

This guidance is to be used for all International Sportsperson governing body endorsement requests made on or after **22 August 2026**.

Section 1: Overview of governing body endorsements for the International Sportsperson route of the points-based system

This page provides a brief explanation of what endorsement requirements apply in respect of the International Sportsperson route of the points-based system. The Immigration Rules for the International Sportsperson route can be found at [Appendix International Sportsperson](#).

The International Sportsperson route is for elite sportspeople and coaches who:

- are internationally established and whose employment will make a significant contribution to the development of their sport at the highest level in the UK
- who will base themselves in the UK
- will be filling a post that cannot be filled by a suitable British citizen or person who has a right to enter or stay in the UK without restriction

The application process explained: migrants applying to come to the UK under the International Sportsperson route need to be sponsored by an organisation that has an International Sportsperson sponsor licence.

If you wish to sponsor such migrants, you must have a sponsor licence. Before you apply to the Home Office for a licence you must be endorsed by the **approved governing body** for your sport. This endorsement confirms to the Home Office that the application for a licence is from a genuine sports club (or equivalent) that has a legitimate requirement to bring migrants to the UK as sportspeople. Once licensed, you 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 **approved governing body** for their sport before you assign the certificate of sponsorship.

An **approved governing body** is one specified in [Appendix Sports Governing Bodies](#) of the Immigration Rules. Such a governing body must be recognised by one of the home country sports councils such as Sport England and will have been approved by the Home Office before being included in [Appendix Sports Governing Bodies](#) of the Immigration Rules.

Approved governing bodies will work within the Home Office's '[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.

Length of endorsement

Governing body endorsements should be issued for a period appropriate to the period of approval for sponsorship, that is:

Type of application	Length of endorsement
Sponsor	Endorsements for sponsors will not have an end date. They will be valid for as long as the sponsor continues to hold a valid sponsor licence.
Migrant	For an initial maximum period of 3 years, with a further extension of a maximum period of 3 years. If the contract is for fewer than 3 years, it will be issued for the length of the contract.

Change of employment

If a migrant is intending to change employer, their new employer must request a new governing body endorsement. The endorsement can be issued for the length of the contract or to the maximum period permitted within the route, whichever is the shorter. The new employer must assign a new certificate of sponsorship to the migrant to allow them to apply to the Home Office for new permission to stay. Permission to stay must be granted before the migrant can start work with the new employer.

Salary

The salary should be agreed as part of the contract between the migrant and the sponsor. This and the other conditions of employment should be at least equal to those normally given to a resident worker for the type of work undertaken.

Supplementary employment

International Sportsperson migrants are eligible to undertake supplementary employment under the Home Office supplementary employment regulations. The 'Supplementary employment' section [Workers and Temporary Workers: guidance for](#)

[sponsors - Sponsor an International Sportsperson guidance](#) has more information on this.

Compliance with the Code of Practice for Sports Governing Bodies

In reviewing this criteria, RYA confirm we have reread the Code 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.

Section 2: Requirements

This page explains the Royal Yachting Association (RYA) requirements for sailing, windsurfing, kitesurfing and motorboating under the International Sportsperson route. The requirements are effective from 22 August 2026.

Only the roles listed are eligible for endorsement.

These requirements are applicable to the UK.

Consultation

The following requirements have been agreed by the Home Office following consultation with the RYA, RYA Scotland, RYA Northern Ireland and RYA Cymru Wales.

Prior to contacting the Home Office during the annual review of this criteria, RYA confirm that full consultation has been carried out, this includes any organisation that could be interpreted as an interested party, such as clubs, bodies, or player associations related to sailing, windsurfing, kitesurfing and motorboating in the UK.

Review

The requirements will be reviewed annually. The next review will be in April 2027.

Length of season

The main sailing season in the UK runs from March to September; however, those working for the RYA and affiliated organisations may be involved in training, competition and international events taking place throughout the year.

Requirements

The table below shows the endorsement requirements for sponsors and migrants.

Category	Requirement
Sponsor	Requests for endorsements will only be accepted from the: • RYA • RYA Scotland • RYA Cymru Wales • RYA Northern Ireland

Category	Requirement	
	organisations affiliated to the RYA whose objectives include managing teams or coaching competitors at international level Organisations will be required to provide satisfactory evidence of their constitution, rules or articles of association, their employment policies or coach contracts, policies relating to safety, equality and safeguarding (where applicable), codes of conduct and disciplinary procedures.	
Migrant	Coach	Governing body endorsements will be available to individuals if they meet the following requirements: - the individual is either qualified to RYA Racing Coach Level 3 or holds a non-UK qualification that is at least equivalent to the RYA Coach Level 3 qualification as confirmed by RYA - has at least 3 years' experience working with elite athletes or as part of another nation's equivalent "world-class programme" - has a proven track record of coaching and working with elite athletes in delivering World and Olympic medals – these athletes would be within the Top 30 of their "class" in the world. The sponsor and the individual must provide the aforementioned evidence of the individual's previous coaching experience at elite level and detail how their employment will make a significant contribution to the development of athletes and podium success along with a copy of the individuals CV.
	Non Coaching Managerial	Governing body endorsement requests will be considered for the following roles: performance director

Category	Requirement
	- team manager Governing body endorsements will be available to individuals if they meet the following requirements: - has at least 3 years' experience working with elite athletes or as part of another nation's equivalent "world-class programme" - has a proven track record of coaching and working with elite athletes in delivering World and Olympic medals – these athletes would be within the Top 30 of their "class" in the world. Applicants for the aforementioned roles will need to satisfy the requirements set out above and demonstrate all of the following: - must be able to demonstrate that they have worked for at least 2 years in a similar role within the equivalent of a sporting "world-class program" - current and comprehensive knowledge and experience of sailboat racing at all levels, specifically Olympic, Paralympic and Pathway Classes - understanding of international sailing competition - understanding and experience of the demands of international level athletes Endorsement requests should include a statement explaining why it is appropriate not to fill the post with a UK citizen or other settled worker.

Category	Requirement
Definitions	Elite athletes are defined as those who have achieved a top 30 result at a World Championships or Olympic Games or have been funded as part of another nation's equivalent to the world class programme. A world-class programme means a national system designed to produce elite athletes.
Injuries, Absences and Suspensions 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 governing body endorsement, 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 offence.	

Further information

This information is available on the [RYA](http://www.rya.org.uk) website.

For any queries relating to the requirements or the endorsement process please contact:

Dave Strain
Finance Director
Email: dave.strain@rya.org.uk
Telephone: 023 8060 4110

Information on visas and immigration is available on the [GOV.UK](http://www.gov.uk) website.

Section 3: Endorsement Requests and Decisions

Endorsement requests will be considered by a panel comprising the RYA Chief Executive, Director of Sport and Finance Director.

Records of all endorsement decisions will be maintained by the Finance Director and made available to the Home Office on request.

Section 4: Dispute handling procedures

Where an application for a governing body endorsement as set out for International Sportsperson has been refused on the grounds that the individual fails to meet the published requirements, the sponsor may seek a review of the application. The sponsor will have 14 days to request such a review. In these cases the RYA will refer the sponsor's evidence to an independent panel as set out below.

Where possible the sponsor's supporting evidence will be sent to the panel in advance for their consideration in order to allow an informed decision. Sponsors should note that, in respect of any application, there will only be one panel available and the decision of the panel is final. Sponsors should therefore ensure that all evidence it wishes to present in support of its application is presented to the panel. If the sponsor has previously made an application that was unsuccessful at panel a further panel cannot be requested for the same individual during a calendar year unless their status changes and the individual meets the requirements whereby a new application can be submitted.

The Review

The request for a review may only be made by the sponsor for whom the governing body endorsement has been initially rejected by the RYA.

A review shall be commenced by the appellant lodging with the RYA Finance Director, a notice of appeal within 14 days of the decision appealed against. The notice of appeal shall

- i. set out details of the decision appealed against and, if the whole of the decision is not appealed against, identify that part of it which is appealed against;
- ii. set out in full the grounds of appeal and an appellant shall not be entitled to rely on any grounds of appeal not set out in the notice of appeal.

The review will be referred to a panel consisting of at least three non-executive directors of the RYA Board whose decision will be final.

The Decision

The panel will make a decision using the above criteria which shall be final and binding.