

# JOB DESCRIPTION



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| <b>Job Title:</b>        | National Academy Lead                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Department:</b>       | Talent & Elite Youth                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Reporting to:</b>     | Director of Talent & Elite Youth                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Hours of work:</b>    | 37.5 hours per week. However, the nature of the post will require a high degree of flexibility involving evenings and weekends as dictated by operational requirements of the business. |
| <b>Duration of post:</b> | 12 month fixed term contract, with the possibility of extension or permanency subject to organisational requirements.                                                                   |
| <b>Role family:</b>      | Professional                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Salary scale:</b>     | £35,000 - £45,000                                                                                                                                                                       |

## **PURPOSE OF THE JOB:**

To lead the design and delivery of technical and tactical coaching programmes and sessions, with a specific focus on developing high-potential players and supporting long-term player development across Northern Ireland, while overseeing the day-to-day technical programme at the National Academy (residential).

## **MAIN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:**

1. Support, mentor and develop high-potential players across the Irish FA player pathway, including within the JD National Academy residential programme, with a particular emphasis on individual player progression.
2. Manage the National Academy technical staff on a day-to-day basis.
3. Lead the preparation and coaching of Irish FA youth international teams from U14 to U17, while supporting the progression of talented players into national youth squads.
4. Contribute to domestic talent identification and player development initiatives.
5. Provide overnight supervision at the National Academy residential facility, as required.
6. Prepare technical and tactical reports on players, teams and match situations to support coach and player development.
7. Communicate the progress and scheduling of National Academy developments to all stakeholders.
8. Maintain awareness of the need to safeguard sensitive information, always, ensuring that the Irish FA is regarded as a trusted organisation by customers and stakeholders.
9. Adhere to and actively support Irish FA security policies, procedures and best practice, with particular emphasis on the protection of sensitive information.

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10. Ensure compliance with Irish FA safeguarding policies and procedures and actively promote the welfare and protection of children and young people at all times.
11. Adhere to at all times all Irish FA policies, procedures, processes and working.
12. Any other reasonable duties as may be requested from time to time.

**Note: In the interest of the efficient management of the Association, the duties described in the above job description will be reviewed periodically and may be subject to modification or amendment after consultation with the postholder.**

## PERSONNEL SPECIFICATION – National Academy Lead

| Criteria:                                      | Essential:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Desirable:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
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| <b>1. Education &amp; Qualification</b>        | <p>1.1 A valid and up-to-date UEFA A Licence.</p> <p>1.2 A third-level qualification in a Sporting Discipline (e.g. Sports Coaching, Sports Studies, Sports Science) or another discipline relevant to the role, or a minimum of three years' experience working in a coaching or sporting environment within a club or national association.</p> <p>1.3 A UEFA B Youth Diploma, or an equivalent qualification.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                  | <p>1.4 Relevant youth football coaching qualifications or specialist youth development awards.</p>                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>2. Experience</b>                           | <p>2.1 A minimum of three years' coaching experience gained within the last 5 years at a professional football club or national association, working in a youth development environment.</p> <p>2.2 Three years' experience of managing a multidisciplinary team in an elite youth or professional environment.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <p>2.3 A minimum of two years' experience in talent identification or scouting within a professional football club or national association.</p> <p>2.4 Demonstrable experience of leading teams within an elite youth competition environment.</p>     |
| <b>3. Skills, Knowledge &amp; Competencies</b> | <p>3.1 A strong understanding of player development models for young players, and the ability to apply these within a periodised coaching programme.</p> <p>3.2 Demonstrable ability to lead and deliver a technical curriculum in football, working effectively with multidisciplinary staff, including physiotherapists, analysts and scouts.</p> <p>3.3 Demonstrable leadership, mentoring and staff development skills.</p> <p>3.4 Demonstrable emotional intelligence, with the interpersonal skills and the sensitivity required to work effectively with young and high-potential players.</p> | <p>3.5 Knowledge of growth and maturation in talent development, and the ability to apply this when designing player development programmes.</p> <p>3.6 Sound understanding of the player development pathway from youth to professional football.</p> |
| <b>4. Personal Disposition</b>                 | <p>4.1 Diligent, professional and committed to the development of youth and high-potential players.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |

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|                                                                                              | <p>4.2 A willingness to work unsociable hours, including evenings and weekends, in line with the operational demands of the role.</p> <p>4.3 A willingness to travel and stay overnight as required.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |  |
| <p><b>5. Other Requirements</b><br/><br/>(Items 5.4-5.6 are post-job offer requirements)</p> | <p>5.1 Proof of eligibility to work in the UK.</p> <p>5.2 Have a valid passport allowing unrestricted international travel.</p> <p>5.3 Have a clean driving licence and access to a car for business use.</p> <p>5.4 Completion of a medical questionnaire demonstrating the ability to fulfil the Occupational Health requirements for the post and flag any reasonable adjustment required.</p> <p>5.5 Two satisfactory employment references, one of whom should ideally be the current/most recent employer.</p> <p>5.6 Enhanced AccessNI checks with satisfactory clearance</p> |  |

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

**Closing date:** The closing date for completed applications is Midnight 5 August 2026. Applications received after the closing date and time will not be considered.

**Shortlisting:** Only those applications which clearly demonstrate the requirements set out in the personnel specification will be shortlisted. Please note that the Association reserves the right to implement all or some of the desirable criteria in addition to the essential criteria for shortlisting purposes.

**Offer of employment:** Any offer of employment is subject to the receipt of two satisfactory employment references, proof of eligibility to work in the UK, and proof of any required qualifications.

**Reserve list:** A reserve list of suitable candidates may be maintained for the purpose of any similar vacancies (temporary or permanent) that may arise within twelve months of the completion of the recruitment exercise.

**Vetting & Safeguarding:** The Irish FA is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and employees to share this commitment. This role involves work with young people and is subject to Enhanced AccessNI checks, including barred list checks. Clearance through this system is required.

**Criminal Records & Ex-Offenders:** Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar an applicant from being considered for this role. The Irish FA has a formal policy on recruiting ex-offenders, and applicants will be assessed fairly in line with this policy. Convictions will only be taken into account where relevant to the requirements of the position.

**Disclosure Information Handling:** The Irish FA operates a written policy on the secure handling, use, storage, and retention of disclosure information. All personal information obtained through AccessNI/DBS checks will be handled confidentially and in compliance with data protection legislation.

**Equal Opportunities:** The Irish Football Association is an equal opportunities employer and welcomes applications from all sections of the community. However, as women are currently under-represented in our workforce, we would particularly welcome applications from women. All appointments will be made on the basis of merit.

**Approved: July 2026**