

UMPIRING PATHWAY

Published February 2026





CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
UMPIRING PATHWAYS	2
LEVEL CLARIFICATION	3
UMPIRE DEVELOPERS	4
PROMOTION CRITERIA	5
• Level 6 to Level 5	8
• Level 5 to Level 4	9
• Level 4 to Level 3	10
• Level 3 to Level 2 (Men's Game Pathway)	11
• Level 3 to Level 2 (Women's Game Pathway)	13
MCC LAWS OF THE GAME TEST EXTERNAL LINKS	15
UMPIRE COMPETENCE FRAMEWORK	16

INTRODUCTION

The ECB Umpiring Pathways were launched ahead of the 2023 season. There are two pathways in which umpires are categorised, the Men's Game Pathway (M levels), and Women's Game Pathway (W levels).

Umpires are categorised within each pathway, allowing differentiation and recognition of both regular activity in a chosen pathway of competition, and also the expected and commensurate level at which umpires are likely to officiate on a regular basis.

The ECB Umpiring Pathway provides a clear and transparent process detailing how umpires may progress to higher levels of the game, subject to meeting specific criteria.

Since the introduction of the ECB Umpire Progression Pathway, benefits include:

- A clear process for umpires to progress through to higher levels of recreational cricket.**
- A pathway that links the recreational game through to the professional game has been established and embedded.**
- Opportunities are based on the gender of competition, not the gender of umpire.**
- Umpires have ownership and control over their own progression.**

UMPIRING PATHWAYS

The following diagram shows the Umpiring Pathways and associated competitions



Men's Cricket	All Junior, non-County Cricket & Social cricket	All other levels of Open Age Competition	Highest level County Feeder League Competition	ECB Premier Leagues (or equivalent)	NCCA, Professional 2nd XI Competitions	County Champs, One Day Cup, T20 Blast, Hundred
Women's Cricket	All Junior, non-County Cricket & Social cricket	All softball cricket competitions, Junior hardball competitions (Pairs)	Hardball leagues, County Junior Hardball	County Senior, County Age Groups, County Hardball Premier Leagues	Tier 2 One Day Cup, T20 Blast, Tier 1 Academy	Tier 1 One Day Cup, T20 Blast, Hundred

LEVEL CLARIFICATION

Any umpire who is successful in achieving promotion through the ECB Umpire Promotion Pathway, will have their grade amended on their ACO registration and WTU (if applicable) ahead of the following season.

For clarification, all umpires who attend and successfully complete all elements of the ECB Umpiring Course will start at Level 6 (M6 and W6) in both the Men's Game Pathway and Women's Game Pathway above.

Umpires seeking promotion from Level 6 to Level 5 (Men's & Women's Pathways) may have their grade changed at any time during the season by their County ACO on successful completion of the criteria detailed within this document.



UMPIRE DEVELOPERS

Umpire Developers will be deployed by appropriate appointing bodies, such as the ECB or County ACOs, to conduct off-field development observations.

Those who express an interest in being an Umpire Developer are invited to attend familiarisation and training sessions offered by either the ECB Officiating Department or local County ACOs, ahead of the season. These sessions include details on how to make effective judgements on an umpire's performance and how to give constructive and structured written feedforward.

For more information on being an Umpire Developer, please contact your County ACO Development Officer.



PROMOTION CRITERIA

Any umpire who is interested in applying for promotion must submit an 'Expression of Interest' form* to their County ACO Development Officer by no later than 30th April of the season in which they wish to complete their application. A copy of this form is available as APPENDIX C or can be obtained via the County ACO Development Officer. Any umpire who is not aware of their local County ACO contact, should e-mail: ecb.aco@ecb.co.uk

***An umpire seeking promotion from Level 6 to Level 5, does not need to complete the 'Expression of Interest' form as this promotion can be applied at any time during the season.**

All umpires applying for promotion, at all levels, must be a current full member of the ECB ACO for the current season.



PROMOTION CRITERIA

Promotion Scheme	Deadline for Expression of Interest for Promotion	Minimum Number of Matches (within gender of competition for promotion)	Minimum Number of Boundary Observations	Minimum Score for Boundary Observation	MCC Laws of the Game Exam	Judgement for Promotion Outcome
Level 6 to Level 5	N/A	5	N/A	N/A	Basic Test (Min. 80%)	County ACO
Level 5 to Level 4	30th April to County ACO ^x	7	1 ^o	38 ^o	Basic Test (Min. 80%)	County ACO
Level 4 to Level 3	30th April to County ACO	10	2 ^o	38 ^o	Intermediate Test (Min. 90%)	County ACO
Level 3 to Level 2	30th April to County ACO	15	3 ^o	N/A	Intermediate Test (Min. 90%)	ECB Officiating Department

PROMOTION CRITERIA

- ◊ *The number is the minimum number of boundary observations which must be completed by Umpire Developers. An umpire may receive more observations for their own development if resourcing allows.*
- ◊ *Where an umpire receives more observations than the minimum requirement, the required score is only required for the minimum number of observations required. For example, an umpire seeking promotion from Level 4 to Level 3 who receives two observations, must achieve a minimum mark of 38 on each observation. Should the umpire receive three observations, a minimum mark of 38 is required on any two out of the three observations received.*
- × *An umpire who progresses from Level 6 to Level 5 during the season, may apply for promotion to Level 4 in the same season if the County ACO is able to facilitate the request and that there is a realistic prospect that the umpire may achieve the required criteria for promotion to Level 4. In these specific cases only, the deadline for application does not apply.*

Where an umpire is required to receive two or more observations, these must be completed by different Umpire Developers. An umpire submitting observations which achieve the minimum required mark from the same Umpire Developer will not be eligible for promotion.

Level 6 to Level 5 (Men's Game Pathway & Women's Game Pathway)



Promotion Scheme	Deadline for Expression of Interest for Promotion	Minimum Number of Matches (within gender of competition for promotion)	Minimum Number of Boundary Observations	Minimum Score for Boundary Observation	MCC Laws of the Game Exam	Judgement for Promotion Outcome
Level 6 to Level 5	N/A	5	N/A	N/A	Basic Test (Min. 80%)	County ACO

In order to be successful, the umpire must evidence the following:

- Has umpired a minimum of any 5 matches within the gender of competition for which they are applying for promotion.
- Has successfully completed the MCC Basic Laws test, achieving a mark of 80% or higher within the season in which the promotion is processed.

Promotion from Level 6 to Level 5 can be processed at any time by the County ACO Development Officer once they are satisfied that all the above criteria have been met by the umpire. The County ACO for which the umpire is a registered member will notify the outcome to the umpire.

Level 5 to Level 4 (Men's Game Pathway & Women's Game Pathway)



Promotion Scheme	Deadline for Expression of Interest for Promotion	Minimum Number of Matches (within gender of competition for promotion)	Minimum Number of Boundary Observations	Minimum Score for Boundary Observation	MCC Laws of the Game Exam	Judgement for Promotion Outcome
Level 5 to Level 4	30th April to County ACO*	7	1 ^o	38 ^o	Basic Test (Min. 80%)	County ACO

In order to be successful, the umpire must evidence the following criteria, which must be from the gender of competition for which the application is made:

- Has umpired a minimum of any 7 matches at Level 5 or higher.
- Has successfully completed the MCC Basic Laws test, achieving a mark of 80% or higher between 1st January and 31st May of the season in which the application is made.
- Has received a minimum of one Boundary Observation by an Umpire Developer on a game at Level 5 or higher.
- Has achieved a score of 38 or greater on a minimum of 1 Boundary Observation on a game at Level 5 or higher.

The umpire applying for promotion is responsible for ensuring that evidence of meeting the above criteria is sent to the County ACO Development Officer by no later than 30th September of the season in which they wish to be promoted.

The County ACO for which the umpire is a registered member will notify the outcome to the umpire by the end of November in the same year.

**An umpire who progresses from Level 6 to Level 5 during the season, may apply for promotion to Level 4 in the same season if the County ACO are able to facilitate the request and that there is a realistic prospect that the umpire may achieve the required criteria for promotion to Level 4. In these specific cases only, the deadline for application does not apply.*

Level 4 to Level 3 (Men's Game Pathway & Women's Game Pathway)



Promotion Scheme	Deadline for Expression of Interest for Promotion	Minimum Number of Matches (within gender of competition for promotion)	Minimum Number of Boundary Observations	Minimum Score for Boundary Observation	MCC Laws of the Game Exam	Judgement for Promotion Outcome
Level 4 to Level 3	30th April to County ACO	10	2	38	Intermediate Test (Min. 90%)	County ACO

In order to be successful, the umpire must evidence the following criteria, which must be from the gender of competition for which the application is made:

- Has umpired a minimum of any 10 matches at Level 4 or higher.
- Has successfully completed the MCC Intermediate Laws test, achieving a mark of 80% or higher between 1st January and 31st May of the season in which the application is made.
- Has received a minimum of 2 Boundary Observations by an Umpire Developer on any game at Level 4 or higher.◊
- Has achieved a score of 38 or greater on a minimum of 2 Boundary Observations on a game at Level 4 or higher.◊

◊Where an umpire receives more observations than the minimum requirement, the required score is only required for the minimum number of observations required. For example, an umpire seeking promotion from Level 4 to Level 3 who receives two observations, must achieve a minimum mark of 38 on each observation. Should the umpire receive three observations, a minimum mark of 38 is required on any two out of the three observations received.

Where an umpire is required to receive 2 or more observations, these must be completed by different Umpire Developers. An umpire submitting observations which achieve the minimum required mark from the same Umpire Developer will not be eligible for promotion.

The umpire applying for promotion is responsible for ensuring that evidence of meeting the above criteria is sent to the County ACO Development Officer by no later than 30th September of the season in which they wish to be promoted. The County ACO for which the umpire is a registered member will notify the outcome to the umpire by the end of November in the same year.

Level 3 to Level 2 (Men's Game Pathway)



Promotion Scheme	Deadline for Expression of Interest for Promotion	Minimum Number of Matches (within gender of competition for promotion)	Minimum Number of Boundary Observations	MCC Laws of the Game Exam	Judgement for Promotion Outcome
Level 3 to Level 2	30th April to County ACO	15	3	Intermediate Test (Min. 90%)	ECB Officiating Department

◇ All observations undertaken during the current and previous season, will be expected to be submitted as part of any application.

All independent observations undertaken for Level 3 to Level 2 purposes, must be completed by Umpire Developers who have attended specific Umpire Developer training delivered by the ECB Officiating Department ahead of the current season.

The umpire applying for promotion is responsible for ensuring that evidence of meeting the above criteria is uploaded by 31st October of the year in which the application is made to a unique SharePoint folder which can be requested by the County ACO Development Officer at the end of the season.

The ECB Officiating Department will notify the outcome of any portfolio submissions to the umpire by the end of November of the season in which the application is made. An additional selection process may be required ahead of the following season as deemed appropriate by the ECB Officiating Department.

Any umpire who satisfies eligibility criteria but is not selected for the National Panel of Umpires following the selection process will remain as a Level 3 (M3).

Level 3 to Level 2 (Men's Game Pathway)



In order to be eligible for consideration for promotion, the umpire will be able to evidence the following criteria, which must be from the gender of competition for which the application is made:

- Has umpired a minimum of any 15 matches at Level 3 or higher during the season in which the application is made. These are expected to include equivalent ECB Premier League matches or higher and include a variety of formats (such as multi-day and limited overs cricket) at Level 3 level or higher.
- Umpired a minimum of any 10 matches at Level 3 or higher during the season previous to which the application is made. (Eg. If the application is made during the 2026 season, this applies to the 2025 season).
- Has received a minimum of 3 Boundary Observations by an Umpire Developer on games at Level 3 or higher during the season in which the application is made. It is recommended that observations are spaced periodically throughout the season (early, mid and late stages) to demonstrate sustained and consistently high performance commensurate with an umpire seeking promotion[◇], and by a range of different ECB Umpire Developers.
- Has met or exceeded the standards expected of an umpire during any matches umpired at Level 2 during the season in which the application is made.
- Has successfully completed the MCC Intermediate Laws test, achieving a mark of 90% or higher between 1st January and 31st May and has successfully completed an ECB Competition Regulations module between Monday 3rd August and Monday 31st August of the season in which the application is made.
- Marks received (where available) from captains on Level 3 competition(s) demonstrate an umpire has performed to a high standard throughout the season. (Example: Top quartile of end of season merit table).
- Can evidence that they have sought to improve their on-field performances through further development opportunities during the season in which the application is made, such as attendance at local or national CPD workshops or other commensurate training.

Level 3 to Level 2 (Women's Game Pathway)



Promotion Scheme	Deadline for Expression of Interest for Promotion	Minimum Number of Matches (within gender of competition for promotion)	Minimum Number of Boundary Observations	MCC Laws of the Game Exam	Judgement for Promotion Outcome
Level 3 to Level 2	30th April to County ACO	15	3	Intermediate Test (Min. 90%)	ECB Officiating Department

◇ All observations undertaken during the current and previous season, will be expected to be submitted as part of any application.

All independent observations undertaken for Level 3 to Level 2 purposes, must be completed by Umpire Developers who have attended specific Umpire Developer training delivered by the ECB Officiating Department ahead of the current season.

The umpire applying for promotion is responsible for ensuring that evidence of meeting the above criteria is uploaded by 31st October of the year in which the application is made to a unique SharePoint folder which can be requested by the County ACO Development Officer at the end of the season.

The ECB Officiating Department will notify the outcome of any portfolio submissions to the umpire by the end of November of the season in which the application is made. An additional selection process may be required ahead of the following season as deemed appropriate by the ECB Officiating Department.

Any umpire who satisfies eligibility criteria but is not selected for the National Panel of Umpires following the selection process will remain as a Level 3 (W3).

Level 3 to Level 2 (Women's Game Pathway)



In order to be eligible for consideration for promotion, the umpire will be able to evidence the following criteria, which must be from the gender of competition for which the application is made:

- Has umpired a minimum of any 15 matches at Level 3 or higher during the season in which the application is made. These are expected to include equivalent Level 3 or higher and include a variety of formats (such as multi-day and limited overs cricket) at Level 3 level or higher.
- Umpired a minimum of any 8 matches at Level 3 or higher during the season previous to which the application is made. (Eg. If the application is made during the 2026 season, this applies to the 2025 season).
- Has successfully completed the MCC Intermediate Laws test, achieving a mark of 90% or higher between 1st January and 31st May and has successfully completed an ECB Competition Regulations module between Monday 3rd August and Monday 31st August of the season in which the application is made.
- Has received a minimum of 3 Boundary Observations by an Umpire Developer on any game Tier 3 or higher during the 2026 season. It is recommended that observations are spaced periodically throughout the season (early, mid and late stages) to demonstrate sustained and consistently high performance commensurate with an umpire seeking promotion[◇], and by a range of different ECB Umpire Developers.
- Has met or exceeded the standards expected of an umpire during any matches umpired at Level 2 during the season in which the application is made.
- Marks received (where available) from captains on Level 3 competition(s) demonstrate an umpire has performed to a high standard throughout the season. (Example: Top quartile of end of season merit table).
- Can evidence that they have sought to improve their on-field performances through further development opportunities during the season in which the application is made, such as attendance at local or national CPD workshops or other commensurate training.



MCC LAWS OF THE GAME EXAM

As detailed within the above document, umpires must complete a specified MCC Laws of the Game exam to be eligible for promotion. The MCC Laws of the Game exams can be located by clicking on the relevant links below.

MCC Basic Laws of the Game Exam | [Click Here](#)

MCC Intermediate Laws of the Game Exam | [Click Here](#)

UMPIRE COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

A full Competency Framework, which outlines the characteristics, behaviours and performance elements for umpires who operate at each level of the game is available as **APPENDIX A**.

Umpires are encouraged to use the framework as a reference point for their own self-reflections and Umpire Developers should refer to it when completing the Umpire Developer report. A template of the Umpire Developer Report form can be found as **APPENDIX B**.

The Umpire Developer Report carries values of 5 - 1, with 5 being Outstanding which decreases to 1 being Below Standard Expected. Umpire Developers are to total these numbers (excluding Preparation) at the end of each report. The total mark is required to be detailed and used by an umpire as evidence for eligibility for promotion as covered above.

County ACOs, league panels and other appointing bodies are encouraged to provide opportunities to attend educational sessions to help umpires learn and develop in areas that align to the Competency Framework.





UMPIRING PATHWAY GUIDANCE

Published February 2026