

UK Sport Eligibility Panel: Independent Chair

1. Introduction

UK Sport is a strategic investor in Olympic and Paralympic performance programmes. Pursuant to its Royal Charter and National Lottery Directions, UK Sport encourages, supports, and promotes high ethical standards from all recipients of its funding. High standards of conduct are important in upholding the positive impact of sport on society.

As a strategic, discretionary, investor of National Lottery and Exchequer funding in Olympic and Paralympic sports, Athletes and Athlete Support Personnel ("ASP"), UK Sport reserves the right to decide who is eligible to receive Public Funding and/or Publicly Funded Benefits through the Funding Eligibility Policy (the "Policy"). UK Sport's guiding principle is that investment into Athletes and ASP is a privilege and not a right.

Where the conduct of an Athlete or ASP causes their eligibility for funding to be in question, UK Sport has established an Eligibility Panel (the Panel) to determine the individual cases for Athletes and ASP to receive Public Funding and/or Publicly Funded Benefits. The Policy is the basis for this and stipulates a number of eligibility criteria, which if not fulfilled, may cause an individual to be in breach of the Policy.

When making decisions about an individual's eligibility for funding under the Policy, UK Sport will generally take into account the outcome of other relevant processes that the Athlete or ASP will have been subject to. These may include actions taken by National Governing Bodies (NGBs), Funded Partners, the Courts and/or the Police, UK Anti-Doping (UKAD), His Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC), the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), among others. UK Sport will ordinarily wait for such processes to conclude but reserves the right to make its own independent funding decision under the Policy.

2. Role of the Eligibility Panel

The UK Sport Board has fully delegated decision-making authority to the Eligibility Panel to determine matters relating to the eligibility of Athletes and ASPs to receive Public Funding and/or Publicly Funded Benefits in accordance with the UK Sport Funding Eligibility Policy ([UK Sport Funding Eligibility Policy](#)).

The Eligibility Panel will have the experience, capacity and skills to understand the requirements of UK Sport's investment role and the requirements of all the key stakeholders.

The Eligibility Panel comprises of members of the UK Sport Board, independent legally qualified Chairs and independent members with experience in areas such as elite performance and safeguarding. The Eligibility Panel is quorate with three (3) members, one (1) from each category.

Eligibility Panel hearings will typically require approximately half a day of preparation and half a day for the hearing. Independent Chairs can ordinarily expect to support approximately three to five hearings each year, although the number and duration of hearings may vary according to caseload.

3. Role of the Independent Chair

The role of the Independent Chair is to:

- chair Eligibility Panel hearings fairly, independently and effectively;
- ensure proceedings are conducted in accordance with the Funding Eligibility Policy and applicable procedures;
- support the Panel in reaching fair, evidence-based and procedurally robust decisions;
- ensure that all relevant information and views are considered;
- facilitate effective discussion and provide appropriate challenge;
- contribute legal knowledge and disciplinary panel experience to the Panel's deliberations;
- support the clear recording of the Panel's reasons and decisions; and
- uphold UK Sport's values and ethos.

4. Knowledge and Experience

Candidates must demonstrate:

- qualification as a practising barrister, solicitor or CILEX Fellow;
- experience of chairing or sitting on disciplinary panels;
- experience of analysing complex and sensitive information and evidence;
- experience of working as a board, panel or committee member;
- experience of making, or contributing to, fair and evidence-based decisions;
- experience of providing appropriate and constructive challenge;
- experience of accepting responsibility and accountability for collective decisions; and
- experience of managing or resolving conflicting requirements.

5. Key competencies

Serial	Competence	Evidence
1	Ability to chair proceedings fairly, independently and effectively.	• Creates an environment in which all Panel members can contribute meaningfully. • Manages discussion effectively and keeps proceedings focused on the relevant issues. • Ensures that different perspectives and relevant evidence are considered.

Serial	Competence	Evidence
		• Supports the Panel in reaching clear, fair and evidence-based decisions. • Maintains independence, objectivity and procedural fairness.
2	Accountability and sound judgement.	• Accepts responsibility and accountability for individual contributions and collective decisions. • Exercises strong judgement when examining complex and sensitive matters. • Offers appropriate and constructive challenge to support fair and robust outcomes. • Applies a consistent approach to decision-making. • Supports other Panel members while holding them appropriately to account.
3	Strong understanding of equity, diversity and inclusion considerations.	• Applies an equitable, diverse and inclusive approach to their own conduct and the work of the Panel. • Values different backgrounds, experiences and perspectives. • Considers evidence objectively and without discrimination or bias. • Demonstrates awareness of how assumptions or unconscious bias may affect decision-making.
4	Ability to communicate and listen effectively.	• Demonstrates well-developed communication and listening skills. • Communicates clearly and sensitively. • Debates and challenges constructively in a range of settings. • Listens to and considers different perspectives. • Contributes effectively to Panel discussions.
5	Ability to analyse complex information and evidence	• Identifies the fundamental and peripheral elements of complex issues. • Assesses complex and sensitive information objectively. • Distinguishes relevant evidence from information that is not material to the decision. • Approaches cases fairly, independently and objectively. • Contributes to fair, evidence-based and procedurally robust decisions.
6	Ability to work effectively as a team.	• Works collaboratively with other Panel members. • Contributes constructively to group discussions. • Shares relevant knowledge and expertise. • Consults and involves others appropriately in decision-making. • Evaluates and adapts their own approach and behaviour.

Serial	Competence	Evidence
		• Supports collective decision-making while maintaining independent judgement.
7	Understanding of UK Sport and the Policy.	• Supports UK Sport's purpose and mission. • Understands UK Sport's strategic investment role. • Understands the wider sporting, social and policy context in which the Funding Eligibility Policy operates. • Develops an effective understanding of the Policy and the role of the Eligibility Panel.

6. Appointment and Tenure of Office

Appointment to the Eligibility Panel does not constitute a contract of employment and is therefore not subject to the provisions of employment law.

Independent Chairs can be appointed for a maximum two (2) terms of up to four (4) years per term.

Reappointments may be made at the end of the first period of appointment for a further four (4) years, subject to mutual agreement.

7. Induction

An induction will be provided.

8. Remuneration

Remuneration of £218 per day is available and will be paid on a pro rata basis, inclusive of any relevant taxes.

9. Conflicts of Interest

Independent Chairs will be required to complete a declaration of interests on appointment and annually thereafter. They must also declare any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest that arises during their appointment.

No Chair may participate in a matter where, in UK Sport's opinion, an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest could affect, or reasonably be seen to affect, their independence or impartiality.

10. Disqualification

The circumstances where an individual is deemed unsuitable to be an independent Eligibility Panel member are:

- Convicted and received a custodial sentence in excess of 3 months in the last 6 years.
- Declared bankrupt or have had a composition or arrangement with their creditors.
- Found guilty of serious professional misconduct by statutory or professional body.
- Dismissed, for reasons other than redundancy, from any paid employment with a public body.
- Suspended from, or removed from, or subject to conditions on registration, of any professional body.
- Disqualification order under the Company Directors' Disqualification Act 1986.
- Removal from trusteeship of a charity by a court, or the Charity Commissioners.