

This guidance is to be used for all International Sportsperson governing body endorsement requests made on or after **11 April 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.

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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 three years, with a further extension of a maximum period of three years. If the contract is for fewer than three 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, British Swimming Limited 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 British Swimming Limited requirements under the International Sportsperson visa route. The requirements are effective from 11 April 2026.

Only the roles listed as part of this criteria are eligible for endorsement.

These requirements are applicable to England, Scotland and Wales.

Consultation

The following requirements have been agreed by the Home Office following consultation with British Swimming Limited who have consulted Scottish Swimming, Swim Wales and Swim England.

Prior to contacting the Home Office during the annual review of this criteria, British Swimming Limited 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 swimming in the UK.

Review

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

Length of season

Aquatics typically runs throughout the year, there is no natural start or end to the season.

Requirements

The table below shows the endorsement requirements for sponsors and migrants for Swimming, Para-Swimming, Diving, Artistic Swimming and Water Polo:

Category	Requirement
Sponsor	<p>Governing body endorsements will be considered by the 'British Swimming Limited Panel' from club's affiliated with either the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Swim England• Scottish Swimming• Swim Wales• British Swimming Limited <p>The 'British Swimming Limited Panel' will consist of the Chief Operating Officer and Director of People and Culture and a representative from the relevant national swimming association.</p> <p>In order to obtain an endorsement, the club must prove their affiliation to Swim England, Scottish Swimming, Swim Wales</p>

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	and/or British Swimming Limited by providing their unique reference number and club code.	
Migrant	The criteria apply to extensions and changes of employment and initial applications.	
	Performance Directors (Swimming, Para-Swimming and Diving)	<p>Governing body endorsements for an individual will be issued if they have a minimum of five years' experience, with evidence of directing or contributing to the programme of individual athletes reaching major events such as at the Olympics/Paralympics, World and European Championships and Commonwealth Games and achieving consistent success.</p> <p>This needs to be demonstrated through their history of employment record within the application and also through their record of achievements obtained through references:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • individuals will hold National and/or International Coaching qualifications; a minimum of UKCC Level 3 or equivalent. Copies of their relevant certificates should be provided as evidence of proven success in setting a strategy to deliver an elite programme at World and Olympic/Paralympic level. This needs to be demonstrated through their history of employment record within the application and also through their record of achievements obtained through references.
	Head Coach (Swimming, Para-Swimming) (National Level)	<p>Governing body endorsements for an individual will be issued if they have a minimum of three years technical coaching experience at World Level (World Championship or Olympic/Paralympic Games) and provide evidence of delivering finalists at World Senior Level.</p> <p>This needs to be demonstrated through their history of employment record within the</p>

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		<p>application and also through their record of achievements obtained through references:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • individuals will hold national and/or international coaching qualifications or equivalent; a minimum of UKCC Level 3 Copies of their relevant certificates should be provided • leadership and management experience with extensive exposure to high performance issues and solutions such as planning and preparation for World Aquatic (WA) World Championship level and European Aquatics Championship level events. This needs to be demonstrated in the relevant section of the application form and also through obtained references and • evidence of one to one peer level coaching. This needs to be supported in the relevant section of the application form and also through obtained references.
	<p>Head Coach (Artistic Swimming and Water Polo, Diving) (National Level)</p>	<p>Governing body endorsements for an individual will be issued if they have:</p> <p>Minimum of three years technical coaching experience at World Level (World Championship or Olympic Games) and provide evidence of delivering finalists at World Level. This needs to be demonstrated through their history of employment record within the application and also through their record of achievements obtained through references:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals will hold national and/or international coaching qualifications or equivalent; a minimum of UKCC Level 2/Coach. Copies of their relevant certificates will be provided. • Leadership and management experience with extensive exposure to high performance issues and solutions such as planning and preparation for World

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		<p>Aquatics (World Championship Level) and Continental Championship Level events. This needs to be demonstrated in the relevant section of the application form and also through obtained references.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of one to one peer level coaching. This needs to be supported in the relevant section of the application form and also through obtained references.
	<p>Head Coach (Swimming, Para-Swimming) (Club Level)</p>	<p>Governing body endorsements for an individual will be issued if they have:</p> <p>The minimum of an UK Coaching Certificate Level 3 Coaching or equivalent qualification and have a minimum of two years relevant coaching experience.</p> <p>This needs to be demonstrated through their history of employment record within the application and also through their record of achievements obtained through references:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • individuals will hold national and/or international coaching qualifications or equivalent; a minimum of UKCC Level 3 Copies of their relevant certificates should be provided and • evidence of their personal continuous professional development. This will be ascertained by obtaining copies of their relevant certificates and by providing documentation to prove their attendance at National seminars and placements.
	<p>Head Coach (Artistic Swimming and Water Polo and Diving) (Club Level)</p>	<p>Governing body endorsements for an individual will be issued if they have:</p> <p>Minimum of a UK Coaching Certificate Level 2 Coaching or equivalent qualification and have a minimum of two years relevant coaching experience. This needs to be demonstrated through their history of employment record within</p>

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		<p>the application and also through their record of achievements obtained through references:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals will hold national and/or international coaching qualifications or equivalent; a minimum of UKCC Level 2/Coach Copies of their relevant certificates or license should be provided. • evidence of their personal continuous professional development or level of coaching experience. <p>This will be ascertained by obtaining copies of their relevant documents to prove their knowledge, level and experience.</p>
	<p>Assistant Coach (Swimming, Para-Swimming and Diving) (National and Club Level)</p>	<p>Governing body endorsements for an individual will be issued if they have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a national and/or international coaching qualification equivalent to a minimum of UKCC Level 3. This will be ascertained by obtaining copies of their relevant certificates • knowledge of the technical laws associated with the aquatic discipline as ascertained through achieving their UKCC certificates. This needs to be demonstrated in the relevant section of the application form and also through obtained references • a minimum of two years coaching experience at a high level of domestic and or international level including coaching athletes of international potential. This needs to be demonstrated by identifying the candidate's success at major national and/or international competitions/events and should be supported through the application and through obtained references.
	<p>Assistant Coach</p>	<p>Governing body endorsements for an individual will be issued if they have:</p>

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	<p>(Artistic Swimming and Water Polo) (National and Club Level)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a national and/or international coaching qualification. This will be ascertained by obtaining copies of their relevant certificates or license. • knowledge of the technical laws and rules associated with the aquatic discipline as ascertained through qualification and experience. This needs to be demonstrated in the relevant section of the application form and also through obtained references • A minimum of two years coaching experience at a high level of domestic and or international level including coaching athletes of international potential. This needs to be demonstrated by identifying the candidate's success at major national and/or international competitions/events and should be supported through the application, results at competition or through obtained references • Water Polo - Coaching experience at a domestic level and or international level including assisting in the coaching of athletes. This needs to be demonstrated by identifying the candidate's success at major national and/or international competitions/events and should be supported through the application and through obtained references
	<p>(Olympic and Para-Swimming Performance Advisor (all disciplines))</p>	<p>Governing body endorsements for an individual will be issued if they have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • extensive recent experience at high level Olympic/Paralympic (at least two Olympics/Paralympics in the last four Olympic/Paralympic cycles) as either an athlete, coach or manager • minimum of five years' experience in the aquatics high performance system

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• detailed understanding of high performance aquatics programmes (international level)• knowledge and application of high performance aquatics analysis (international level)• knowledge of elite aquatic development as either an athlete, coach or manager
Injuries, Absences and Suspensions <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>		

Further information

This information is available on the British Swimming Limited website at www.britishswimming.org

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

British Swimming Limited Governing Body Endorsements
British Swimming Limited Panel
C/O The People and Culture Department
SportPark
3 Oakwood Drive
Loughborough LE11 3QF

Telephone: 07876885382
Email: peopledepartment@aquaticsgb.com

Information on visas and immigration is available on the GOV.UK website.

British Swimming Limited Governing Body Endorsement Requirements

Dispute handling procedures

Where an application for either an individual covered by the requirements 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 28 days to request such a review. In these cases, British Swimming Limited 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 player during the season unless his status changes and he meets the requirements whereby a new application can be submitted.

a. 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 British Swimming Limited.

A review shall be commenced by the appellant lodging with the British Swimming Limited Executive Chief Operating Officer and General Counsel a notice of appeal within 28 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 in any ground of appeal not set out in the notice of appeal; and
- iii. be accompanied by a deposit of £150.00. The panel shall have discretion as to whether the deposit is returned.

The procedure for appeal will be in accordance with the Disciplinary Regulations and the Panel shall be comprised as detailed below.

b. The Panel

The panel will be appointed by the Disciplinary Hearings Manager. The appointed panel shall consist of: an independent chairman, one representative of the British

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Swimming Limited (who has not been involved in the initial decision) and one representative of the British Swimming Limited Board.

c. Power of the Panel

An endorsement request may be refused if the individual does not meet the relevant criteria set out in this document or fails to provide the mandatory documents. The British Swimming Limited will notify an individual in writing of any endorsement request which is refused setting out the reasons for refusal.

An individual shall have 7 days from the date of the written refusal to submit an appeal in writing to British Swimming Limited. An individual may only appeal on the basis that British Swimming Limited have not applied the endorsement criteria correctly.

British Swimming Limited shall consider the appeal and any evidence submitted in support and shall, within 7 working days of the receipt of the appeal, notify the individual of its decision.

d. The Decision

The panel will make a decision using the above criteria which shall be final and binding. There are no other grounds of appeal.

Section 3: Process for applying for an endorsement

How to apply for governing body endorsements for International Sportsperson sponsor licence applications

All potential sponsors should note that the purpose of an endorsement for a prospective sponsor is to confirm to UK Visas & Immigration (UKVI) officials processing sponsor applications that the application is from a bona fide sports club or equivalent that has a legitimate requirement to bring migrants to the UK as sportspeople. UKVI has additional criteria for sponsors that must be met in order for an aquatic club to be granted a sponsor licence. It is not the 'British Swimming Limited Panel' that will grant a sponsor licence to a club.

There is an administration fee of £150.00 for each governing body endorsement in support of a sponsor licence application. Card payments can be made via the Finance Team and if paying by cheque, cheques must be included with applications, made payable to British Swimming Limited.

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