

Irish Football Association - Governing Body Endorsement Requirements for Men's Football

IRISH FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION MEN'S FOOTBALL - POINTS BASED SYSTEM 2026/27 SEASON

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

Any queries regarding these criteria or the application process should be directed to registrations@irishfa.com.

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

If a club is seeking a GBE during a transfer window, any application should be submitted to the IFA by midday on the relevant transfer deadline day (at the latest) in order for the IFA to process the application that day. If a club signs and registers a player who does not have a GBE, it should do so in the knowledge that the Player may not be granted a GBE if his application does not comply with the terms of these criteria and the Player may not be able to undertake any employment duties for the applicant club. Clubs are also advised to allow sufficient time for entry clearance or permission to stay to be granted. The time taken may vary depending upon where the player is making his application from. A guide to visa processing times is available on the Home Office website at www.gov.uk/visa-processing-times.

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

Consideration will be given to the following when applying the criteria: injury; a period of maternity or paternity leave; serious illness or any legitimate medical reasons; suspension; international duty; bereavement; or family crisis.

In order to obtain the GBE, the individual must not be subject to a provisional suspension or any unexpired period of ineligibility from playing and/ or coaching activities in any jurisdiction as a result of being charged with or found guilty of a corruption offence and/ or a doping offence and/ or another misconduct.

Clubs are reminded the onus is on them to ensure they are acting legally within the Immigration Rules and they must ensure that any individual they wish to employ holds the right to work in the UK. Further information regarding a sponsor's duties can be found here:

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/sponsorship-information-for-employers-and-educators>
- <https://www.gov.uk/check-job-applicant-right-to-work>

Please see the Glossary on page 12 for definitions of the terms used in this document.

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In reviewing these criteria, the Irish Football Association confirm we have read the Code of Practice for Sports Governing Bodies and agree to our roles and responsibilities as set out within. We confirm we have acted in full compliance with the principles of the Code during this annual review.

Prior to contacting the Home Office during the annual review of this criteria, the Irish Football Association confirms that it has consulted with Football Associations within the UK, as well as other interested parties related to football in the UK. The Irish Football Association confirms the Football Association, the Scottish Football Association, and the Football Association of Wales have been fully consulted regarding the contents of this document.

GOVERNING BODY ENDORSEMENT REQUIREMENTS

GBE Status

1. A club must obtain a GBE from the IFA before a player is permitted to undertake any employment duties for the club (including participation at training and in friendly matches). A player can register for a club without a GBE but, in order to play any football, he must have obtained a GBE, been assigned a Certificate of Sponsorship by that club and secured permission to stay under the International Sportsperson route (ISP) of the PBS (subject to satisfying any other eligibility requirements of the IFA and any competitions the club participates in).
2. A club can apply for a GBE for a player at any time during the Season. In order to apply for a GBE, a club must hold a valid Sponsor's Licence under ISP of the PBS. In order to apply for and obtain a valid Sponsor's Licence, a club must have obtained an endorsement letter for a Sponsor's Licence from the IFA. If a Club's Sponsor's Licence is revoked, any player who has obtained a GBE in order to play for the Club may have his permission curtailed and may have to make a change in employment application which must be granted before the player can undertake any employment duties for the new club.
3. If the IFA grants an application for a GBE for a player in accordance with these criteria, the club is permitted to assign a Certificate of Sponsorship to the player for the period covered by the GBE. The GBE must be presented to the Home Office when the club applies for entry clearance on behalf of a player, which must be done within 3 months of a Certificate of Sponsorship being assigned. Any Certificate of Sponsorship and a copy of the player's biometric residence permit must be submitted to the IFA by the club within 3 months of being assigned. Clubs must keep a copy of the relevant page of the player's passport evidencing their entitlement to work and contact details for the player, which must be provided to the IFA upon request. The club will also have to comply with any other criteria set by the Home Office in order to secure permission to stay under ISP of the PBS.
4. A GBE under ISP (long term) of the PBS will be granted for three years or the length of the player's contract (whichever is shorter) and a GBE under ISP (short term) of the PBS will be granted for twelve months or the length of the player's contract (whichever is shorter). A player will not be eligible to play for the club beyond the expiry date of the GBE unless the club has applied for and obtained an Extended GBE before the existing GBE has expired in accordance with these criteria and the PBS.

Extensions to or transfers of a GBE

5. A player who has been granted a GBE under ISP (short term) of the PBS can apply (in country) to transfer to a GBE under ISP (long term) of the PBS. If a player is applying under ISP (long term), they must meet the English language requirement of the Immigration Rules (i.e provide a pass certificate or other written confirmation containing an appropriate reference number, from an accredited English language test centre).
6. If a Club wishes to retain the services of a player beyond the period of their IFA Governing Body Endorsement, the Club must send a new application before the player's permission to stay expires. If the criteria are satisfied, an endorsement will be issued for the period of their contract, up to a maximum of three years. Where the player does not satisfy the criteria, the IFA will consult with the other relevant football bodies by email, providing any details put forward by the Club in favour of that individual. If it is their unanimous recommendation that the application does not need to be considered by a panel, then the case can be processed without.

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7. If the football bodies do not unanimously agree to the renewal, then the Club may request that it be considered by a panel.
8. A Club wishing to sign a player who has been granted an IFA Governing Body Endorsement through another Club must send a new application for a governing body endorsement to the IFA. If the criteria are satisfied, an IFA Governing Body Endorsement will be issued for a maximum of three (3) years in respect of their employment with the new Club. If the criteria are not satisfied, the IFA will consult with the relevant football bodies by email, providing any details put forward by the Club in favour of the player, such as their appearance record for that Club and details of how far they meet the criteria. If it is their unanimous recommendation that the application does not need to be considered by a panel, then the case can be processed without. If any party expresses concern about the application, an appeal panel will be required.
9. If a player is intending to change employer, their new employer must request a new IFA Governing Body Endorsement. The endorsement can be issued for the length of the contract or to the maximum period permitted within the category, whichever is the shorter. The new employer must assign a new certificate of sponsorship to the player to allow them to apply to the Home Office for new permission to stay. Permission to stay must be granted before the player can start work with the new employer.
10. The club must inform the Home Office within 10 days if a Player:
 - a) does not turn up for employment;
 - b) is absent for more than 10 working days without permission;
 - c) has his contract terminated during the period that a GBE is effective;
 - d) is no longer sponsored by the club for any other reason; or
 - e) experiences significant changes in his circumstances (such as a change in job title, salary or location of employment).
11. The club must also inform the Home Office if there is a change of circumstances at the club within 20 working days. A change in circumstances might include changes of name, address or contact details, changes in structure (including mergers, takeovers and de-mergers), changes in financial circumstances (such as administration, receivership, company voluntary arrangement, debt arrangement scheme, liquidation or sequestration).

Temporary Transfers/Loans

12. If a player who has been granted a GBE in accordance with these criteria is loaned to another club during the period of validity of the GBE, the player's club must notify the Home Office of the loan and change of location via the Sponsor Management System within 10 working days (regardless of the jurisdiction in which the loanee club is based). The loaning club will retain responsibility as the player's sponsor.
13. Loans are only permissible within the player's current period of approval and should not be used to avoid making extension or change of employment applications.
14. If a Player is loaned from a Northern Irish Club to another Northern Irish Club (a "Domestic Loan"), no GBE application will be required by the loanee club.
15. If a domestic loan is made permanent, the new club will be required to submit an application for a GBE (which must comply with the requirements set out in these criteria). If the GBE is granted, the player will need to make a change of employment application. Provided the domestic loan continues until the date on which the change of employment application is granted, the player can continue to play for the new club in the interim period.

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16. If the player is loaned from a Northern Irish Club to a club affiliated to another Home Association, or another National Association, the governing body endorsement process of that Association will have to be satisfied by the loanee club.
17. When the Player returns to their parent Club after the loan period, no GBE application will be required by the parent club provided that their IFA Governing Body Endorsement remains valid beyond the date of their return.
18. Any Player joining a Club in Northern Ireland on loan from an overseas Club (including any of the Home Associations) must meet all the requirements of ISP and therefore an application must be submitted to the IFA. International loan Players are also subject to appeal panels if they do not meet the criteria.
19. GBEs will not be issued in respect of Players who are trialling with a Club in Northern Ireland. If a Club wishes to trial a Player, it should contact the Home Office.

Application Process

20. An administration fee of £200 will be charged for each application for an IFA Governing Body Endorsement.
21. A club must submit an application for a GBE to the IFA Player Registrations Department along with any evidence in support of the application, including but not limited to:
 - a) A fully completed application form
 - b) A playing contract, transfer agreement or loan agreement in respect of the player
 - c) Written evidence to support any claim made by the applicant club that a Player was Unavailable for Selection for a particular match, including the reason(s).
22. Players applying to come to the UK under the International Sportsperson route need to be sponsored by an organisation that has a sponsor licence under ISP.
23. An organisation wishing to sponsor such players must have a sponsor licence. Before applying to the Home Office for a license an organisation must be endorsed by the IFA. This endorsement confirms to the Home Office that the application for a licence is from a genuine football club (or equivalent) that has a legitimate requirement to bring players to the UK as sportspeople. Once licensed, an organisation can assign certificates of sponsorship to a sportsperson or coach with a job offer that allows them to apply for entry clearance or permission to stay in the UK. Each individual must also have a personal endorsement from the IFA before an organisation assigns the certificate of sponsorship.
24. The IFA will work within the Home Office code of practice for sports governing bodies and must comply with any immigration regulations, UK legislation and the principles of the Points Based System as detailed on the GOV.UK website.
25. If a Club prematurely ceases to employ a player who has a certificate of sponsorship, the Club must inform the Home Office.
26. Where a club wishes to make significant changes to the terms and conditions of the player's contract, for instance to improve their salary or length of contract part-way through the approved period, the club should notify the Home Office of this via the sponsor management system.

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27. If a new application is required and the endorsement requirements are not met, the club must submit a summary of the player's domestic club appearances over the previous 12 months as well as any other information which the club deems to be relevant to its application. The IFA will at that stage consult with Relevant Interested Parties by email and in doing so will provide any details put forward by the club in support of the application. When considering the application and deciding whether the application should be granted, the IFA and the Relevant Interested Parties shall consider the information put forward by the club as well as any other information which they deem to be relevant in their absolute discretion which indicates whether the player remains of sufficient quality to be awarded a governing body endorsement. If a majority of the IFA and the Relevant Interested Parties recommend that a governing body endorsement should be granted, a governing body endorsement will be issued. If a majority recommendation for approval is not given, a governing body endorsement will not be granted.

Player's Criteria

28. The IFA will grant a GBE if the Player's International Appearances meet the Auto Pass Percentage set out in Table 1 of the criteria.
29. If a Player is not granted a GBE in accordance with paragraph 28 above, the IFA will grant a GBE if a Player achieves 15 or more points in accordance with paragraphs 38- 48.
30. If a Player is not granted a GBE in accordance with paragraphs 28 and 29 above, the Club may request that an Exceptions Panel consider the application if a Player achieves between 8 and 14 points in accordance with paragraphs 38-48 and the club can evidence that exceptional circumstances prevented the player from achieving 15 points.
31. If the Club requests an Exceptions Panel, the procedure in paragraphs 49-59 shall apply.
32. If a Player is not granted a GBE in accordance with paragraph 28, 29 or paragraphs 49-59, he will have no further opportunity to apply for a GBE in the same transfer window unless his circumstances change and will not be eligible to play for the applicant club.
33. **Exception for Youth Players**

There is no minimum points threshold required for a youth player to be eligible for an exceptions panel. A club may request an exceptions panel for any youth player who does not meet the standard pass mark of 15 points.

The club must provide evidence that the youth player demonstrates significant potential and is of sufficient quality to enhance the development of the game in Northern Ireland.

If the exceptions panel is not satisfied by the evidence submitted by the club, a GBE will not be granted.

Clubs will also have to comply with any rules and/or guidance of their respective leagues regarding the number of youth players requiring a GBE that it may register per season.

Calculations

34. If a Player has played for two (or more) clubs during the Reference Period, or a Player is or has been a Free Agent during the Reference Period, the Player's Continental Minutes, Player's Domestic Cup Minutes and Player's Domestic Minutes (each, the "**Minutes**") will be calculated in accordance with paragraphs 35-37 below.

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35. For each of the Minutes criteria, the applicant club should calculate a weighted average as follows:
- Calculate the number of days during the Reference Period the Player has been registered for each/any club or no club (as appropriate).
 - Calculate the percentage of the overall Reference Period that each of those periods of time represents.
 - Calculate the percentage of Minutes played as a proportion of the total Available Continental Minutes, Available Domestic Cup Minutes or Available Domestic Minutes (respectively).
 - Multiply each of the numbers at (b) by their corresponding number at (c).
 - Add each of the numbers at (d) to find the weighted average value for the Minutes.
36. If only one of the clubs played in a Continental Competition, the Player's Continental Minutes shall be the percentage the Player played in for that club.
37. If the calculation of a Player's International Appearances, Player's Domestic Minutes, Player's Domestic Cup Minutes or Player's Continental Minutes (or any other percentage) results in:
- a decimal number of .5 or higher, the number will be rounded up to the next whole number; or
 - a decimal number of lower than .5, the number will be rounded down to the next whole number.

Player's International Appearances

38. A Player shall be granted the number of points set out in Table 1 in respect of the Player's International Appearances.

Table 1					
	Aggregated FIFA World Ranking of the Player's National Association				
Player's International Appearances	1-10	11-20	21-30	31-50	51-200
90-100%	Auto Pass	Auto Pass	Auto Pass	Auto Pass	2
80-89%	Auto Pass	Auto Pass	Auto Pass	Auto Pass	1
70-79%	Auto Pass	Auto Pass	Auto Pass	Auto Pass	0
60-69%	Auto Pass	Auto Pass	Auto Pass	10	0
50-59%	Auto Pass	Auto Pass	10	8	0
40-49%	Auto Pass	Auto Pass	9	7	0
31-40%	Auto Pass	10	8	6	0
20-29%	10	9	7	0	0
10-19%	9	8	0	0	0
1-9%	8	7	0	0	0

Player's Domestic Minutes

39. A Player shall be granted the number of points set out in Table 2 in respect of the Player's Domestic Minutes.

Table 2						
Player's Domestic Minutes	Band 1	Band 2	Band 3	Band 4	Band 5	Band 6
90-100%	12	12	12	6	4	2
80-89%	11	11	11	5	3	1
70-79%	10	10	10	4	2	0

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60-69%	9	9	9	3	1	0
50-59%	8	8	8	2	0	0
40-49%	7	7	7	1	0	0
31-40%	6	6	6	0	0	0
20-29%	0	0	0	0	0	0
10-19%	0	0	0	0	0	0
1-9%	0	0	0	0	0	0
Debut for youth player	6	5	4	3	2	1

If a player is eligible for points in multiple columns of Table 2, including where:

- a. The player has played in two domestic league competitions during the reference period;
- b. A youth player made his first appearance in more than one band during the reference period; or
- c. A youth player has made his first appearance for the senior team of a club during the Reference Period but has also played in a sufficient percentage of minutes to be eligible for points elsewhere, the player shall be granted the higher of the points he is eligible for in Table 2.

Player's Continental Minutes

40. A Player shall be granted the number of points set out in Table 3 in respect of the Player's Continental Minutes.

Table 3			
Player's Continental Minutes	Band 1 Continental Competition	Band 2 Continental Competition	Band 3 Continental Competition
90-100%	10	5	2
80-89%	9	4	1
70-79%	8	3	0
60-69%	7	2	0
50-59%	6	1	0
40-49%	5	0	0
31-40%	4	0	0
20-29%	0	0	0
10-19%	0	0	0
1-9%	0	0	0

If the player has made an appearance in two continental competitions during the reference period, the player shall be granted the higher of the points he is eligible for in Table 3.

Final League Position of Player's Last Club

41. A Player shall be granted the number of points set out in Table 4 in respect of the Final League Position of the Player's Last Club, provided (i) the Player appeared on the matchday squad list for the Player's Last Club for at least one match in its domestic league competition or (ii) the value of the Player's Domestic Cup Minutes was at least 1%, during the Last Season.

Table 4						
Last Club's Final League Position	Band 1	Band 2	Band 3	Band 4	Band 5	Band 6
Title winner	6	6	6	3	2	1
Qualified for group stages of a Band 1 Continental Competition	5	5	5	2	1	0

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Qualified for qualifiers of a Band 1 Continental Competition	4	4	4	1	0	0
Qualified for group stages of a Band 2 Continental Competition	3	3	3	0	0	0
Qualified for qualifiers of a Band 2 Continental Competition	2	2	2	0	0	0
Mid-table	1	1	1	0	0	0
Relegation	0	0	0	0	0	0
Promotion	N/A	1	1	1	1	1

42. For the avoidance of doubt, a Player shall only be granted the higher of the points he is eligible for in Table 4.

Continental Progression of Player's Last Club

43. A Player shall be granted the number of points set out in Table 5 in respect of the Continental Progression of the Player's Last Club, provided (i) the Player appeared on the matchday squad list for the Player's Last Club for at least one match in its domestic league competition or (ii) the value of the Player's Domestic Cup Minutes was at least 1%, during the Last Season.

Continental Progression	Band 1 Continental Competition	Band 2 Continental Competition	Band 3 Continental Competition
Final	10	7	2
Semi-Finals	9	6	1
Quarter-Finals	8	5	0
Round of 16	7	4	0
Round of 32 / knockout phase play-offs	6	3	0
Group stage / league phase	5	2	0
Other	0	0	0

44. If the relevant continental competition is knock-out only, the player will be awarded the points listed for group stage in Table 5 for any round prior to the Round of 32.
45. For the avoidance of doubt, a Player shall only be granted the higher of the points he is eligible for in Table 5.

League Quality of Player's Current Club

46. A Player shall be granted the number of points set out in Table 6 in respect of the band of the Player's Current Club, provided (i) the Player appeared on the matchday squad list for the Player's Current Club for at least one match in its domestic league competition or a Continental Competition or (ii) the value of the Player's Domestic Cup Minutes was at least 1%, during the Reference Period.

Band of Player's Current Club	Points
Band 1	12
Band 2	10
Band 3	8
Band 4	6

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Band 5	4
Band 6	2

47. If a Player has been loaned to a club in a lower band than his parent club and has made a first team appearance (on the pitch) for his parent club during the Reference Period, he shall be granted the higher of the points he would have been eligible for in accordance with Table 6 if his parent club was the Player's Current Club.

Points Allocated for Investment

48. A Player shall be granted the number of points set out in Table 7 in respect of the salary paid in relation to league median average.

Salary (% above median for relevant league)	Points
50% above median	1
60% above median	2
70% or more above median	3

For the purposes of this Table 7, salary is the player's remuneration excluding any additional payments for accommodation, meals and/or other expenses.

Exceptions Panels

49. Where an application does not meet the published criteria, a club may lodge a written request with the IFA Registrations Department for an Exceptions Panel to consider the player's skills and experience. In these cases, the IFA will refer the club's evidence to an independent panel.
50. A fee of £500 will be charged for each GBE application referred to an exceptions panel.
51. The club's supporting evidence will be sent to the IFA and other football bodies in advance for their consideration in order to allow an informed decision.
52. The panel will normally consist of representatives from the relevant football bodies together with up to three independent experts. The IFA will endeavour to ensure there are no conflicts of interest between the independent experts and the applicant club. If the applicant club wishes to object to the involvement of any of the independent experts it must do so in writing at least 24 hours before the panel hearing explaining their reasons for the objection.
53. The panel's terms of reference are:
a) to consider whether the player is of the highest calibre
b) to consider whether the player is able to contribute significantly to the development of the game at the top level in Northern Ireland
54. The panel will make a recommendation to the IFA whose decision will then be relayed to the club. The details of the voting will not be disclosed. Each member of the Panel will provide written reasons for their own decision to the Secretary of the Panel. A positive vote is required to approve an application.
55. Full terms of reference and roles of the panel members and the club are available to attendees.
56. Clubs should note that, in respect of any application, there will only be one panel available (i.e. a panel and recommendation, followed by a decision). A club should therefore ensure that all evidence it wishes to present in support of its application is presented to the panel.

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57. The Exceptions Panel shall only recommend to the IFA that a GBE be granted if the player is an elite sportsperson who is internationally established and can make a significant contribution to the development of the game at its highest level in Northern Ireland.
58. If the Exceptions Panel recommends to the IFA that a GBE be granted, the IFA will consider whether to grant a GBE (but is under no obligation to do so).
59. The decision of the exceptions panel will be communicated to the applicant club within 5 days of the date of the hearing.

GLOSSARY

Aggregated FIFA World Rankings means the aggregated rankings list for senior men's international teams over the International Reference Period that are published by the IFA following publication of the FIFA World Rankings. This list is available on www.irishfa.com.

Auto Pass Percentage means the percentage set out in Table 1 of this criteria.

Available Continental Minutes means the total number of minutes (including, for the avoidance of doubt, any injury time or added time) played by the Player's club (in the group stages onwards) in a Continental Competition during the Reference Period, minus the number of minutes that the Player was Unavailable for Selection.

Available Domestic Cup Minutes means the total number of minutes (including, for the avoidance of doubt, any injury time or added time) played by the Player's club in a Domestic Cup during the Last Season, minus the number of minutes that the Player was Unavailable for Selection.

Available Domestic Minutes means the total number of minutes (including, for the avoidance of doubt, any injury time or added time) played by the Player's club in its domestic league competition during the Reference Period (including any play-off games), minus the number of minutes that the Player was Unavailable for Selection.

Available International Matches means the total number of matches played by the Player's National Association in Senior Competitive International Matches during the International Reference Period, minus the number of matches that the Player was Unavailable for Selection. If less than 30% of the matches played by the Player's National Association during the International Reference Period were Senior Competitive International Matches, Available International Matches shall also include International Friendlies.

Available Minutes means the Available Continental Minutes, Available Domestic Cup Minutes, Available Domestic League Minutes and/or Available International Matches (as applicable)

B Team means a secondary team of a club which plays in a lower domestic professional division within the same league structure as the club's first team.

Band 1 means the English Premier League, the Bundesliga, La Liga, Serie A and Ligue 1.

Band 1 Continental Competition means the UEFA Champions League and the Copa Libertadores.

Band 2 means the Portuguese Primeira Liga, Eredivisie, Belgian First Division A, , Campeonato Brasileiro Serie A and the English Championship.

Band 2 Continental Competition means the UEFA Europa League, UEFA Europa Conference League, the Copa Sudamerica and the FIFA Club World Cup.

Band 3 means the Turkish Super Lig, Primera División of Argentina, Liga MX, USA's Major League Soccer and the Scottish Premiership.

Band 3 Continental Competition means any continental competition which is not a Band 1 Continental Competition or Band 2 Continental Competition.

Band 4 means the Czech First League, Croatian First Football League, the Swiss Super League, La Liga 2, Bundesliga 2, Ukrainian Premier League, the Greek Superleague, the Colombian Categoría Primera

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A, the Austrian Football Bundesliga, the Danish Superliga, Russian Premier League, the Japanese J1 League and Ligue 2.

Band 5 means the Australian A-League, the Serbian SuperLiga, the Polish Ekstraklasa, , the Chilean Primera División, the Uruguayan Primera División, the Swedish Allsvenskan Division, the Norwegian Elitserien Division, the South Korean K League 1, , the Hungarian Nemzeti Bajnokság I, A-League and the Italian Serie B and the EFL League One.

Band 6 means all leagues not in Band 1, Band 2, Band 3, Band 4 or Band 5.

Certificate of Sponsorship means a certificate assigned to a Player pursuant to a club's Sponsor's Licence.

Continental Competition means a Band 1 Continental Competition, a Band 2 Continental Competition or a Band 3 Continental Competition.

Continental Progression means the progress made by the Player's Last Club in a Continental Competition in the Last Season.

Current Club means:

- 1) the Player's Last Club, if the application for a GBE is made after the club the Player plays for as at the date of the application has completed its season; or
- 2) the club the Player is playing for as at the date the application is made, if the application for a GBE is made before the club the Player plays for as at the date of the application has completed its season (i.e. mid-season)

If the player is a free agent, the player's current club is the club the player played in the half of the season immediately before the date the application is made. If the player is a free agent and was not registered for any club in the half of the season immediately before the date the application is made, he shall not be granted any points for the criteria which adopt this definition.

If a player has not been named in a match day squad list within the first transfer window of the season for the club the player is registered for as at the date the application is made, the player's current club is the player's last club.

Domestic Cup means any domestic cup competition which is open to clubs in the country's top domestic division and provides a route for qualification to a Band 1 Continental Competition or Band 2 Continental Competition.

Exceptions Panel means a panel appointed by the IFA to consider an application for a GBE in accordance with paragraphs 48-58.

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

FIFA means the Fédération Internationale de Football Association.

Final League Position means the final league position of the Player's Last Club at the end of the Last Season. If the Last Season did not finish but a final league table was compiled, the Last Club's league position shall be taken from that final league table.

Free Agent means a player who is not registered for any club as at the date the application for a GBE is made.

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GBE means Governing Body Endorsement.

Home Associations means the Scottish Football Association, the Football Association of Wales and the Football Association.

The IFA means The Irish Football Association.

International Friendlies means any match played by the National Association's senior team which is not a Senior Competitive International Match.

International Reference Period means:

- 1 the twenty four months prior to the date of the application for a GBE, if the player is not a youth player; or
- 2 the twelve months prior to the date of the application for a GBE, if the player is a youth player

ISP means the International Sportsperson route.

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

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

Club in Northern Ireland means a club affiliated to the IFA.

Last Club means the club the Player played for in the Last Season. If the Player played for two (or more) clubs during the Last Season, the Player's Last Club is the club the Player played for at the end of the Last Season.

Last Season means the last full season prior to the date of the application for a GBE.

Loans means temporary transfers which do not extend beyond the end of the season in which the registration is temporarily transferred.

Median Salary figure to be calculated by IFA Player Status Department at 1st August 2026 (the commencement of the competition period)

National Association means a football association that is a member of, and recognised by, FIFA.

PBS means the Home Office Points Based System.

Player means any player who is not a citizen of the United Kingdom or Ireland and has not acquired permanent residence in the United Kingdom, been granted pre-settled status or settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme.

Player's Domestic Cup Minutes means the percentage of Available Domestic Cup Minutes the Player played in.

Player's Domestic Minutes means the percentage of Available Domestic Minutes the Player played in.

Player's Continental Minutes means the percentage of Available Continental Minutes the Player played in.

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Player's International Appearances means the percentage of Available International Matches the Player played in.

Player's National Association means the National Association the Player plays for, or has declared for, as at the date of the application for a GBE.

Reference Period means the twelve months prior to the date of the application for a GBE.

Season means the period from 1 July to 30 June.

Senior Competitive International Matches means any match played by the National Association's senior team in the following tournaments:

- 1) FIFA World Cup Finals;
- 2) FIFA World Cup Qualifying Groups;
- 3) FIFA Confederations Cup; and
- 4) Continental Cup Qualifiers and Finals, including but not limited to:
 - a. UEFA European Championships and Qualifiers;
 - b. UEFA Nations League Groups and Final Stages;
 - c. CAF African Cup of Nations and Qualifiers;
 - d. AFC Asian Cup and Qualifiers;
 - e. CONCACAF Gold Cup;
 - f. CONCACAF Copa Caribe;
 - g. UNCAF Nations Cup;
 - h. CONMEBOL Copa America; and
 - i. OFC Nations Cup.

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

Unavailable for Selection means the player was not available to play due to injury, on-field suspension or any other circumstances which would prevent the player from physically entering the field of play. For the avoidance of doubt, a player may not be classed as injured (and therefore Unavailable for Selection) if he was listed as a substitute in a match and was not used and such matches may not be eligible for exclusion when calculating the Available Minutes (as applicable). In international competitions where players are listed as substitutes regardless of whether or not they are injured, players may be classed as injured (and therefore Unavailable for Selection) if sufficient evidence is provided of their injury.

Youth Player means a Player who is under 21 as at the date the application for a GBE is made.