

Ice Hockey UK

Governing Body Endorsement Requirements

This guidance is to be used for all International Sportsperson governing body endorsement requests made on or after the **28 June 2023**.

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](#).

Please note: This criteria no longer distinguishes between short term and long term periods of stay under the International Sportsperson route.

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](https://www.gov.uk) website.

Summary

In order to apply for a Sponsor Licence, applicants will need to use the form found at [Annex 1](#), and in turn will be issued with a Licence by IHUK as at [Annex 2](#).

In order to then apply for an endorsement for a player, a Sponsor will need to use the form found at [Annex 3](#), and in turn will be issued with a Licence by IHUK as at [Annex 4](#).

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	4 years from date of issue.
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.

Section 2: Requirements

This page explains Ice Hockey UK (IHUK) requirements under the International Sportsperson route for the 2023 to 2024 season and will be effective from **28 June 2023**.

Only the roles listed are eligible for endorsement.

The endorsements apply to England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Consultation

The following requirements have been agreed by the Home Office following consultation between Ice Hockey UK, Elite Ice Hockey League (EIHL or Elite League), National Ice Hockey League National Division (NIHL National), National Ice Hockey League 1 (NIHL1) & Scottish National League (SNL).

Review

The requirements will be reviewed annually in March each year.

Length of season

The season for ice hockey tends to run from August to April Player registrations for EIHL finish at the end of February and for National & NIHL1 at the end of January.

Requirements

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

Category	Requirement	
Sponsor	Governing body endorsements will only be issued to teams competing in the Elite League, National, NIHL1 and SNL. None are permitted to be issued for any development leagues operating in the UK or Northern Ireland.	
Migrant	'Player'	In order to qualify for a GBE a Player coming to the UK must have played in at least 70% of competitive games where they were available for selection in the last two complete seasons prior to the start date of the relevant current domestic season. These games must be from either the following leagues, or any of those listed in Table 1 and Table 2 below: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• National Hockey League (NHL)• American Hockey League (AHL)• National Collegiate Athletic Association Division 1 & Division 3 (NCAA I & NCAA III/American league)

- Canadian Interuniversity Sports League (AUS, CWUAA, OUA and RSEQ)
- East Coast Hockey League (ECHL)
- National Collegiate Athletic Association Div 1 (NCAA); consisting of Atlantic Hockey, Big Ten, ECAC Hockey, Hockey East, National CHC and Western CHC
- Canadian Hockey League (OHL, QMJHL, WHL)
- GMHL (Canadian)

(Please note: If the player has previously played in the NHL or AHL they must have played in 70% of competitive games where they were available for selection in either of those leagues, for season 2021-2022 or 2022-2023.)

Table 1 – From Nations in Men’s IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship

Country	1 st Division	2 nd Division
USA/Canada	SPHL LNAH	
Sweden	SHL	HockeyAllsvensken
Finland	Liiga	Mestis
Czech Republic	Extraliga	1.Liga
Switzerland	National League	Swiss League
Slovakia	Extraliga	1.Liga
Latvia	Latvia 1	
Norway	Get Ligaen	Norway 2 (1.Divisjon)
Kazakhstan	Karaqunda Liga	
Germany	DEL	DEL2
Denmark	Metal Ligaen	
France	Ligue Magnus France 2 (Division 1)	
Austria	EBEL Liga & Alps League	
Poland	Polska Liga Poland 2	

Table 2 – Other Eligible Leagues (from Nations in IIHF WM1A & WM1B)

		<table><tr><th>Country</th><th>1st Division</th></tr><tr><td>China</td><td>(none listed)</td></tr><tr><td>Ukraine</td><td>Ukrainian Professional Ice Hockey League (UHL)</td></tr><tr><td>Spain</td><td>Liga Nacional de Hockey</td></tr></table>	Country	1 st Division	China	(none listed)	Ukraine	Ukrainian Professional Ice Hockey League (UHL)	Spain	Liga Nacional de Hockey
Country	1 st Division									
China	(none listed)									
Ukraine	Ukrainian Professional Ice Hockey League (UHL)									
Spain	Liga Nacional de Hockey									
		<p>Olympic/International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF) World Championship players</p> <p>Irrespective of the requirements above Players are also eligible for a GBE where they have represented their country in the Olympics or the World Championships and have played in at least 70% of competition games for an IIHF World Championship nation ranked above Great Britain’s Men’s national side within the 12 months prior to the GBE application.</p> <p>Statistics for initial endorsement</p> <p>Statistics from the overseas club for whom the player played the previous season must be provided, in the first instance where possible.</p> <p>The UK Club should also provide copies of any press reviews relating to the player and statistics or the previous season to demonstrate that the player meets the above criteria. This must be on the club’s letter headed paper. The use of statistics from ‘Hockey News’ or official websites such as EliteProspects.com, NHL.com, AHL.com and ECHL.com can be accepted where information from clubs is difficult to obtain.</p> <p>Renewal of endorsement: player’s returning or extending</p> <p>Where an overseas player is returning for another season (after playing in the UK during the previous season) they must have played 70% of games subject to a minimum of 20 fixtures. Where an overseas player is extending their leave, they must have played at least 70% of their previous UK team’s competitive games subject to a minimum of 20 fixtures.</p> <p>Statistics for renewal of endorsement</p> <p>The club is to provide a copy of the player’s previous season’s statistics.</p>								

		<p>Transfers from other EIHL, NIHL, NIHL1 & SNL Clubs</p> <p>Applications for players to transfer to another club during a season will be treated as a change of employment application. They will be assessed against the criteria for the initial endorsement i.e. the players will continue to qualify on the basis of 70% competitive games played subject to a minimum of 20 fixtures in the previous season in the qualifying league overseas.</p>
	Netminders	<p>In order to qualify for a GBE, a netminder must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • must have been dressed in at least of 50% games in the qualifying leagues and have started in 25% of those games, subject to a minimum of 10 games in the previous season; or • where they have previously played in the NHL or AHL, have played in 50% of competitive games and have started in 25% of those games, subject to a minimum of 10 games, where they were available for selection in either of those leagues, for season 2021 -2022 or 2022-2023. <p>For renewal, extension and change of employment applications, a netminder must have been dressed in at least 50% of games and have started in 25% of games, subject to a minimum of 10 games.</p>
	Coach	<p>Coaches must possess a minimum of a Level 2 IIHF qualification or Level 2,3,4,5 6, USA , CANADA Coaching certificate to coach players in Elite Ice Hockey League, English National League, English National League 1 and Scottish National</p>
	Player Coach	<p>The Player Coach must meet the appropriate 70% playing criteria and must have a minimum of a Level 2 IIHF coaching certificate.</p>
<p>Please note: No player or coach may run learn to play programmes, Hockey schools, or any other on ice activity outside the remit of his working application to coach or play for his team/ sponsor who has employed him.</p>		

Injuries, Absences and Suspensions

Matches/games for which the applicant was unavailable for selection are to be excluded when calculating the player's appearance percentage. Unavailable for selection means the player was not available to play due to injury or suspension and written evidence supporting this, setting out the games missed and the reason(s), must be provided by the player's National Association or club doctor to Ice Hockey UK.

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 in one of the leagues covered by the requirements for a governing body endorsement as set out for the International Sportsperson route has been refused on the grounds that the player or coach 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, Ice Hockey UK 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 Ice Hockey UK.

A review shall be commenced by the appellant lodging with the Ice Hockey UK and Governance Director, 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 £500. 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, as appointed from time to time by IHUK. The appointed panel shall consist of: an independent chairman, and three Ice Hockey UK board members appointed by the chairman of Ice Hockey UK.

c. Power of the Panel

An endorsement request may be refused if the Player/Coach does not meet the relevant criteria set out in this document or fails to provide the mandatory documents. Ice Hockey UK will notify a Player/Coach in writing of any endorsement request which is refused setting out the reasons for refusal.

A Player/Coach shall have 7 days from the date of the written refusal to submit an appeal in writing to Ice Hockey UK. A Player/Coach may only appeal on the basis that Ice Hockey UK have not applied the endorsement criteria correctly.

Ice Hockey UK shall consider the appeal and any evidence submitted in support and shall, within 7 working days of the receipt of the appeal, notify the Player/Coach 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.

If the club remains dissatisfied with the outcome, it may, if it wishes refer the details to the Sport Dispute Resolution Service (SDRS – www.sportresolutions.com) for a final decision. Where the appeal is referred to the SDRS the club will be charged all costs levied by the SDRS and all further costs incurred by Ice Hockey UK.

Further information

This information is available on the Ice Hockey UK website.

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

Andy French
General Secretary
Ice Hockey UK
Regus House
Malthouse Avenue
Cardiff CF23 8RU

Telephone: +44771 359 0506
Email: andy.french@icehockeyuk.co.uk

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

Dispute handling procedures

All disputed applications need to be directed to Ice Hockey UK in the first instance.

Section 3: process for applying for an endorsement

How to apply for governing body endorsements Creative and Sporting Sponsor's Licence for International Sportsperson.

A team competing in the EIHL, NIHL, NIHL1, or SNL, can apply to IHUK for a governing body endorsement Creative and Sporting Sponsor's Licence using the form in [Annex 1](#).

If an application is successful, IHUK will issue an endorsement in the format attached at [Annex 2](#).

How to apply for governing body endorsements for International Sportsperson

If a team competing in the EIHL, NIHL, NIHL1, or SNL, holds a Creative and Sporting sponsor licence and wishes to apply for IHUK's governing body endorsement to employ a sportsperson, they must apply to IHUK using the form in [Annex 3](#).

If the application is successful, IHUK will issue an endorsement in the format attached at [Annex 4](#).

Annex 1: Ice Hockey UK (IHUK) governing body endorsement - Sponsor Licence

Type	IHUK sponsor licence endorsement
Endorsement reference number	
Endorsement issue to (Club full name)	
Club address	
Start date of endorsement	
End date of endorsement	
IHUK endorsement issued by	IHUK Andy French Ice Hockey UK General Secretary
Signed	 (on behalf of IHUK)
Date endorsement issued	

In order to apply for a sponsor licence, applicants will need to submit the necessary paperwork. Once IHUK have received the application for a sponsor licence, they will issue a Sponsor Licence as detailed at Annex 2.

For further details on what is required to obtain Certificate of Sponsorship (COS) numbers, please refer to pages 1-2 of this document.

The issue of this IHUK (governing body for ice hockey) endorsement does not guarantee that subsequent endorsements will be issued, each endorsement will be considered against the requirements and the information provided to IHUK at the time of the request.

The information on this form may be disclosed to UKVI in the event that they investigate IHUK's processes and procedures.

Annex 2: International governing body endorsement application - Sponsor Licence

This form should be used to apply to Ice Hockey UK (IHUK) for a governing body endorsement in support of an application for a **licence to sponsor migrants under the Creative and Sporting category**.

Please complete all sections below:

Name of club:	
Address:	
Telephone number	
Contact name & job title	
Contact email address	
Signature	
Date of application	

Please tick the applicable boxes below:

- ☐ we are a team competing in the EIHL, NIHL, NIHL1, or SNL
- ☐ we wish to apply to UKVI for a licence to sponsor migrants under the Creative and Sporting category

Please forward the original form to:

Andy French
Ice Hockey UK
Regus House
Malthouse Avenue
Cardiff
CF23 8RU

The information on this form may be disclosed to UKVI in the event that they investigate IHUK's processes and procedures.

Annex 3: International governing body endorsement application

This form should be used to apply to Ice Hockey UK (IHUK) for a governing body endorsement of an application for a sportsperson under **the Creative and Sporting categories**.

Please complete all sections of the form unless otherwise indicated:

Full name of migrant sportsperson	
Address	
Nationality	
Job title of sportsperson	
Period of employment the endorsement is issued for	
Proposed salary	
Supplementary employment section	
Club address	
Sponsor licence number (SLN)	
Telephone number	
Club contact name & job title	
Club contact email address	
Signature	
Date of application	

Please tick the applicable boxes below:

- ☐ we hold a licence to sponsor migrants under the International Sportsperson Creative and Sporting category and we wish to apply to UKVI to sponsor the above migrant under the Creative and Sporting category

Please forward the original form to:

Andy French
Ice Hockey UK
Regus House
Malthouse Avenue
Cardiff
CF23 8RU

The information on this form may be disclosed to UKVI in the event that they investigate IHUK's processes and procedures.

Annex 4: Ice Hockey UK (IHUK) endorsement –International sportsperson

A copy of this document must be sent to the individual so that they can print a copy which must be included in their application for leave to enter or remain in the UK. IHUK also advise that the individual carries a copy when travelling to or from the UK.

Type (i.e. player, netminder or coach)	
Endorsement reference number	
Endorsement issue to (Club full name)	
Club address	
Endorsement issued for (Migrant full name)	
Address of migrant	
Job title	
Proposed Salary	
Period of employment the endorsement is issued for	
IHUK endorsement issued by	IHUK Andy French Ice Hockey UK General Secretary
Signed	 (on behalf of IHUK)
Date endorsement issued	

The issue of this IHUK (governing body for ice hockey) endorsement does not guarantee that subsequent endorsements will be issued, each endorsement will be considered against requirements and the information provided to IHUK at the time of the request.

The information on this form may be disclosed to UKVI in the event that they investigate IHUK's processes and procedures.