



RL
COMMERCIAL

GRADING CRITERIA HANDBOOK

January 2025

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01

INTRODUCTION

THE ULTIMATE OBJECTIVE OF GRADING IS TO INCENTIVISE CLUBS TO:

GROW THEIR FANBASE

INVEST IN THEIR CLUB AND THE SPORT IN A SUSTAINABLE MANNER

BETTER ENGAGE WITH FANS

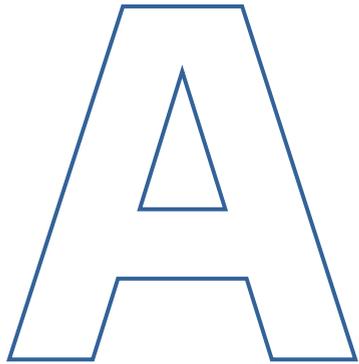
RUN IN A BEST-IN-CLASS WAY

GROW TOP-LINE NON-CENTRALISED REVENUE

ENSURE STRONG GOVERNANCE IS IN PLACE

INTRODUCTION

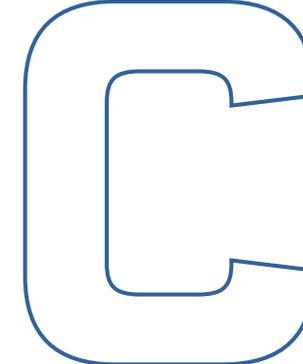
GRADES



The highest rated grade with the club guaranteed participation in the top-tier on a permanent basis [as long as the grade is maintained].



Eligible to participate in the top tier only when spaces are available.



Will participate in the Championship and League 1.

Clubs will be reassessed every year.
Minimum standards will be in place alongside the grading criteria.

02

THE CRITERIA

THE CRITERIA

PILLARS

| NO. | PILLAR | RATIONALE | MAX SCORE | % OF TOTAL |
|--------------|-------------|--|-----------|-------------|
| 01 | FANDOM | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to attract more fans at home/in stadia/digitally • Improved fan engagement critical to retain existing and new fans • Key driver for both club and central revenues | 5 | 25% |
| 02 | PERFORMANCE | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On pitch performance remains the basis for the participation and is key to overall club success • Drives fan awareness and engagement | 5 | 25% |
| 03 | FINANCES | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflects success of fan engagement and business performance • Rewards sustainable investment and sound financial management | 4.5 | 22.5% |
| 04 | STADIUM | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical to stakeholder experience – both in stadia and when viewing from home/digitally • Need to compete with other sports and events | 3 | 15% |
| 05 | COMMUNITY | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Club foundation – drives participation growth and community engagement • Indicator of club fanbase potential • Incentivises investment in large potential markets • Foundation activity reflects a club's impact in its community | 2.5 | 12.5% |
| TOTAL | | | 20 | 100% |

FANDOM

FANDOM

OBJECTIVE:

Assess clubs on the size of their fan base and reward growth.



ATTENDANCE

2.5



VIEWERSHIP

1



DIGITAL

1.5



SOCIAL FOLLOWING

0.2



WEBSITE VISITS

0.5



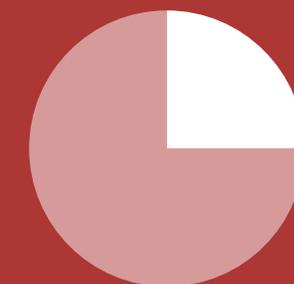
TOTAL ENGAGEMENTS

0.8



5

MAX SCORE



25%

OVERALL WEIGHTING

FANDOM

1. ATTENDANCE

| | AVERAGE ATTENDANCE | POINTS |
|-----------------------|--------------------|--------|
| ATTENDANCE THRESHOLDS | >7,500 | 2.50 |
| | >3,000 | 2.00 |
| | >1,500 | 1.50 |
| | <1,500 | 0.75 |

- The definition of match attendance is the average number of fans attending regular season home games in person [this total therefore must exclude season ticket holders / club members not in attendance at matches].
- Attendance to be included on the Ground Safety Match Officer Report to be submitted to the RFL within five days of a match taking place.
- Average attendance covers men's home league matches [regular season fixtures only [excluding play off matches]].
- Ad hoc audits will take place each season to assess the accuracy of the recorded attendance figures.
- Attendance figures are averaged over the last three seasons e.g. attendances of 8,000, 10,000, 12,000 over a three year period would lead to a 10,000 attendance figure.

FANDOM

2. DIGITAL – DEFINITIONS

FOLLOWERS



- The total number of followers or subscribers each club has on each active social platform [Facebook, Instagram, X, TikTok and YouTube added together to get the threshold].
- This data is public facing and can be found on the profile pages of each platform. It is recommended all clubs take a monthly snapshot of follower numbers for each platform.

ENGAGEMENTS



- The total number of engagements across social platforms [e.g. likes, shares, comments, retweets, video views, metrics for reels and stories].
- This data is pulled via the analytics page of each social platform. To do this each club must have a business account on each platform and access the analytics via the business account analytics. It is recommended recording this data each month, as some platforms will not allow retrospective data collection.
- Instructions on how to retrieve social data can be found in the Digital Criteria Guide. The digital data required for the grading criteria process is clearly defined on the RFL's Data Capture Form.

WEBSITE VISITS



- The total number of annual visits the club's official website receives. This is measured by the number of "Sessions" recorded for the website in Google Analytics for the annual time period.
- This data is available via Google Analytics. It is recommended that all clubs pull this data each month.

FANDOM

2. DIGITAL – CONTROLS

- Most platforms will allow for profiles to run paid media to increase engagement and followers, and it is possible to run search engine marketing to increase the number of visits to a website.
- Whilst it is key to encourage clubs to market their brand to grow their audience, it will be easy to identify where this is done via the purchasing of social media addresses. For example, if a club put some media budget towards buying followers across certain platforms, total engagements would not see the same uplift. Similarly, if paid media is used to drive engagement growth, there should be a correlating increase in website visits.
- If such manipulation is detected, an adjustment to the club's figures submitted may be made in order to negate any advantage a club may derive from this action.

FANDOM

2. DIGITAL SCORING

| | SOCIAL FOLLOWING | POINTS | | TOTAL ENGAGEMENTS | POINTS | | WEBSITE VISITS | POINTS |
|----------------------|------------------|--------|-----------------------|-------------------|--------|--------------------|----------------|--------|
| FOLLOWERS THRESHOLDS | >300K | 0.15 | ENGAGEMENT THRESHOLDS | >20M | 0.6 | WEBSITE THRESHOLDS | >2M | 0.375 |
| | >200K | 0.1 | | >10M | 0.4 | | >1M | 0.25 |
| | >100K | 0.05 | | >2M | 0.2 | | >500K | 0.125 |
| | >25K | 0.025 | | >500K | 0.1 | | >100K | 0.1 |
| | 10% YOY GROWTH | 0.05 | | 10% YOY GROWTH | 0.2 | | 10% YOY GROWTH | 0.125 |

Social Following and Total Engagements scores – across Facebook, Instagram, X, TikTok and YouTube added together to get the threshold.
Date range to be measured: a year up to the date of submission of the grading data capture form.

FANDOM

3. VIEWERSHIP

- Clubs are rewarded for their games being broadcast, enabling a wider reach of fans.
- Score based on viewership in the latest season.
- The six clubs with the highest linear TV [SkySports & BBC] average match audience for the current year's regular season will score 1 point.
- Clubs broadcasting at least 5 regular season home games on any TV or live streamed platform e.g. SkySports, SkySports+, SuperLeague+, L'Equipe+, BBC3, iPlayer, YouTube or Club Owned TV, with a three camera production [or better], with commentary and the game score and clock displayed will score 0.75 points.

| | THRESHOLD | POINTS |
|------------------------|--|--------|
| VIEWERSHIP THRESHOLDS: | THE SIX CLUBS WITH THE HIGHEST LINEAR TV AVERAGE MATCH AUDIENCES | 1 |
| | FIVE OR MORE GAMES BROADCAST, WITH THREE CAMERA PRODUCTION OR BETTER | 0.75 |
| | NOT BROADCAST AT ALL | 0.5 |

PERFORMANCE

PERFORMANCE

OBJECTIVE:

Clubs to remain incentivised to perform on the field.



LEAGUE
PERFORMANCE

4

Teams are ranked based on where they finish in the leagues and playoffs for the last three seasons.



SUPER LEAGUE

0.75



CHALLENGE CUP

0.25



CHAMPIONSHIP

0.25



LEAGUE 1

0.1



1895 CUP

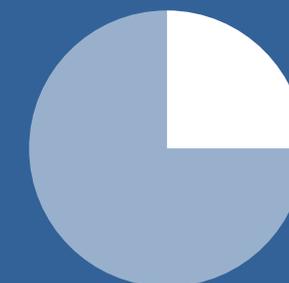
0.1

Teams are awarded bonus points for winning the league and cup competitions outright (only applies to the current year).



5

MAX SCORE



25%

OVERALL WEIGHTING

PERFORMANCE

REGULAR SEASON LEAGUE RANKINGS

- Each season all clubs in Tiers 1–3 (Men’s only) are ranked based on their final league positions i.e. after all matches have been played in each season.
- For clubs that reach the end of season play-offs their final performance ranking will be determined by how they progress in the play-offs. Please see Appendix One for how teams are ranked across all three leagues.
- The season league rankings are calculated over the last three seasons. Clubs are ranked 1–36 over the three year period and receive the score on the adjacent table based on their three year ranking. For example, the club with the best three year average will receive 4.0000 points and the second ranked club will receive 3.8889.
- In the unlikely event that clubs are level on points the highest performing club in the most recent season will be ranked the highest.

| LEAGUE RANKING | SCORE |
|----------------|--------|
| 1 | 4.0000 |
| 2 | 3.8889 |
| 3 | 3.7778 |
| 4 | 3.6667 |
| 5 | 3.5556 |
| 6 | 3.4444 |
| 7 | 3.3333 |
| 8 | 3.2222 |
| 9 | 3.1111 |
| 10 | 3.0000 |
| 11 | 2.8889 |
| 12 | 2.7778 |
| 13 | 2.6667 |
| 14 | 2.5556 |
| 15 | 2.4444 |
| 16 | 2.3333 |
| 17 | 2.2222 |
| 18 | 2.1111 |
| 19 | 2.0000 |
| 20 | 1.8889 |
| 21 | 1.7778 |
| 22 | 1.6667 |
| 23 | 1.5556 |
| 24 | 1.4444 |
| 25 | 1.3333 |
| 26 | 1.2222 |
| 27 | 1.1111 |
| 28 | 1.0000 |
| 29 | 0.8889 |
| 30 | 0.7778 |
| 31 | 0.6667 |
| 32 | 0.5556 |
| 33 | 0.4444 |
| 34 | 0.3333 |
| 35 | 0.2222 |
| 36 | 0.1111 |



4

MAX SCORE

PERFORMANCE

BONUS POINTS

- Teams are awarded bonus points for winning league and cup competitions outright.
- These scores will be added to the respective team's final league performance scores.
- Performance bonuses are only awarded for the current season.



1

MAX SCORE

FINANCE

FINANCE

OBJECTIVE:

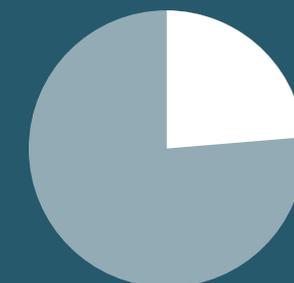
Make clubs financially stable, have diversified revenue streams and reward profitability.



| TYPE | CRITERIA | MAX SCORE | WEIGHTING |
|-------------------------|---|-----------|-----------|
| REVENUE DIVERSIFICATION | NON-CENTRALISED TURNOVER (£) | 2.25 | 50% |
| | NON-CENTRALISED TURNOVER AS % OF TOTAL TURNOVER | 0.75 | 17% |
| PROFITABILITY | ADJUSTED PROFIT | 0.5 | 11% |
| SUSTAINABILITY | BALANCE SHEET STRENGTH | 0.5 | 11% |
| | OWNER INVESTMENT | 0.5 | 11% |
| TOTAL ALL | | 4.5 | 100% |

Current Grade A or B clubs will require a Statutory Financial Accounts audit or a Limited Assurance assessment of their accounts, this should be conducted by an external qualified accountant or firm of Chartered Accountants.

4.5
MAX SCORE



22.5%
OVERALL WEIGHTING

FINANCE

1. NON-CENTRALISED TURNOVER (£)

- Defined as the total annual revenue after all central distributions are deducted.
- This is the three accounting [periods] prior to the current year i.e. in 2025, this would be an average of 2022, 2023 and 2024.
- Value compared to threshold and points applied.
- This is any turnover and other income on the face of the profit and loss *less* central distributions from the RFL/RL Commercial
- This figure should exclude prize money.

| | THRESHOLD | POINTS |
|--|-----------|--------|
| NON-CENTRALISED TURNOVER THRESHOLDS | ≥£2.5M | 2.25 |
| | ≥£1.25M | 1.50 |
| | ≥£500K | 0.50 |

FINANCE

2. NON-CENTRALISED TURNOVER [%]

- Defined as non-centralised annual turnover as a % of total annual turnover.
- This is for the three accounting [periods] prior to the current year i.e. in 2025, this would be an average of 2022, 2023 and 2024.

| | THRESHOLD | POINTS |
|---|-------------|-------------|
| NON-CENTRALISED TURNOVER AS A % THRESHOLDS | ≥70% | 0.75 |
| | ≥50% | 0.30 |
| | ≥35% | 0.15 |

FINANCE

3. ADJUSTED PROFIT

Depreciation, Facilities Expenditure and Youth Development

- Adjusted profit represents the annual profit before tax, interest, depreciation and amortisation with expenditure on facilities*, youth development (including academy and scholars) and women's and girl's teams can be added back in profit section.
- The add backs are designed to ensure that clubs are not disincentivised to invest in improving player development pathways or facilities.
- Depreciation and amortisation charges are those per the asset notes in the signed accounts. These figures should exclude any impact of revaluation or disposal of assets.
- Interest charge for the year should not include bank charges.
- This is the three accounting (periods) prior to the current year i.e. in 2025, this would be an average of 2022, 2023 and 2024.

| | THRESHOLD | POINTS |
|----------------------------|-----------|--------|
| ADJUSTED PROFIT THRESHOLDS | ≥£1 | 0.50 |
| | ≥(£1M) | 0.25 |

NB* Do not include capital expenditure. This must be amounts included in the profit and loss account relating to repairs, renewals, maintenance or facilities development. It does not include costs of the operation of facilities i.e. rent, rates and utilities.

FINANCE

4. OWNER INVESTMENT

- The intention here is to reward clubs that sustainably invest in growth.
- Defined as either an equity injection (i.e. share capital) or long-term loan to the club (provided that such loan is supported by confirmation that it cannot be withdrawn with less than one year's notice).
- This is for the three accounting (periods) prior to the current year i.e. in 2025, this would be an average of 2022, 2023 and 2024.
- If the investment is equity, then it needs to be backed up with a share certificate as well as movement in share capital in the signed accounts.
- If a loan is converted to equity, this is not allowable as Owner Investment. This impacts other areas within grading finance.
- If the investment is a loan, then this should be presented in the signed accounts within Creditors >1 year along with a signed agreement stating the monies won't be withdrawn within one year as well as evidence of when the money was received.
- Write offs of the interest/loan should not be included as Owner Investment.
- If the 'investment' is within the directors' loan account then the owner investment figure is the movement year on year rather than the closing balance.

| | THRESHOLD | POINTS |
|-----------------------------|-----------|--------|
| OWNER INVESTMENT THRESHOLDS | ≥£500K | 0.50 |
| | ≥£100K | 0.25 |

FINANCE

5. BALANCE SHEET STRENGTH

- Defined as the Net Assets/or Net Liabilities as at the end of the relevant accounting period.
- This is as reported in the last statutory accounts. This is not an average of the previous three years.
- If your stadium is held in a holding company and you have primacy of tenure, as per definition in stadium section, you can add the net book value of the stadium on your balance sheet strength figure.

| | THRESHOLD | POINTS |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|--------|
| BALANCE SHEET STRENGTH THRESHOLDS | ≥£100K | 0.50 |
| | ≥£1 | 0.25 |

STADIUM

STADIUM

OBJECTIVE:

Stadium facilities to reach minimum standards and add value to broadcast and fan experience.



FACILITIES SCORE

1.5



UTILISATION

1



PRIMACY OF TENURE

0.25



LED

0.125



BIG SCREEN

0.125



3

MAX SCORE



15%

OVERALL WEIGHTING

STADIUM

1. FACILITIES SCORE – 1.5

In order to score 1.5 the club's stadium facilities must reach Super League minimum standards. If these standards are not all met the club will score 0.5. Based on the following 10 areas:

CAPACITY

Minimum of 5,000.

SEATS

[Permanent] – Minimum of 2,000 and agreed by Stadium Advisory Group.

SPONSORS' SEATS

Minimum of 200, under cover & separated from public areas by a physical barrier.

CORPORATE LOUNGES

Minimum capacity 200.

DIRECTORS BOX

40 seats, under cover & separated from public areas by a physical barrier. Positioned above pitch level and close to halfway line, direct access to and from boardroom to seats without passing through a public area.

*If a club scored 1.5 points in the previous grading year and undertakes stadium development work agreed in advance with the RFL the club will receive an exemption from a Facilities Score points deduction for an agreed period of up to 2 years whilst facilities improvements are undertaken.

BROADCASTER PARKING AREA

Designated parking area for broadcast operation. Minimum of 50m by 50m, or suitable equivalent 2,500m² area. 50 car park spaces for OB compound. Suitable surface to satisfaction of broadcaster for OB Compound to be located. Additional 15 car park spaces for broadcast staff.

STUDIO SPACE

Minimum 4m x 4m in size, an internal, dry space with power with an in-bowl stadium aspect.

MEDIA FACILITIES

The press box should be able to accommodate 30 in comfort with an overflow area of 20 seats. Should be equipped with firmly fixed flat working surfaces. Overhead lighting should be provided. There should be a room which can be used as a working press lounge & conference facility.

PHOTOGRAPHER FACILITIES

Wifi available. Area to distribute bibs, programmes etc.

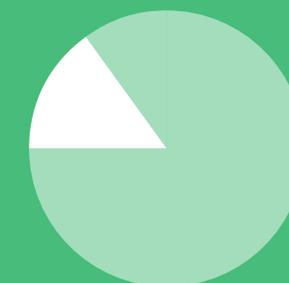
TV GANTRY

Minimum requirement is 15m long x 2m wide, elevated position on half way line, covered from weather elements, and with available power.



3

MAX SCORE



15%

OVERALL WEIGHTING

STADIUM

2. UTILISATION – 1

Utilisation is calculated by the club's average attendance for the season, as defined under the Fandom attendance pillar, divided by the total stadium capacity [as defined by the Safety Advisory Group]. As an example if the stadium capacity is 10,000 and the average attendance is 5,000 the utilisation score will be 0.5. The average for the last three years is calculated and used. General Safety Certificate to be submitted with data capture form as evidence of ground capacity.

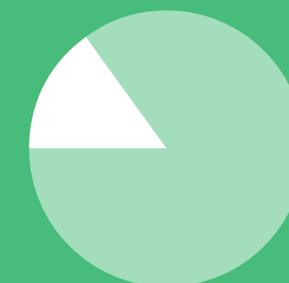
3. PRIMACY OF TENURE – 0.25

Primacy of tenure is defined as the club having an agreement [or providing proof of ownership] that means there are no constraints on fixture scheduling for their stadium that may adversely impact other clubs, fans and broadcast partners. Clubs can score either 0.25 for having primacy of tenure or 0 if they do not.



3

MAX SCORE



15%

OVERALL WEIGHTING

STADIUM

4. LED PERIMETER ADVERTISING BOARDS – 0.125

A score of 0.125 is awarded if a club has LED advertising boards across a minimum of the TV arc three sides with a content management system:

- 100m length (save for where main dug outs are opposite the TV cameras).
- Full length behind goals.
- 900mm high.
- If points 1 and 2 above are met and height of LED Boards is between 600mm and 899mm score = **0.0625 points**.

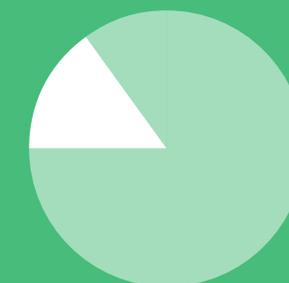
5. BIG SCREEN – 0.125

- In place and meets full specification = **0.125 points**.
 - LED screen size: 36m²
 - Panel size: 960mm
 - Pixel pitch: 5mm
 - Physical screen resolution - dots: 1,105,920 dots
 - Calibrated brightness: 6,000 nits
 - Refresh rate: 1,920Hz
 - Ingress protection: IP65/IP54
 - Input power frequency: 50/60Hz
- In place but LED Screen is Size 30m² and Pixel Pitch of 10mm or better = **0.0625 points**.



3

MAX SCORE



15%

OVERALL WEIGHTING

COMMUNITY

COMMUNITY

OBJECTIVE:

To maximise growth of the sport in the largest markets to generate new fan bases.



AREA
POPULATION



NUMBER OF CLUBS
IN THE AREA

AREA POPULATION:

Defined as the population of the Local Authority District where the club's stadium is located.

1.5



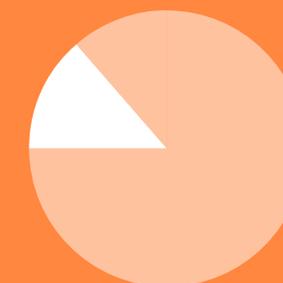
FOUNDATION:

Annual turnover of the foundation as a proxy for the community and participation activities.

1



2.5
MAX SCORE



12.5%
OVERALL WEIGHTING

Data taken from the 2021 Census

CATCHMENT

- Catchment Area is defined as the population of the Local Authority District where the club's stadium is located divided by the total number of Tier 1 and Tier 2 clubs in the same area.
- The population data is based on the latest census [2021] and ONS Boundaries for Local Authority Districts.
- Changes to boundary during the ten year census period that are acknowledged and published as updates by the ONS will be taken into consideration for the catchment score calculation.
- If you sign a Rugby League Development Agreement with another Local Authority District (using the same definition as currently) a club can add that Local Authority District population to its data as long as the agreement remains in place. The acceptance of any Rugby League Development Agreement is subject to RFL approval and activity must be aligned to RFL strategy.

| | THRESHOLD | POINTS |
|---------------------------|-----------|--------|
| CATCHMENT AREA THRESHOLDS | >260K | 1.5 |
| | 130K-260K | 1 |
| | <130K | 0.5 |

CATCHMENT

METHODOLOGY

ONS Process to view catchment data

1. Go to <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/datasets/c2021ts008> and ensure you are using the dataset TS008 - Sex
2. Select the green 'Query data' button.
3. Select 'Geography' from the options on the left-hand side of the screen.
4. Use the search by Postcode or Placename function to find the local authority area.
5. Select the download button on the left side of the screen.
6. Select the link 'view data in your web browser' which will show the population total on screen.

FRENCH CLUBS POPULATION DATA CAN BE FOUND ON INSEE WEBSITE:

| CLUB | COMMUNE SOURCE | DATE |
|-------------------------|--|--|
| CATALANS DRAGONS | DEPARTMENT SOURCE | DOSSIER COMPLET - DÉPARTEMENT DES PYRÉNÉES-ORIENTALES [66] INSEE |
| TOULOUSE OLYMPIQUE XIII | POPULATIONS LÉGALES 2020 - COMMUNE DE TOULOUSE [31555] INSEE | DOSSIER COMPLET - DÉPARTEMENT DE LA HAUTE-GARONNE [31] INSEE |

FOUNDATION

- Clubs will score in this area if they have an active foundation.
- An active foundation is defined as having a clear and confirmed link to a club i.e. common trustees or a service level agreement in place.
- A foundation is defined as a Ltd company that is registered with the Charities Commission. For French clubs Foundation to show a certificate of registration <https://www.journal-officiel.gouv.fr/>
- The score will increase based on foundation turnover.
- This is being used as a proxy for reach/level of community activity.
- This is for the three accounting [periods] prior to the current year i.e. in 2025, this would be an average of 2022, 2023 and 2024.

- Where a foundation delivers multi sport activity an apportionment of foundation turnover will be calculated for Rugby League only and will be based on respective turnover of the clubs involved i.e. of the football club and rugby league club*.

| | THRESHOLD | POINTS |
|-----------------------|---------------|--------|
| FOUNDATION THRESHOLDS | ≥£1M | 1 |
| | ≥£250K | 0.75 |
| | ≥£50K | 0.5 |
| | ≤£50K | 0.25 |
| | NO FOUNDATION | 0 |

NB* If relevant, confirmation from club and foundation they are connected will be sought and evidence of link may be requested.

03

MINIMUM STANDARDS

MINIMUM STANDARDS

| TOPIC | PROPOSED STANDARD | SANCTION |
|---|---|--|
| TALENT & PERFORMANCE PATHWAY | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grade A & B to have a Talent & Performance Pathway that is approved by the RFL by the end of February each year with full reporting of progress provided to the RFL ahead of data capture form submission date. Grade A Talent & Performance Pathway must include a Women's team in accordance with the Participation Agreement for the level within which it plays. Grade A & B Clubs [who are full time] must comply with the RFL Player Welfare Policy and reach the desired level on the Annual Audit. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-compliance results in i] a grading points deduction of 0.25 for the first year of non-compliance, ii] a grading points deduction of 0.5 following the second year of non-compliance and iii] downgrading to the grade otherwise achieved by one level i.e. from A to B for all subsequent years in which this is not achieved. |
| COMMUNITY GAME DEVELOPMENT | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grade A & B must have a Foundation which is an Incorporated Registered Charity registered with the Charities Commission and submit annual accounts and Trustees report [or equivalent] to the RFL ahead of data capture form submission date. Grade A & B must have a Community Rugby League Development Plan [incorporating at least, but not limited to, the development of Physical Disability, Learning Disability and Wheelchair RL] submitted to the RFL for approval by the end of February each year with full reporting of progress provided to the RFL ahead of data capture form submission date. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-compliance results in i] a grading points deduction of 0.25 for the first year of non-compliance, ii] a grading points deduction of 0.5 following the second year of non-compliance and iii] downgrading to the grade otherwise achieved by one level i.e. from A to B for all subsequent years in which this is not achieved. |

MINIMUM STANDARDS

| TOPIC | PROPOSED STANDARD | SANCTION |
|--|---|---|
| BREACH OF OPERATIONAL RULES | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Top tier clubs - any Club found guilty of On/Off Field Misconduct or guilty of a breach of the Salary Cap Regulations that results in a sanction of a fine of >£30,000 (Tier 2 clubs - >£15k, Tier 3 clubs - >£2.5k) or in a points deduction. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Results in grading deduction of 0.25. Salary Cap breach results in i) a grading points deduction of 0.25 ii) a grading points deduction of 0.5 for the second year of non-compliance and iii) downgrading of the grade otherwise achieved by one level i.e. from A to B for all subsequent years in which this is not achieved. |
| BREACH OF OTHER REGULATIONS I.E. GDPR, HMRC OR HEALTH & SAFETY | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Top tier clubs - any sanction resulting in a fine of >£30,000 (Tier 2 clubs - >£10k, Tier 3 clubs - >£2.5k) from the relevant authority. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Results in grading points deduction of 0.25. |
| INSOLVENCY | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grade A & B must not have an Insolvency Event as defined in Insolvency Policy. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A grading points deduction of 50% of the Finance pillar points score will be made. |

MINIMUM STANDARDS

| TOPIC | PROPOSED STANDARD | SANCTION |
|------------------------------|---|--|
| E,D&I | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grade A & B must comply with the Professional Club Governance Code in place. Grade A & B must have an E,D & I action and progress plan which is submitted to the RFL for approval by the end of February each year with full reporting of progress provided to the RFL ahead of data capture form submission date. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-compliance results in i) a grading points deduction of 0.25 ii) a grading points deduction of 0.5 for the second year of non-compliance and iii) downgrading of the grade otherwise achieved by one level i.e. from A to B for all subsequent years in which this is not achieved. |
| ANTI-DOPING | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grade A & B shall not have 3 or more Anti-Doping Rule Violations in any 1 year as reflected in Operational Rules. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sanction of a grading points deduction of 0.25. |
| ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grade A & B must have an Environmental Sustainability action and progress plan which is submitted to the RFL for approval by the end of February each year with full reporting of progress provided to the RFL ahead of data capture form submission date. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-compliance results in i) a grading points deduction of 0.25 ii) a grading points deduction of 0.5 for the second year of non-compliance and iii) downgrading of the grade otherwise achieved by one level i.e. from A to B for all subsequent years in which this is not achieved. |

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LEGAL

ARBITRATION

- All Clubs agree to be bound by the arbitration provisions contained within this document and by virtue of the same, enter into an arbitration agreement for the purposes of Section 6 of the Arbitration Act 1996 [“the Act”]. Each Club agrees that they waive irrevocably their right to any form of challenge, claim, complaint, appeal, review or recourse to any state court or judicial authority, subject to any applicable statutory or other rights.
- There is no appeal against the Grading score awarded to a Club however, a Club, which feels that the process has not been applied fairly and reasonably, may apply to Sport Resolutions [a trading name of The Sports Dispute Resolution Panel Ltd – Company No. 3351039] in accordance with the Act and Sport Resolutions Arbitration Rules, which are deemed incorporated and activated by reference for a review of the procedure and a declaration as to whether the process has been fair and reasonable. For the avoidance of doubt, in the event the Sport Resolutions Tribunal makes a declaration that the process was not fair and reasonable, the matter shall be remitted back to the RFL Board for reconsideration.
- Any challenge shall be to a three-person tribunal appointed in accordance with the Arbitration Rules of Sport Resolutions.
- The Club and the RFL agree to the Sport Resolutions Arbitration Rules other than where they conflict with this document, in which case the terms of this document shall prevail.
- The parties confirm and agree that the matter shall be dealt with under the Sport Resolutions ‘Appeal Arbitration Procedure’ save that the relevant deadlines and timeframes will be expedited due to the short window prior to the commencement of the 2025 Super League Season, namely:
 - A Notice of Challenge [written notice to arbitrate] must be submitted by the Club setting out full grounds upon which the Club intends to rely, along with any supporting documentation, to the RFL and to Sport Resolutions at resolve@sportresolutions.com within 48 hours of the decision by the RFL Board awarding a Grading score to a Club.
 - The RFL must submit any Notice of Response setting out the basis upon which it responds to the Club’s challenge, along with any supporting documentation, to the Club and Sport Resolutions within 48 hours of receipt of the Notice of Challenge.
 - The tribunal will decide upon the need for any additional Directions and will convene a hearing to take place within seven days of the Notice of Challenge initially having been submitted.
- Sport Resolutions will execute and communicate any decision to all relevant parties within seven days of the date of the hearing and any decision shall be final and binding on all parties.
- Any Club seeking to invoke this process must lodge with Sport Resolutions, at the time of submission of its Notice of Challenge, the sum of £5,000 as an initial deposit. This sum will be used against the costs of prospective arbitration proceedings and some or all of this amount may be refunded in the event the Club is successful.
- The tribunal appointed by Sport Resolutions shall determine responsibility for costs [which may include any arbitration costs] at the end of the proceedings, and shall have the power to order that all, or part, of the legal and other costs incurred by one party be paid by another party. The starting point in exercising the tribunal’s discretion shall be that the unsuccessful party shall bear the costs of the arbitration.
- The seat of the arbitrations shall be England and the tribunal shall decide whether any hearing is held virtually or in person. In the event a hearing is to be held in person, it shall take place in Manchester.
- Procedurally, arbitrations shall be governed by the Act unless otherwise determined by the tribunal appointed by Sport Resolutions, and shall incorporate all the provisions of the Act, and shall amount to a binding arbitration agreement [save that sections 44, 45 and 69 of the Act shall not apply].

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX ONE

LEAGUE FINISHING POSITIONS

| | | | |
|----|---|----|--|
| 1 | Super League Grand Final Winner | 24 | Winner of 3 rd v 4 th Middle 8s Play-off |
| 2 | Loser of Super League Grand Final | 25 | Loser of 3 rd v 4 th Middle 8s Play-off |
| 3 | Loser of Super League Semi Final with highest league position | 26 | 5 th in Middle 8s |
| 4 | Loser of Super League Semi Final with lowest league position | 27 | 6 th in Middle 8s |
| 5 | Loser of Super League Eliminator with highest league position | 28 | 7 th in Middle 8s |
| 6 | Loser of Super League Eliminator with lowest league position | 29 | 8 th in Middle 8s |
| 7 | 7 th in Super League | 30 | 5 th in League 1 |
| 8 | 8 th in Super League | 31 | 6 th in League 1 |
| 9 | 9 th in Super League | 32 | 7 th in League 1 |
| 10 | 10 th in Super League | 33 | 8 th in League 1 |
| 11 | 11 th in Super League | 34 | 9 th in League 1 |
| 12 | 12 th in Super League | 35 | 10 th in League 1 |
| 13 | Championship Grand Final Winner | 36 | 11 th in League 1 |
| 14 | Loser of Championship Grand Final | | |
| 15 | Loser of Championship Semi Final with highest league position | | |
| 16 | Loser of Championship Semi Final with lowest league position | | |
| 17 | Loser of Championship Eliminator with highest league position | | |
| 18 | Loser of Championship Eliminator with lowest league position | | |
| 19 | 7 th in Championship | | |
| 20 | 8 th in Championship | | |
| 21 | 9 th in Championship | | |
| 22 | 1 st in Middle 8s | | |
| 23 | 2 nd in Middle 8s | | |

APPENDIX TWO

DATA CONTROL

- The RFL will undertake Club audits in each year. Audits may take place pre or post Data Capture Form submission as the RFL deems suitable.
- Any Club selected for audit must cooperate fully with the RFL Audit or Compliance Team (Including any appointed external assurance partner) in respect of the audit, including (without limitation) by making requested documents (including the Club's accounts and accompanying documents) and other information available for inspection and/or arranging for specified Club Officials to be available for interview, as required by the RFL Audit or Compliance Team.
- The Compliance Manager (and any of the investigators they may instruct to do so) may, following a review of the RFL's report, request further information from the Club.

DATA CAPTURE FORM

- The RFL's Data Capture Form will need to be filled out and sent back to the RFL by an agreed deadline each year.
- The Data Capture Form must be completed and signed by a Club Director. The form will be sent to club representatives by e-mail each year.
- Data Capture Form submission dates will be strictly adhered to. Failure to meet the deadline will result on no grading score for the club for 2025. Late submission of data capture form and specified supporting evidence will result in a fine of £500 per day.



Contact

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