquiring the registration paid and/or payable;
- f) Amount settled and payment date;
- g) Balance payable as at 31 December 2020 in respect of each player transfer including the due date for each unpaid element;
- h) Balance payable as at 31 March 2021 (rolled forward from 31 December 2020) including the due date for each unpaid element, together with explanatory comment; and
- i) Conditional amounts (contingent liabilities) not yet recognised in the balance sheet as at 31 December 2020; and
- j) Amounts subject to any claim/proceedings pending as at 31 March 2021.

The transfers table must be approved by management and this must be evidenced by way of a brief statement and signature on behalf of the executive body of the licence applicant.

10.5.4. ASSESSMENT OF THE INFORMATION

10.5.4.1 ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES

The Irish Football Association will carry out the following procedures to assess criterion F.02:

- a) Reading the transfer payables table prepared by management;
- b) Making enquiries of management regarding the compilation of the transfer payables table;
- c) Check the mathematical accuracy of the transfers table;
- d) Select all or a sample of player transfers/loans, compare the corresponding agreements with the information contained in the transfers table and highlight the selected transfers/loans;
- e) Select all or a sample of transfer payments, compare them with the information contained in the transfers table and highlight the selected payments;
- f) If, according to the transfers table, there is an amount due as at 31 March, that concerns a transfer that occurred before 31 December of the previous year, examine that by 31 March at the latest:
 - 1) An agreement has been reached as per 10.5.5 point 3 b); or
 - 2) A dispute/ claim has arisen as per 10.5.5 point 3 c) or d).
 - 3) All reasonable measures have been taken as per 10.5.5 point 3 e).
- g) Examine all or a selection of bank statements in support of payments;
- h) If applicable: examine documents, including agreements with the relevant football club(s) and/or correspondence with the competent body, in support of f) 1), f) 2) and/or f) 3) above.

10.5.5. LICENSOR DECISION

The UEFA Club Licence must be refused if:

- 1) The information in respect of payables towards football clubs arising from transfer activities is not submitted to the IFA within the defined deadline.
- 2) The licence applicant submits, within the defined deadline, information that does not meet the minimum disclosure requirements.
- 3) As at 31 March 2021, the licence applicant has overdue payables that refer to transfer activities that occurred prior to 31 December 2020.

Payables are considered as overdue if they are not paid according to the contractual or legal terms.

However, payables are not considered as overdue if the licence applicant (i.e. debtor club) is able to prove by 31 March preceding the licence season that:

- a) It has paid the relevant amount in full; or
- b) It has concluded an agreement which has been accepted in writing by the creditor to extend the deadline for payment beyond the applicable deadline (note: the fact that a creditor may not have requested payment of an amount does not constitute an extension of the deadline); or
- c) It has brought a legal claim which has been deemed admissible by the competent authority under national law or has opened proceedings with the national or international football authorities or relevant arbitration tribunal contesting liability in relation to the overdue payables; however, if the decision-making bodies consider that such claim has been brought or such proceedings have been opened for the sole purpose of avoiding the applicable deadlines set out in this Manual (i.e. in order to buy time), the relevant amount will still be considered as an overdue payable; or
- d) It has contested to the competent authority under national law, the national or international football authorities or the relevant arbitration tribunal, a claim which has been brought or proceedings which have been opened against it by a creditor in respect of overdue payables and is able to demonstrate to the reasonable satisfaction of the decision-making bodies that it has established reasons for contesting the claim or proceedings which have been opened; however, if the decision making bodies consider the reasons for contesting the claim or proceedings which have been opened as manifestly unfounded, the amount will still be considered as an overdue payable; or
- e) It is able to demonstrate to the reasonable satisfaction of the decision-making bodies that it has taken all reasonable measures to identify and pay the creditor club(s) in respect of training compensation and solidarity contributions (as defined in the *FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players*).

10.6. NO OVERDUE PAYABLES TOWARDS EMPLOYEES AND SOCIAL/TAX AUTHORITIES

10.6.1. THE CRITERION

No.	Grade	Description
F.03	A	<p>NO OVERDUE PAYABLES IN RESPECT OF EMPLOYEES</p> <p>The licence applicant must prove that as at 31 March 2021 it has no overdue payables (as defined in 10.6.5) in respect of its employees as a result of contractual or legal obligations towards its employees that arose prior to 31 December 2020.</p> <p>All employees that have worked for the licence applicant in the period from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2020, including those who have left their post during this time, must be accounted for on both the licence applicant's No Payables to Employees Form and Employees Table.</p> <p>Signed confirmation must be obtained from each paid employee at the time of leaving that the licence applicant has met all its financial obligations arising from contractual agreements to the employee. Where signed confirmation is not obtained, supporting payroll documentation must be provided to confirm all payments due have been made.</p>

10.6.2. REPORTING DATE

Regardless of the statutory closing date or interim financial reporting date of the licence applicant, the criterion is to be assessed as at 31 March preceding the licence season.

10.6.3 INFORMATION TO BE PREPARED BY THE LICENCE APPLICANT

10.6.3.1. INTRODUCTION TO THE CONTENT OF PAYABLES IN RESPECT OF EMPLOYEES

For the purpose of criterion F.03, the term 'employees' includes the following persons:

- All professional players according to the applicable FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players; and
- The administrative, technical, medical and security staff specified in personnel and administrative criteria P.01 – P.07 of Chapter 8.

Payables are all forms of consideration due in respect of employees as a result of contractual or legal obligations including wages, salaries, image rights payments, bonuses and other benefits. Amounts payable to people who, for various reasons, are no longer employed by the licence applicant fall within the scope of criterion F.07 and must be settled within the period stipulated in the contract and/or defined by law, regardless of how such payables are accounted for in the financial statements.

An employee confirmation letter must be submitted to the Irish Football Association by 31 March preceding the licence season. Where signed confirmation letter is not obtained, supporting payroll documentation must be provided to confirm all payments due have been made.

10.6.3.2. EMPLOYEES TABLE

The licence applicant must prepare and submit to the licensor an employees table showing:

- a) all employees who were employed at any time during the year up to 31 December 2020; i.e. not just those who remain on 31 December 2020.
- b) all employees in respect of whom there is an amount outstanding to be paid at 31 December 2020, irrespective of whether they were employed during the year up to 31 December 2020; and

- c) all employees in respect of whom there is a claim pending before the competent authority under national law or proceedings pending before a national or international football authority or relevant arbitration tribunal.

The following information must be given, as a minimum, in respect of each employee:

- a) name of the employee;
- b) position/function of the employee;
- c) start date;
- d) end date (if applicable);
- e) the balance payable as at 31 December 2020, including the due date for each unpaid element; and
- f) any payable as at 31 March 2021 (rolled forward from 31 December 2020), including the due date for each unpaid element, together with explanatory comment; and
- g) amounts subject to any claim/proceedings pending as at 31 March.

The licence applicant must reconcile the total liability as per the employees table to the figure in the financial statements balance sheet for 'Accounts payable towards employees' or to the underlying accounting records.

The employees table must be approved by management and this must be evidenced by way of a brief statement and signature on behalf of the executive body of the licence applicant.

No.	Grade	Description
F.04	A	<p>NO OVERDUE PAYABLES TOWARDS SOCIAL/ TAX AUTHORITIES</p> <p>The licence applicant must prove that as at 31 March 2021 it has no overdue payables (as defined in 10.6.5) towards social/tax authorities (HMRC):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) as a result of contractual or legal obligations in respect of its employees i.e. PAYE/ NIC that arose on or before 31 December 2020 b) as a result of contractual or legal obligations relating to VAT, Corporation Tax and any other category of tax that arose on or before 31 December 2020. <p>If amounts payable in relation to PAYE/NIC, VAT Corporation Tax and any other category of tax or amount due to HMRC are overdue and have been deferred by mutual agreement, then written confirmation of such a deferment agreement MUST be provided relating to each category of tax owed.</p> <p>Such written deferment agreement(s) MUST be explicit in terms of total amounts owed and applicable deadlines/ schedule for payment(s) MUST also be included.</p> <p>Licence applicants must detail their PAYE/NIC and VAT position over the period 1 January – 31 December 2020.</p>

10.6.3.3. DOCUMENTATION OF PAYABLES TOWARDS SOCIAL/ TAX AUTHORITIES

The licence applicant shall submit to the Irish Football Association a social/ tax table showing the amount payable (if any) to the competent social/tax authorities, as at 31 December of the year preceding the licence season and any claim/proceedings pending.

The following information must be given, as a minimum, in respect of each payable towards social/tax authorities, together with explanatory comment:

- a) Name of the creditor;
- b) Any payable as at 31 December, including the due date for each unpaid element;
- c) Any payable as at 31 March (rolled forward from 31 December), including the due date for each unpaid element, together with explanatory comment and supporting evidence; and

d) Amounts subject to any claim/proceedings pending as at 31 March.

The licence applicant must reconcile the total liability as per the social/tax table to the figure in the financial statements balance sheet for 'Accounts payable to social/tax authorities' or to the underlying accounting records.

The social/ tax table must be approved by management and this must be evidenced by way of a brief statement and signature on behalf of the executive body of the licence applicant.

The PAYE worksheet and the VAT reconciliation worksheet must be completed.

10.6.4 ASSESSMENT OF THE INFORMATION IN RELATION TO OVERDUE PAYABLES IN RESPECT OF EMPLOYEES AND TOWARDS SOCIAL/TAX AUTHORITIES

10.6.4.1 ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES

The licensor assesses the information submitted by the licence applicant, in particular the employees table and other corresponding supporting documents, as detailed below:

- a) Obtain the employees table prepared by management.
- c) Obtain and inspect all or a randomly selected sample of employee confirmation letters and compare the information to that contained in the list of employees.
- d) If there is an amount due as at 31 March that refers to payables in respect of contractual or legal obligations in respect of its employees that arose before the previous 31 December, examine that, by 31 March at the latest:
 - i) An agreement has been reached as per 10.6.5 point 3 b); or
 - ii) A dispute/claim/proceeding has been brought as per 10.6.5 point 3 c) or d).
- e) Examine all or a selection of bank statements in support of payments.
- f) If applicable: examine documents, including agreements with the relevant employee(s) and/or correspondence with the competent body, in support of the representations under d(i) and/or d(ii) above.

The licensor must also assess the further information submitted by the licence applicant, in particular the social/ tax table and other corresponding supporting documents, as detailed below.

- a) Obtain the social/ tax table prepared by management.
- c) Obtain corresponding supporting documents.
- d) If, there is an amount due as at 31 March that refers to payables towards social/ tax authorities (HMRC):
 - as a result of contractual or legal obligations in respect of its employees that arose on or before the previous 31 December,
 - as a result of contractual or legal obligations relating to VAT, Corporation Tax and any other category of tax that arose on or before 31 December

examine that, by 31 March at the latest:

- i) An agreement has been reached as per 10.6.5 point 3 b); or
- ii) A dispute/claim/proceeding has been brought as per 10.6.5 point 3 c) or d).
- e) Examine all or a selection of bank statements in support of payments.
- f) If applicable: examine documents, including agreements with the relevant social/tax authorities and/or correspondence with the competent body, in support of the representations under d(i) and/or d(ii) above.

10.6.5 LICENSOR DECISION

The IFA shall, as part of its assessment, read the information in relation to overdue payables in respect of employees and towards social/tax authorities and also read the auditor's report of factual findings.

The UEFA Club Licence must be refused:

- 1) If the information in respect of payables towards employees and social/ tax authorities is not submitted to the IFA within the defined deadline.
- 2) If the licence applicant submits, within the defined deadline, information that does not meet the minimum disclosure requirements.
- 3) As at 31 March 2021, the licence applicant has overdue payables in respect of its employees or towards social/ tax authorities as a result of contractual and legal obligations that arose on or before 31 December 2020.

Payables are considered as overdue if they are not paid according to the contractual or legal terms.

However, payables are not considered as overdue if the licence applicant (i.e. debtor club) is able to prove by 31 March preceding the licence season that:

- a) It has paid the relevant amount in full; or
- b) It has concluded an agreement which has been accepted in writing by the creditor to extend the deadline for payment beyond the applicable deadline (note: the fact that a creditor may not have requested payment of an amount does not constitute an extension of the deadline); or
- c) It has brought a legal claim which has been deemed admissible by the competent authority under national law or has opened proceedings with the national or international football authorities or relevant arbitration tribunal contesting liability in relation to the overdue payables; however, if the decision-making bodies consider that such claim has been brought or such proceedings have been opened for the sole purpose of avoiding the applicable deadlines set out in this Manual (i.e. in order to buy time), the relevant amount will still be considered as an overdue payable; or
- d) It has contested to the competent authority under national law, the national or international football authorities or the relevant arbitration tribunal, a claim which has been brought or proceedings which have been opened against it by a creditor in respect of overdue payables and is able to demonstrate to the reasonable satisfaction of the decision-making bodies that it has established reasons for contesting the claim or proceedings which have been opened; however, if the decision making bodies consider the reasons for contesting the claim or proceedings which have been opened as manifestly unfounded, the amount will still be considered as an overdue payable.

11. FINAL PROVISIONS

11.1 *Language of Correspondence*

All correspondence between UEFA and the Irish Football Association and/or the licensees must be in English.

11.2 *Annexes*

All Annexes to the present regulations form an integral part thereof.

11.3 *Implementing Provisions and Licensing Documents*

The Licensing Administration shall adopt, in the form of directives, circular letters, templates or any other documents, the detailed provisions and the licensing documents necessary for implementing this Manual.

11.4 *Issuance, Abrogation, Amendments and Entry into Force*

This Manual was issued by the Licensing Committee.

This Manual comes into force immediately after its issuance by the Licensing Committee.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Terms	Definitions
Administration Procedures	A voluntary or mandatory process that may be used as an alternative to the liquidation of an entity, often known as going into administration. The day-to-day management of the activities of an entity in administration may be operated by the administrator on behalf of the creditors.
Agent/ Intermediary	A natural or legal person who, for a fee or free of charge, represents players and/or clubs in negotiations with a view to concluding an employment contract or represents clubs in negotiations with a view to concluding a transfer agreement.
Agreed-upon procedures ("AUP")	In an engagement to perform agreed-upon procedures, an auditor is engaged to carry out those procedures of an audit nature to which the auditor and the entity and any appropriate third parties have agreed and to report on factual findings. The recipients of the report must form their own conclusions from the report by the auditor. The report is restricted to those parties that have agreed to the procedures to be performed since others, unaware of the reasons for the procedures, may misinterpret the results.
Associate	An entity, including an unincorporated entity such as a partnership, which is neither a subsidiary nor an interest in a joint venture and over which the investor has significant influence.
Budget	The schedules containing an entity's future financial information, based on management's assumptions about events that may occur in the future and possible actions by an entity.
Club licensing criteria	Requirements, divided into five categories (sporting, infrastructure, personnel and administrative, legal and financial), to be fulfilled by a licence applicant for it to be granted the UEFA Club Licence.
Club Licensing Quality Standard	Document that defines the minimum requirements with which licensors must comply to operate the club licensing system.
Club monitoring requirements	Requirements to be fulfilled by a licensee that has qualified for a UEFA club competition. These requirements are defined in the applicable UEFA Club Licensing and Financial Fair Play Regulations.
Control	The power to govern the financial and operating policies of an entity so as to obtain benefits from its activities. Control may be gained by share ownership, statutes or agreement.
Costs of acquiring a player's registration	Amounts paid and/or payable for the acquisition of a player's registration, excluding any internal development or other costs. They include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transfer fee and realised conditional transfer amounts, including training compensation and solidarity contributions, paid and/or payable to another football club and/or third party to transfer-in the player's registration; • Agents/intermediaries fees; and • Other direct costs of acquiring the player's registration e.g. transfer fee levy
Deadlines for submission of the application to the licensor	The dates by which the Licensor requires licence applicants to have submitted all relevant information for their applications for the UEFA Club Licence.

Deadline for submission of the list of licensing decisions to UEFA	The date by which the Irish Football Association must submit to UEFA the list of licensing decisions. This date is defined by UEFA each year and announced to the IFA. In principle this date is 31 May.
Event or condition of major economic importance	An event or condition that is considered material to the financial statements of the reporting entity/entities and would require a different (adverse) presentation of the results of the operations, financial position and net assets of the reporting entity/entities if it occurred during the preceding reporting period or interim period.
Future Financial Information	Information in respect of the financial performance and position of the club in the reporting periods ending in the years following commencement of the UEFA club competitions.
Government	Any form of government, including government agencies, government departments and similar bodies, whether local or national.
Group	A parent and all its subsidiaries. A parent is an entity that has one or more subsidiaries. A subsidiary is an entity, including an unincorporated entity such as a partnership that is controlled by another entity (known as the parent).
Image rights payments	Amounts due to employees (either directly or indirectly) as a result of contractual agreements with the licence applicant/licensee for the right to exploit their image or reputation in relation to football and/or non-football activities.
Interim period	A financial reporting period shorter than a full financial year. It does not necessarily have to be a six-month period.
International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS)	Standards and interpretations adopted by the International Accounting Standards Board (IASB). They comprise: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Financial Reporting Standards • International Accounting Standards • Interpretations originated by the International Financial Reporting Interpretations Committee (IFRIC) or the former Standing Interpretations Committee (SIC).
Joint control	The contractually agreed sharing of control over an economic activity, which exists only when the strategic financial and operating decisions relating to the activity require the unanimous consent of the parties sharing control (the venturers).
Joint venture	A contractual arrangement whereby two or more parties undertake an economic activity that is subject to joint control.
Key management personnel	Persons having authority over and responsibility for planning, directing and controlling the activities of an entity, directly or indirectly, including but not limited to any director (executive or otherwise) of the entity.
UEFA Club Licence	Certificate granted by the IFA confirming fulfilment of all minimum criteria by the licence applicant as part of the admission procedure for entering UEFA club competitions.
Licence applicant	Legal entity fully and solely responsible for the football first team participating in national and international club competitions which applies for the UEFA Club Licence.
Licensee	Licence applicant which has been granted the UEFA Club Licence by the IFA.
Licence season	UEFA season for which a licence applicant has applied for/been granted the UEFA Club Licence. It starts the day following the deadline for submission of the list of licensing decisions by the licensor to UEFA (this deadline being, in principle, 31 May) and lasts until the same deadline the following year.

Licensor	Body that operates the club licensing system, grants licences and undertakes certain tasks in respect of the UEFA club monitoring process. In Northern Ireland, the Licensor is the Irish Football Association (IFA).
List of licensing decisions	List submitted by the Licensor to UEFA containing, among other things, information about the licence applicants that have undergone the licensing process and been granted or refused the UEFA Club Licence by the decision-making bodies in the format established and communicated by the UEFA administration.
Materiality	Omissions or misstatements of items or information are material if they could individually or collectively influence the decisions of users taken on the basis of the information submitted by the club. Materiality depends on the size and nature of the omission or misstatement judged in the surrounding circumstances or context. The size or nature of the item or information, or a combination of both, could be the determining factor.
Minimum criteria	Criteria to be fulfilled by a licence applicant in order to be granted the UEFA Club Licence.
National accounting practice	The accounting and reporting practices and disclosures required of entities in the United Kingdom.
Parties Involved	A person or entity involved in the club licensing system, including the licensor, the licence applicant/licensee and any individual involved on their behalf.
Party	A person or legal entity.
Protection from creditors	Procedures pursuant to laws or regulations whose objectives are to protect an entity from creditors, rescue insolvent entities and allow them to carry on running their business as a going concern. This process encompasses administration procedures and other insolvency proceedings (that might result in a compromise with creditors, bankruptcy or liquidation).
Reporting entity/entities	A registered member of IFA or group of entities or some other combination of entities which is included in the reporting perimeter and which must provide the licensor with information for both club licensing and UEFA club monitoring purposes.
Reporting Period	A financial reporting period ending on a statutory closing date, whether this is a year or not.
Significant change	An event that is considered material to the documentation previously submitted to the licensor and that would require a different presentation if it occurred prior to submission of the documentation.
Significant influence	Ability to influence but not control financial and operating policy decision-making. Significant influence may be gained by share ownership, statute or agreement. For avoidance of doubt, a party or in aggregate parties with the same ultimate controlling party (excluding UEFA, IFA and NIFL) is deemed to have significant influence if it provides within a reporting period an amount equivalent to 30% or more of the licensee's total revenue.
Stadium	The venue for a competition match including, but not limited to, all surrounding properties and facilities (for example offices, hospitality areas, press centre and accreditation centre).
Statutory closing date	The annual accounting reference date of the reporting entity.
Supplementary information	<p>Financial information to be submitted to the licensor in addition to the financial statements if the minimum requirements for disclosure and accounting are not met.</p> <p>The supplementary information must be prepared on a basis of accounting, and accounting policies, consistent with the financial statements. Financial information must be extracted from sources consistent with those used for the preparation of the annual financial statements. Where appropriate, disclosures in the supplementary information must agree with, or be reconciled to, the relevant disclosures in the financial statements.</p>



Training facilities

The venue(s) at which a club's registered players undertake football training and/or youth development activities on a regular basis.



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