

NATIONAL LEAGUE SYSTEM REGULATIONS

1. DEFINITIONS

In the interpretation of these Regulations: any words and expressions, unless otherwise defined herein, shall be words and expressions as defined as follows:-

“**The Association**” means The Football Association Limited.

“**Club**” means a football club for the time being in a League in membership of the NLS.

“**Committee**” in these Regulations means the relevant Committee appointed by the Association.

“**Competition**” in these Regulations means a League in the NLS.

“**Conditional Licence**” means a Licence with conditions attached to be met by a Club within a period determined by the Competition in which the Club holding the Licence is allocated by the Committee. Such period is not to exceed 1 March in the Membership Year to which the Licence relates. Save in exceptional circumstances a Conditional Licence cannot be granted to a Club for successive Membership Years in respect of the same Criterion.

“**Criteria**” means the Criteria for participation in Play Off Matches as set out in regulation 9 of these Regulations.

“**League**” means any competition sanctioned by The Association and/or an Affiliated Association in membership of the NLS.

“**Licence**” means an annual licence required to be held by a Club to be a member of a Competition that may be either an Unconditional Licence or Conditional Licence.

“**NLS**” means the National League System of competitions controlled by The Association where promotion and relegation links exist between participating Leagues.

“**Playing Season**” means the period between the date on which the first competitive fixture in the League is played each year until the date on which the last competitive fixture in the League is played. For Clubs participating in Play Off Matches this does include the period when Play Off Matches are played.

“**Play Off Match(es)**” means matches played between Clubs in a Play Off Position on a format to be determined by each League provided that the format is the same across each Step.

“**Play Off Position**” means the position of a Club at the end of each Playing Season which is provided for in Standardised Rule 12 as qualifying the Club to take part in a Play Off Match to qualify for promotion to the next Step for the next Playing Season.

“**Regular Season**” means the period between the date on which the first competitive fixture in the League is played each year and the date on which the last competitive fixture in the League is played, excluding Play Off Matches.

“**Regulations**” means these regulations.

“**Rules**” means The Association’s Standardised Rules or The Association’s Standard Code of Rules under which a League is administered.

“**Step**” means the level at which a Club participates in the NLS.

“**Unconditional Licence**” means a Licence without any conditions attached.

NATIONAL LEAGUE SYSTEM REGULATIONS

2. THE NLS SHALL BE OPERATED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REGULATIONS.

A Club shall be required to hold a Licence to be a member of a Competition at Steps 1 to 4 of the NLS.

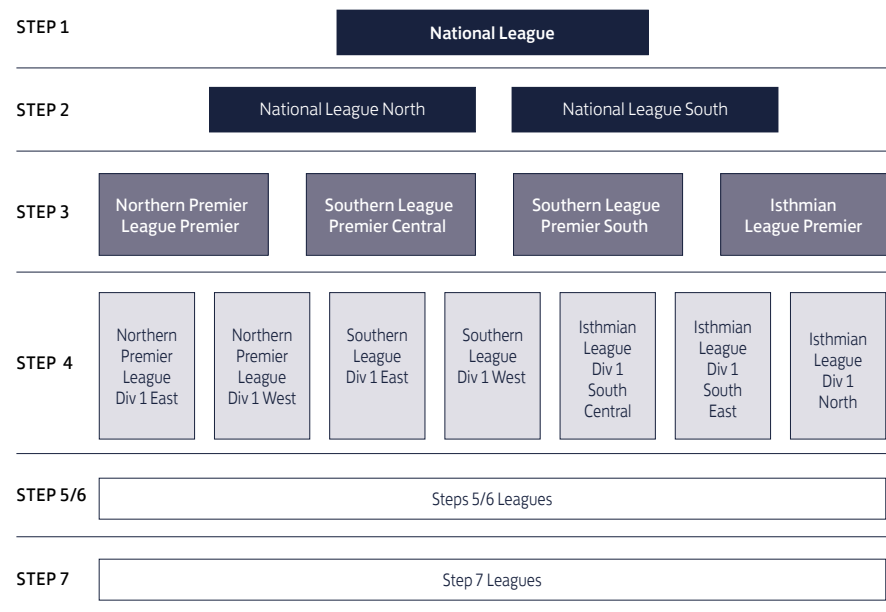
The aims and objectives of the NLS are to provide:

- 2.1 Clubs with a level of competitive football appropriate to their playing ability, stadium/ ground facilities and geographical location.
- 2.2 A framework for discussion on matters of policy and common interest to Leagues and Clubs.
- 2.3 The seasonal movement of Clubs.
- 2.4 A co-ordinated approach between Leagues regarding the final date of the Playing Season.

All Leagues are bound by the Regulations. A Club is bound by the Regulations from the date it has qualified for placement into the NLS until such time as it leaves the NLS for whatever reason.

3. POSITION OF A LEAGUE IN THE NATIONAL LEAGUE SYSTEM

3.1 The current structure of the NLS is set out below:



The Leagues currently at Steps 5, 6 and 7 are set out at the end of the Regulations.

Each Step shall have the maximum number of Clubs: Step 1 – 24, Step 2 – 44, Step 3 – 88, Step 4 – 140, Step 5 – 280, Step 6 – 380. Clubs will be placed in the most geographically appropriate division. At Step 7 the maximum number of Clubs in each division shall be determined by the Committee taking into account all relevant factors.

- 3.2 Any league wishing to become part of the NLS must apply to the Committee by 31st December in the relevant year in such form and/or providing such information as shall be required by the Committee from time to time. The decision as to whether or not a league should be admitted to the NLS shall be made by the Committee which will then decide on the Step at which the League will compete.
- 3.3 Any League wishing to propose an adjustment to its position within the NLS must apply in writing to the Committee by 31st December in any year for such proposal to be determined by the Committee in order, if approved, to have effect in the following Playing Season.

4. RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR PROMOTION AND RELEGATION

The Committee shall provide for the seasonal promotion, relegation or lateral movement of Clubs.

5. DETAILED PROMOTION AND RELEGATION ISSUES

- 5.1 The criteria for entry to the NLS and the criteria for ground/stadium facilities and the Criteria for participation in Play Off Matches shall be determined by the Committee. All criteria so determined shall be published by The Association from time to time.
- 5.2 Subject to 5.5, at the conclusion of each Playing Season, the following procedures will apply to promotion/ relegation subject to the application of the Rules:

Step 1 and Step 2

These regulations do not deal with promotion from Step 1.

The Clubs finishing in the bottom four places at Step 1 at the end of the Playing Season will be relegated to a feeder pool and placed in the most geographically appropriate division at Step 2 for the following Playing Season. They will be replaced by the Clubs finishing in 1st position in each of the divisions at Step 2 together with a further two Clubs determined by a series of Play Off Matches. Where a Club finishes in 1st position but does not meet the criteria for participation at the next Step, the Club finishing in 2nd position shall be promoted. The Clubs finishing in 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th positions shall be eligible to take part in the Play Off Matches. The Play Off Matches shall be played so that in each Step 2 division there is a qualifying round, semi-finals and a promotion final with all ties being played over a single leg at the ground of the higher placed Club. The winner of the promotion final in each Step 2 division will be promoted. If a Club is not eligible to enter Step 1 then it shall not take part in any Play Off Matches. In that event, such Club shall not be replaced and the Play Off Matches structure and draw shall be adjusted as necessary by the Competition on the basis of the remaining Clubs' final league positions.

Step 2 and Step 3

The Clubs in the bottom three places in each of the two divisions at Step 2 at the end of the Regular Season will be relegated to a feeder pool and placed in the most geographically appropriate division at Step 3 for the following Playing Season. They will be replaced by the Clubs finishing in 1st position in each of the four divisions at Step 3 together with a further two Clubs determined by a series of Play Off Matches. Where a Club finishes in 1st position but does not meet the criteria for participation at the next Step, the Club finishing in 2nd position shall be promoted and the Club finishing in 3rd position (and so on) shall be the Club in the next eligible position to take part in the Play Off Matches. Where a Club finishes in a Play Off Position but does not meet the Criteria for participation in Play Off Matches the Club finishing in the next eligible position shall take part in the Play Off Matches. In each division at Step 3, the Play Off Matches shall be played so that the highest placed of the eligible Clubs plays against the lowest placed and the other two Clubs play each other (the "Step 3 Initial Play Off Matches"): The winners of each of the Step 3 Initial Play Off Matches will play each other resulting in one

winner in each of the Step 3 divisions (the "Step 3 Divisional Play Off Winners"). The Step 3 Divisional Play Off Winners will play a further match against each other. The ties will be decided by the Committee pairing Clubs on the most suitable geographical basis. The ties will be played on a single match basis with the home Club being the Club with the best points per match ratio in the Regular Season. If there are only three eligible Clubs then the highest placed shall receive a bye to a second match where it will play the winner of the other Play Off Match and the winner of that match will play in the further Play Off Match described above. Clubs finishing below position 7 will not be considered for Play Off Matches.

The promoted Clubs will be placed in a feeder pool and placed in the most geographically appropriate division at Step 2.

Step 3 and Step 4

The Clubs finishing in the bottom three places in each of the four divisions at Step 3 at the end of the Regular Season will be relegated to a feeder pool and placed in the most geographically appropriate division at Step 4 for the following Playing Season. They will be replaced by the Clubs finishing in 1st position in each of the seven divisions at Step 4 together with a further five Clubs determined by a series of Play Off Matches. Where a Club finishes in 1st position but does not meet the Criteria for participation at the next Step, the Club finishing in 2nd position shall be promoted and the Club finishing in 3rd position (and so on) shall be the Club in the next eligible position to take part in the Play Off Matches. Where a Club finishes in a Play Off position but does not meet the Criteria for participation in Play Off Matches, the Club finishing in the next eligible position shall take part in the Play Off Matches. In each division at Step 4 the Play Off Matches shall be played so that the highest placed of the eligible Clubs plays against the lowest placed and the other two Clubs play each other (the "Step 4 Initial Play Off Matches"). The winners of each of the Step 4 Initial Play Off Matches will play each other and the winner of those matches shall result in seven teams eligible for promotion. The five Clubs to be promoted shall be the five Clubs out of the seven divisional Play Off winners with the best points per match ratio in the Regular Season. If there are only three eligible Clubs then the highest placed shall receive a bye to the second match where it will play the winner of the other Play Off match and the winner of that match will be promoted. Clubs finishing below position 7 will not be considered for Play Off Matches.

The promoted Clubs will be placed in a feeder pool and placed in the most geographically appropriate division at Step 3.

Step 4 and Step 5

The Clubs finishing in the bottom two places in each of the seven divisions at Step 4 at the end of the Regular Season will be relegated and placed in the most geographically appropriate division at Step 5. These Clubs will be replaced by the fourteen Clubs finishing in first position in each of the fourteen divisions at Step 5 at the end of the Regular Season.

With effect from the commencement of the 2019/20 season, the following will apply:

In addition, a series of Play Off Matches shall be played between the Clubs finishing in second position in each of the Leagues at Step 5 at the end of the Regular Season. The ties shall be decided by the Association pairing Clubs on the most suitable geographical basis. These matches shall be played on a single match basis on the ground of the Club with the best points per match ratio in the Regular Season. The winners of each of these seven matches shall play a final Play Off Match against one of the Clubs finishing third from bottom of each Step 4 division at the end of the Regular Season, such matches to be decided by the Association so that each Step 4 Club plays a Step 5 Club; such matches to be on a single match basis on the home ground of the Step 4 Club on cup tie terms with no percentage being paid to any Competition. The seven winners shall play at Step 4 in the following season.

The 2018-19 Regulations resume here.

The Clubs to be promoted from Step 5 will be allocated to the most geographically appropriate division at Step 4.

A Club promoted to Step 4 shall comply with the Licencing System provision as set out in Appendix 1 to the Standardised Rules.

Step 5 and Step 6

The Clubs in the bottom two places in each of the fourteen divisions at Step 5 at the end of the Regular Season will be relegated and placed in the most geographically appropriate division of Step 6. These Clubs will be replaced by the nineteen Clubs finishing in first position in each of the Leagues at Step 6 at the end of the Regular Season together with the required number of Clubs finishing in second position at the end of the Regular Season on a points per match ratio. If there are insufficient Clubs to fill vacancies Clubs finishing second to bottom of the Step 5 divisions will be reprieved so that the best such Club shall be reprieved first.

Step 6 and 7

At the end of the Regular Playing Season the Clubs in the bottom two positions of each of the nineteen Step 6 divisions will be liable to relegation.

All Step 7 Clubs seeking promotion to Step 6 must make application using the prescribed form direct to The Association, copied to their existing League, by 31st December in the relevant year. In order to be considered for promotion Clubs must finish in 1st position in their Step 7 league. If the Club finishing in 1st position does not wish to be promoted or fails to meet the entry criteria then the club finishing in 2nd position will be eligible for promotion. If the club in 2nd position does not seek promotion or fails to meet the entry criteria then clubs down to 5th position may be considered for promotion provided that they meet the appropriate entry criteria. Clubs finishing below 5th position will not be considered for promotion and only one club will be considered from each League. Each application must be accompanied by the agreed application fee, as determined by the Committee, which is non-refundable.

No more than 38 Clubs will be promoted from Step 7. If more than 38 Clubs are eligible for promotion they will be chosen based on a points per match basis. Where the eligible Clubs count does not reach 38 in number, reprieves of Step 6 Clubs shall come into effect on a points per match basis.

5.3 At Steps 2-5 the Club finishing in last place in the table at the end of the Regular Season will be relegated and not reprieved. Below Step 5 the Clubs to be reprieved will be decided at the sole discretion of the Committee.

5.4 At Steps 1 to 6, if a Club becomes eligible to take part in a Play Off Match and refuses to take part in that match or if a Club qualifies for promotion and refuses to be promoted then that Club shall be relegated from the division from which it has so qualified and shall play the following Playing Season in the division at the next Step below which is deemed the most appropriate by the Committee.

5.5 Where a vacancy occurs within the NLS the following procedures will apply:

End of the Playing Season

- 5.5.1 (a) Where a Club notifies its decision to resign from its League at the end of the Playing Season, then a vacancy is created on the date the notification of that decision is formally recorded by that League. Such resignation can only be withdrawn by the end of that Playing Season with the consent of the Board of that League.
- (b) In all cases, that Club is treated as a relegated Club. The final table of that division is not affected.
- (c) In cases where the vacancy is created after the end of the Playing Season but before the League's AGM, the vacancy will be filled in accordance with Regulation 5.5.2 below.
- 5.5.2 (a) Where a vacancy occurs at Step 1 and Step 2 following the completion of a Playing Season the best ranked Club in a relegation position is reprieved.
- (b) Where a vacancy occurs at Step 3 following the completion of a Playing Season the Club with the best points per match ratio in the Regular Season which is a Play Off winner but not promoted under Regulation 5.2 is promoted.

- (c) Where a vacancy occurs at Step 4 following the completion of a Playing Season the second placed Club across the Competitions at Step 5 with the best points per match ratio in the Regular Season will be promoted.
- (d) Where a vacancy arises and Clubs at Step 4 are to be relegated but for whatever reason a Step 4 division does not have its full complement of Clubs at the end of the Regular Season then Clubs to be reprieved will be determined by the Committee in its sole discretion.
- (e) Where a vacancy arises at Step 5 and below, the question of reprieves shall be dealt with at the sole discretion of the Committee.
- (f) Where a vacancy occurs after the date of a League AGM then a League is not able to replace the Club(s) concerned for the following Playing Season.

Prior to the end of a Playing Season

- 5.5.3 (a) In cases where the vacancy is created prior to the end of the Playing Season, the vacancy will be filled by the best ranked Club in a relegation position at the end of the Regular Season, eligible of being reprieved in that same division. In the event of there being more vacancies than Clubs eligible to be reprieved, such vacancy or vacancies will be filled by Clubs eligible to be reprieved in the Competition's other division(s) on a points per match ratio.
- (b) Where, prior to the end of the Playing Season, a Club notifies its decision to resign from its League with immediate effect or where a Club is removed from the League for any reason, then the playing record of that Club will be expunged and a vacancy is created on the date the resignation or removal is formally recorded by that League.
- (c) In all such cases that Club is treated as a relegated Club and the vacancy will be filled in accordance with 5.5.3(a) above.

5.6 Only internal changes to the constitution of a League are allowed following the holding of a League's Annual General Meeting.

5.7 Clubs are not allowed to enter into a ground share agreement in order to gain promotion or to retain membership at a particular Step where the Club has failed to attain or maintain the relevant Grade.

5.8 Ground grading requirements will be in accordance with the Rules.

In order to be considered for promotion, the following requirements will apply.

Step 1 - Clubs must comply fully with the requirements of Grade A.

Step 2 - Clubs competing at Step 2 must comply fully with the requirements of Grade B. To be considered for promotion to Step 1 or to be included in the Play Off Matches, Clubs must meet the requirements of Grade B together with any additional requirements by 31st March in the year in which they seek promotion. Clubs must also attain Grade A by 31st March in the year following promotion.

Step 3 - Clubs competing at Step 3 must comply fully with the requirements of Grade C. To be considered for promotion to Step 2 or to be included in the Play Off Matches, Clubs must meet the requirements of Grade C and attain Grade B by 31st March in the year following promotion.

Step 4 - Clubs competing at Step 4 must comply fully with the requirements of Grade D. To be considered for promotion to Step 3 or to be included in the Play Off Matches, Clubs must meet the requirements of Grade D and attain Grade C by 31st March in the year following promotion.

Step 5 - Clubs competing at Step 5 must comply fully with the requirements of Grade F and attain Grade D by 31st March in the year following promotion.

Step 6 - Clubs competing at Step 6 must comply fully with the requirements of Grade G. To be considered for promotion to Step 5, Clubs must meet the requirements of Grade G and attain Grade F by 31st March in the year following promotion.

Step 7 - Clubs competing at Step 7 must comply fully with the minimum requirements in force. To be considered for promotion to Step 6, Clubs must meet the requirements of Grade H and attain Grade G by 31st March in the year following promotion. Clubs can be promoted from Step 7 to 6 without floodlights provided that all other requirements of Grade H are met by 31st March in the Playing Season in which the Club wishes to gain promotion and that the Club has the following in place:-

- Planning permission granted for floodlights
- That by 30th September following promotion the floodlights are installed and in working order.
- A development/business plan
- Quotations/estimates for the work to be carried out
- Funding applications submitted if required

Failure to install floodlights in working order by 30th September following promotion will result in a sanction being imposed at the discretion of the League of which the Club is a member. If by 31st March in the year following promotion the floodlights are still not installed then the Club will be a relegated Club and be dealt with accordingly.

- 5.9 If a Club is relegated for not achieving the required Grade for the Step at which it is playing it will not be eligible for promotion again until it has attained the required Grade for the Step to which it wishes to be promoted. The Club must have that Grade at 31st March in the year in which it seeks promotion.
- 5.10 Where a Club resigns from a League that Club will not be eligible for promotion for at least one Playing Season following the Season in which it resigned.
- 5.11 In the event of any question arising regarding the interpretation of these Regulations it will be decided by The Association in its sole discretion.

6. THE MOVEMENT OF CLUBS WITHIN THE NLS OTHER THAN BY PROMOTION OR RELEGATION

6.1 Movement of a Club from participation in one League to another is not permitted other than by promotion and relegation or otherwise as set out in League Rules save with the approval of the Committee.

It may be necessary from time to time to move Clubs laterally at the same Step. Each year the Committee will consider whether any lateral movements may be necessary at each Step; if so the Clubs likely to be affected shall be notified and given the opportunity to present a case if that Club does not wish to be moved laterally. The final decision shall rest with a sub-committee of the Committee. Any appeal shall be in accordance with the Regulations for Football Association Appeals. The decision of that appeal shall be final and binding subject only to Arbitration under FA Rule K.

In coming to its decision the Committee will have regard to any representations made by any party, the distance to be travelled by any Club to be moved compared to the distance travelled in the Playing Season prior to movement; the financial impact on the Club to be moved, the frequency with which the Club has been moved in the past; the number of Clubs both in the division to which the Club is to be moved and in the division from which the Club is moved, and any other matter that it considers to be relevant.

6.2 Any Club wishing to move from one League to another must make application in writing to The Association on or before 31st March in each year to be effective for the following Playing Season. In the event of such application being successful the League from which the Club is moving shall not levy a financial penalty on that Club.

6.3 (i) If a Club (whether a Members' Club or a Company) is wound up, liquidated, or is removed from its League or withdraws from football competition ('the Former Club'), and a new Club ('the New Club') is established which wishes to be placed within the NLS, it will be allowed to make an application only to join a League/ division at Step 5 of the NLS unless the Former Club was in either Step 4 or Step 5 when the event which caused it to cease its membership occurred in which case it must re-join the NLS at a minimum of two Steps below the level at which it was at the time the event occurred, or withdrew from football competition, whichever is lower. Where the Former Club was a member of Premier League or EFL then the Committee shall at its absolute discretion determine in which League the New Club shall be placed for the following Playing Season and will set out at its complete discretion the requirements to be met by the New Club.

In order for consideration to be given to the placement in the NLS of the New Club in the following Playing Season, an initial application must be received by the Committee by 1st March or within twenty-one days of the Former Club being wound up, liquidated, resigning or being removed from its League or withdrawing from football competition, if such date is later than 1st March.

The full application accompanied by all necessary documents including evidence of security of tenure having been granted to the New Club and affiliation to a County Football Association must be received by 31st March or within twenty-one days of the Former Club being wound up, liquidated, resigning or being removed from its League or withdrawing from football competition, if such date is later than 1st March. The application shall be copied to the League of which membership is being requested. The application will be determined by the Committee.

In considering any application, the Committee will set out at its sole discretion the requirements to be met by the New Club.

In the event of more than one application being received within twenty-one days of the Former Club being wound up, liquidated, resigning or being removed from its League or withdrawing from football competition, the Committee will consider at its discretion which application will be considered in accordance with this Regulation.

(ii) If a Club is removed from its League and wishes to remain in the NLS it shall apply to the Committee within five working days of it receiving written notification of its removal from its League. The Committee will consider such application and will place the Club in what it considers at its sole discretion to be the most appropriate League/division for the following Playing Season.

6.4 If a Club (whether a Members' Club or a Company) ceases to be a member of its league and that Club (that is not a New Club as defined at 6.3 above) wishes to be placed within the NLS for the immediately following Playing Season, then unless otherwise determined by the Committee, it may be allowed to make an application to join a League/division below the most recent League/division of which the Club was a member.

In order for consideration to be given to the placement in the NLS by the Club in the immediately following Playing Season, an initial application must be received by the Committee in accordance with the procedures set out at 6.3 above. The application shall be copied to the League of which membership is being requested. The application will be determined by the Committee at its absolute discretion.

In considering any application, the Committee will set out at its sole discretion the requirements to be met by the Club in determining whether to approve the application.

- 6.5 If two or more Clubs (“the Merging Clubs”) are proposing a transaction or series of transactions that result in the merging or consolidation (“the Proposed Merger”) of those Clubs into one Club (“the Merged Club”) then a formal application to do so must be received by the Committee and the league(s) of which the Merging Clubs are members by 31st December to be valid for the following Playing Season.

A Deed of Agreement, which shall be legally binding on all parties must be submitted to The Association by 31st March in the year immediately following receipt of the application. The Committee shall determine at its absolute discretion where the Merged Club is to be included in the NLS for the following Playing Season subject to the provisions of item 6.5.5 below.

A Deed of Agreement, which shall be legally binding on all parties must be submitted to The Association by 31st March in the year immediately following receipt of the application. The Committee shall determine at its absolute discretion where the Merged Club is to be included in the NLS for the following Playing Season subject to the provisions of item 6.5.5 below.

In arriving at its decision the Committee may apply the following minimum criteria:

- 6.5.1 The requirements of Standardised Rule 2.9 for the current Playing Season must be met by each of the Merging Clubs. If one or more of the Merging Clubs is subject to an insolvency event then Standardised Rule 2.9.2 shall be applied to such club(s), otherwise Standardised Rule 2.9.1 shall be applied;
- 6.5.2 The proposed playing name of the Merged Club must be acceptable to the Committee; and
- 6.5.3 The Merged Club must have security of tenure to a ground that meets the relevant ground grading requirements;
- 6.5.4 Any other criteria that the Committee may from time to time deem to be appropriate;
- 6.5.5 The Merged Club will ordinarily be placed at the lower of the Steps at which the Merging Clubs ended the Playing Season in which the application is made. For the purposes of this Regulation, if one of the Merging Clubs has finished that Playing Season in a relegation place, then they will be deemed to have ended the Playing Season at the Step to which they would have been relegated without the Proposed Merger proceeding.

Any decision regarding whether a proposed transaction or series of transactions falls to be considered under this Regulation shall be determined by the Committee at its absolute discretion.

7. PLACEMENT OF A CLUB INTO A LEAGUE

- 7.1 Usually a club can only enter the NLS at Step 7. However a League may seek approval from the Committee to receive a club or team not currently in membership of a League within the NLS provided that there is: (a) exceptional circumstances, (b) a vacancy within its constitution, (c) the club meets the entry criteria and (d) promotion and relegation issues have been satisfied. Such request must be received from the league by no later than 1st February. Any decision shall only be capable of Appeal to The Association by the affected League.
- 7.2 Reserve teams, including a team from a club or Club which is not considered by the Committee to be sufficiently separate from another club or Club, will not be permitted to compete above Step 6 in the NLS. There must be a minimum of two Steps between a first and reserve team. This does not apply at Steps 6 & 7. No two teams from the same Club can play at the same Step. Reserve teams currently at Step 5 can remain unless relegated, once relegated they will not be permitted to be promoted back to Step 5.
- 7.3 Teams from Higher Education or Further Education establishments are not permitted to compete above Step 5. This does not prevent any such establishment forming a Club which complies with all entry criteria and which is separate from the establishment itself.

- 7.4 Where a Club moves from one League to another, for whatever reason, the League from which it is being moved must provide the League to which the Club is being moved with a certificate confirming that the Club being moved does not owe any money or other property of any nature to the League from which it is being moved. The Club being moved cannot compete in its new League until such certification has been provided and the onus will be on the Club being moved to ensure that it has cleared all indebtedness to its previous League.

8. PROCEDURES FOR THE DETERMINATION OF ANY MATTER, DISPUTE OR DIFFERENCE BY THE COMMITTEE

- 8.1 The Committee may adopt such procedures for the determination of any matter, dispute or difference as it considers appropriate and expedient, having regard to the aims and objectives set out at Regulation 2. The Committee may require the attendance at a meeting or the written observations of any League or Club, as it considers appropriate to assist its determination.

- 8.2 (a) Any dispute or difference between a League and a Club relating to promotion and relegation issues, lateral movement and/or other eligibility criteria must be referred for determination to the Committee; such determination shall be final and binding subject only to Arbitration in accordance with Rule K.

- (b) Any decision of the Committee shall be subject to a right of appeal to an Appeal Board. The decision of that Appeal Board shall be final and binding on all parties.

All referrals of appeals shall be conducted in accordance with the Appeal Regulations save for appeals in relation to Ground Grading decisions where the procedures are outlined in 8.2(c) below.

(c) Procedures for Ground Grading Appeals

- (i) The ratification of the Ground Grading decision must be sent in writing within 14 days of the final decision date, currently 31st March.
- (ii) Appeals in relation to Ground Grading Appeals must be submitted to The Association’s Judicial Services Department within seven days from the date of the written decision outlining the Grounds of Appeal, with a copy to The Association’s Leagues & Clubs Department.
- (iii) The Ground Grading Technical Panel will appear before an Appeal Board with the Appellant to respond to the application and there is no requirement to make a formal response in writing.
- (iv) In all cases the Ground Grading Technical Panel will submit any documentation including the Ground Grading report that was considered by the Ground Grading Technical Panel in relation to the Ground Grading decision, (which the appellant would already have received).
- (v) Dates would be set annually in advance by the Judicial Services Department for the hearing of Ground Grading appeals and details of the dates would be notified to all Clubs in the correspondence from the Ground Grading Technical Panel notifying the decision of the Ground Grading assessment.

- 8.3 The Committee may, at its discretion, delegate the resolution of any matter, dispute or difference arising under these Regulations to anybody it considers to be appropriate (including a sub-committee or commission which may include members of council not on the Committee or a body constituted by a County Football Association).

9. CRITERIA FOR THE PARTICIPATION IN PLAY-OFF MATCHES

- Security of Tenure – see Standardised Rule 2.3.2
- Solvency – see Standardised Rule 13.B.2
- Ground Share requirements, i.e. not ground share in order to gain promotion – see 5.7 of these Regulations
- Ground Grading – see 5.8 of these regulations and the relevant criteria document

10. ARBITRATION

The fact of participation in the NLS and signifying agreement to be bound by the Regulations shall constitute an agreement between each League and Club to refer to Arbitration any challenge in law arising out of, or in relation to, the Regulations in accordance with the provisions of FA Rule K.

11. PRECEDENCE

In the case of conflict between the Regulations for the Operation of the NLS and the Rules, the Regulations take precedence.

Leagues/Divisions at Steps 5, 6 & 7 of the National League System (season 2018/2019).

Step 5	Step 6	Step 7
Combined Counties League Premier Div	Combined Counties League Div 1	Anglian Combination Premier Div
Eastern Counties League Premier Div	East Midlands Counties League	Bedfordshire County League Premier Div
Essex Senior League	Eastern Counties League Div 1 North	Cambridgeshire County League Premier Div
Hellenic League Premier Div	Eastern Counties League Div 1 Eastern Senior League	Central Midlands League Div North
Midland League Premier Div	Hellenic League Div 1 East	Central Midlands League Div South
North West Counties League Premier Div	Hellenic League Div 1 West	Cheshire League Premier Div
Northern League Div 1	Midland League Div 1	Dorset Premier League
Northern Counties East League Premier Div	Northern Counties East Div 1	Essex & Suffolk Border League Premier Div
Southern Counties East League Premier Div	North West Counties League Div 1 North	Essex Olympian League Premier Div
Spartan South Midlands League Premier Div	North West Counties League Div 1 South	Gloucestershire County League Premier Div
Southern Combination Football League Premier Div	Northern League Div 2	Hampshire Premier League Senior Div
United Counties League Premier Div	South West Peninsula League Premier Div	Herts Senior County League Premier Div
Wessex League Premier Div	Spartan South Midlands League Div 1	Humber Premier League Premier Div
Western League Premier Div	Southern Combination Football League Div 1	Kent County League Premier Div
	Southern Counties East League Div 1	Leicestershire Senior League Premier Div
	United Counties League Div 1	Lincolnshire Football League Premier Div
	Wessex League Div 1	Liverpool County Premier League Premier Div
	West Midlands (Regional) League Premier Div	Manchester Football League Premier Div
	Western League Div 1	Mid Sussex Football League Premier Div
		Middlesex County League Premier Div
		Midland League Div 2
		Northamptonshire Combination Premier Div
		Northern Football Alliance Premier Div
		North Riding Football League Premier Div
		Nottinghamshire Senior League Senior Div
		Oxfordshire Senior League Premier Div
		Peterborough & District League Premier Div
		Sheffield & Hallamshire County Senior League Premier Div
		Somerset County League Premier Div
		Southern Combination Div Two
		South West Peninsula League Div 1 East
		South West Peninsula League Div 1 West
		Spartan South Midlands League Div 2
		Staffordshire County Senior League Premier Div
		Suffolk & Ipswich League Senior Div
		Surrey Elite Intermediate League Intermediate Div
		Thames Valley Premier League Premier Div
		Wearside League
		West Cheshire League Div 1
		West Lancashire League Premier Div
		West Midlands (Regional) League Div 1
		West Riding County Amateur League Premier Div
		West Yorkshire League Premier Div
		Wiltshire Football League Premier Div
		York Football League Premier Div