



UPDATED
Tournament schedule
amended
21/01/2026

HURLINGHAM POLO ASSOCIATION **SPONSOR LICENCE AND MIGRANT ENDORSEMENT** **REQUIREMENTS – 2025/26**

These requirements are to be used for all International Sportsperson governing body endorsement requests made on or after **08.11.2025**.

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 and
- who will base themselves in the UK and
- 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 will 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. The sponsor may be required to provide evidence to demonstrate this to be the case.

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, Hurlingham Polo Association 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 Hurlingham Polo Association requirements for the International Sportsperson route.

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

These requirements are applicable to England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Consultation

The following requirements have been agreed by the Home Office following consultation with the Hurlingham Polo Association.

Prior to contacting the Home Office during the annual review of this criteria, Hurlingham Polo Association 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 polo in the UK.

Review

The requirements will be reviewed annually. The next review will be in August 2026.

Length of season

The summer season for Polo runs from 1 April to 30 September.

The winter season for Polo runs from 1 November to 7 March.

There is a six-week period before the start of each season when grooms are required to get the horses fit for the season i.e. from 14 February and 14 September.

There is a 4-week period at the end of each season to prepare ponies for turning away and deal with any rehabilitation i.e. to 7 April and to 31 October.

Requirements

The tables below show the endorsement requirements for sponsors and migrants:

International Sportsperson High and Medium Goal	
SPONSOR	1. HPA membership; and 2. Confirmation to the HPA that they or their team will be playing high goal and/or medium goal (12-15 goals and 10-12 goals) during the summer season. Or 3. Confirmation to the HPA that they or their team will be playing high goal and/or medium goal (10 – 15 goals) during the winter season. Or 4. Confirmation that the umpire will be employed in high goal and/or medium goal (as per definitions above) by the HPA or HPA affiliated club.

MIGRANT	PLAYER	a) has a mixed polo handicap of 4 goals or above issued by the HPA or by a recognised overseas polo governing body; and b) has a contract of employment with a patron/ team of a high or medium goal polo team for the summer season. c) the sponsor has provided evidence to show they have taken all reasonable steps to comply with the three key criteria defining elite sportspeople and sought to employ a suitably qualified British citizen or person who has a right to enter or stay in the UK without restriction as the player to be contracted prior to giving consideration to a migrant player for the role.
	FEMALE PLAYER (For participation in women's polo)	a) has a women's polo handicap of 4 goals or above issued by the HPA or by a recognised overseas polo governing body; and b) has a contract of employment with a patron/ team of a high goal women's polo team for the summer season. c) the sponsor has provided evidence to show they have taken all reasonable steps to comply with the three key criteria defining elite sportspeople and sought to employ a suitably qualified British citizen or person who has a right to enter or stay in the UK without restriction as the player to be contracted prior to giving consideration to a migrant player for the role.
	GROOM	has at least four years' experience as a professional polo groom and can provide: a) reference(s) from their previous employer who is a member of the HPA; or b) reference(s) from their previous employer who is a member of a recognised overseas governing body; or c) a reference from an overseas employer endorsed by an HPA member or a member of a recognised overseas governing body; and d) a contract of employment with: (i) a patron/ team of a high or medium goal polo team for the summer season; or (ii) a patron/ team of a high or medium goal polo team for the winter season; or (iii) a player who has a contract of employment with a patron/ team of a high or medium goal polo team for the summer season; or (iv) a player who has a contract of employment with a patron/ team of a high or medium goal polo team for the winter season; or and for grooms requiring an endorsement of over 10 months:

		i) the sponsor has provided evidence to show they have taken steps to seek a British citizen or person who has a right to enter or stay in the UK without restriction prior to applying for an endorsement.
	TEAM MANAGER	has at least two years' experience in this position and can provide: a) reference(s) from their previous employer who is a member of the HPA; or b) reference(s) from their previous employer who is a member of a recognised overseas governing body; or c) a reference from an overseas employer endorsed by an HPA member or a member of a recognised overseas governing body; and d) has a contract of employment with: (i) a patron/ team of a high or medium goal polo team for the summer season; or (ii) a patron/ team of a high or medium goal polo team for the winter season;
	POLO PONY TRAINER	has at least two years' experience in this position and can provide: a) reference(s) from their previous employer who is a member of the HPA; or b) reference(s) from their previous employer who is a member of a recognised overseas governing body; or c) a reference from an overseas employer endorsed by an HPA member or a member of a recognised overseas governing body; and d) has a contract of employment with: (i) a patron/ team of a high or medium goal polo team for the summer season; or (ii) has a contract of employment with a patron/ team of a high or medium goal polo team for the winter season; or (iii) a player who has a contract of employment with a patron/ team of a high or medium goal polo team for the summer season; or (iv) a player who has a contract of employment with a patron/ team of a high or medium goal polo team for the winter season; and e) will be HPA Chukka and Umpire member for the relevant year
	TEAM COACH	has at least two years' experience in this position and can provide: a) reference(s) from their previous employer who is a member of the HPA; or

		b) reference(s) from their previous employer who is a member of a recognised overseas governing body; or c) a reference from an overseas employer endorsed by an HPA member or a member of a recognised overseas governing body; and d) has a contract of employment with: (iii) a patron/ team of a high or medium goal polo team for the summer season; or (iv) has a contract of employment with a patron/ team of a high or medium goal polo team for the winter season; and e) will be a licensed HPA Coach for the relevant year. and f) will be HPA member for the relevant year.
	UMPIRE	Has at least two years' experience umpiring and can provide: a) reference(s) from a recognised overseas governing body that they are capable of umpiring 15 goal polo and above and b) has a contract of employment with the HPA or an HPA affiliated Club. and c) will be HPA Chukka and Umpire member for the relevant year.

International Sportsperson Low Goal

SPONSOR	1. HPA membership; and 2. Confirmation to the HPA that the umpire/coach will be employed for low goal polo only;	
MIGRANT	UMPIRE/COACH	holds an HPA umpire grade and HPA coaching qualification and a) has held a handicap of 2 goals or above for at least 3 years, and b) has a contract of employment with the HPA or an HPA affiliated club. and c) will either be HPA Chukka and Umpire member or a HPA licensed coach for the relevant year.

***MIGRANT GROOM CAP**

- a) For both individual players who are sponsors and team sponsors. The cap is detailed below

This cap will be applied as follows based on the level at which that team or an individual gains 200 visa points (or alternative points for more grooms in the 22 goal) planned for tournaments in the forthcoming season. This cap is applied per sponsor organisation and so HPA will keep on record whether the sponsor licence applies to an individual player or a team. If a team has more than one distinct playing team, this will need to be notified to the HPA and agreed in advance before any endorsements are applied for.

Level at which points are achieved	Type of Sponsor Organisation	
	Migrant groom cap per professional Player	Migrant grooms cap per Team
22 goal (300 points)	3	15
22 goal (250 points)	3	14
22 goal (200 points)	3	12
18 goal (200 points)	3	12
15 goal (200 points)	2	6
12 goal (200 points)	2	4
Victrix (women's polo) Any level (200 points)	2	4

Injuries, Absences & 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.

Dispute handling procedures

Where an application for either a player to play in a team or a coach to coach a team covered by the requirements for a governing body endorsement as set out for International Sports person 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, the Hurlingham Polo Association 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 Hurlingham Polo Association.

A review shall be commenced by the appellant lodging with Hurlingham Polo Association and HPA Disciplinary Officer, 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 £250. 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 Chief Executive. The appointed panel shall consist of the Chief Executive and two members of the HPA Council.

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 Hurlingham Polo Association 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 Hurlingham Polo Association. An individual may only appeal on the basis that Hurlingham Polo Association have not applied the endorsement criteria correctly.

Hurlingham Polo Association 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.

For any endorsement queries, please contact Lucinda Robinson on 01367 242828 or enquiries@hpa-polo.co.uk

The requirements and contact details are published on the HPA website.

Annex A

Points for HPA Official Tournaments

OFFICIAL HPA WINTER TOURNAMENTS	
Level:	Points:
HPA National Championships (Emsworth), Gold Cup (RCBPC)	100
15 Goal	70
10 - 12 Goal	70

OFFICIAL HPA SUMMER TOURNAMENTS		
22 Goal	Location	Points
Prince of Wales	RCBPC	100
Trippett's	Cowdray	100
Queen's Cup	Guards	150
Warwickshire	Cirencester	100
Gold Cup	Cowdray	150
The Prince of Wales Championship Cup	Guards	100
18 Goal		
Oxford Cup	Black Bears	90
Duke of Sutherland	Cowdray	90
Apsley Cup	Cirencester	90
Indian Empire	Guards	90
Challenge	Cowdray	90
15 Goal		
Queen Mother	Guards	80
Cicero	Cowdray	80
Arthur Lucas	Beaufort	80
Bryan Bethell	Cowdray	80
Royal Windsor	Guards	80
Coworth Park Challenge	Guards	80
Eduardo Moore	RCBPC	80
Harrison	Cowdray	80
County Cup	Cirencester	80
Duke of Cornwall	Guards	80
12 Goal		
Valerie Halford	Guards	60
Tyro	Cowdray	60
Dollar Cup	Cowdray	60
John Prestwich	RCBPC	60
Phoenician	Guards	60
Prince of Wales	Beaufort	60
Texaco	Cowdray	60
Queen Mother	Cirencester	60
Duke of Wellington	Guards	60
Cheltenham Cup	Cirencester	60
Autumn Nations	Guards	60
Autumn League	Cowdray	60
Victrix Ludorum 16 Goal (Women's polo)	Location	Points
Black Bears	Black Bears	90
Knepp	Knepp	90
Cowdray	Cowdray	90
Cirencester	Cirencester	90
Beaufort	Beaufort	90
RCBPC	RCBPC	90
Guards	Guards	90
Victrix Ludorum 22 Goal (Women's polo)		
Cirencester	Cirencester	100
Guards	Black Bears/ Guards	100
Cowdray	Cowdray	100

