

National League System Ground Grading Requirements

These facility criteria become mandatory from Season 2008/09. In the meantime existing Clubs should be working towards these facilities.

- To be in membership of the UCL Premier Division (Step 5) Clubs will need a Category F grading
- To be eligible for promotion to Step 4 Clubs will need a Category E grading
- To be eligible for continued membership at Step 4 Clubs will need a Category D grading by 1 April following their promotion

Clubs who wish to progress to Step 4 should refer to the Regulations for the Establishment and Operation of the National League System for the process to follow which are printed elsewhere in the Handbook.

- To be in membership of UCL Division One (Step 6) Clubs will need a Category G grading
- To be eligible for promotion to the Premier Division (Step 5) Clubs will need a Category F grading

Clubs who wish to be considered for promotion to the Premier Division must notify the League Secretary in order that a facilities inspection can be arranged at the earliest opportunity. Final inspection and acceptance must be completed by April 1st at the latest.

Clubs who wish to enter the United Counties Football League must notify their own League Secretary. On approval their application, based on their Leagues successful inspection of the Clubs facilities, will be forwarded to the UCFL. If Clubs do not have a category G grading, membership prior to season 2008/09 may be possible if minimum standards prior to the publication of the National Ground Grading Document are met. All inspections to establish criteria will be based on the Grading criteria in the current League Handbook available from either feeder member Leagues Secretary's or the UCFL Secretary. Inspection of prospective clubs facilities will be arranged with the UCFL as soon as possible thereafter, thus giving maximum time to enable any unforeseen shortfall to be remedied. Final inspection and acceptance must be completed by April 1st at the latest. Any club relegated from a higher league will not be regraded within the first season.

A non-returnable Grading Fee of £100 will be charged to all clubs visited by the Grading Committee. In any instance where the League's requirements conflict with those of the local Safety Authority the latter will prevail. Clubs must keep records of all tests and inspections carried out on any part of their ground.

The UCFL Management Committee reserves the right to amend or change the minimum grading requirements without prior notice. This chart is only intended to be a summary of the National Ground Grading Document dated February 2005 (as amended). Clubs are advised to refer to that document for full information and in particular before undertaking any ground improvements or submitting plans for grant aid. In circumstances where the National Ground Grading Document differs from the information below, the National Ground Grading Document will apply.

Clubs are also advised to refer to the "Guide for Safety at Sports Grounds" book published by The Stationery Office.

		Category D	Category E	Category F	Category G
1.0	Ground				
	The Ground must give the impression of being a football ground suitable for the National League System	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Viewing possible from the entire length of four sides of the ground, or three sides if no unauthorised access to fourth side..	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Name of Club must reflect the area in which it operates and ground location must be approved by the League	Yes	Yes	Not compulsory	Not compulsory
1.1	Security of Tenure				
	Ownership of the Freehold of the Ground or Lease/Agreement for the ground acceptable to the Football Association or Adequate Security of Tenure	Preferable	Preferable	Preferable	Preferable
		Acceptable	Acceptable	Not compulsory	Not compulsory
1.2	Ground Sharing				
	Ground Sharing permitted providing full use of facilities available on Match Days (time restrictions if arrangement is made to avoid relegation/gain promotion)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
1.3	Capacity				
	Ground Capacity requirements	Minimum 1500 with potential to be 2000	Minimum 1000	N/A	N/A
1.4	Boundary of Ground				
	Permanent boundary which prevents viewing from outside ground (unless exemption agreed). At Category D and E boundary must be of concrete, brick, breeze block or metal cladding with steel or concrete posts and be a minimum of 1.83 metres measured from outside ground. Lapped timber, latch panel wood fences with wooden posts and wire mesh fences may be acceptable but hedges, shrubs and /or trees not normally accepted	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
1.5	Clubhouse Facilities				
	Clubhouse on or adjacent to the ground	Yes	Yes	Yes	Preferable
	Clubhouse/Other Facility open on match days to provide spectator refreshments	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
1.6	Car Parking				
	Adequate Car Parking on or adjacent to Ground	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

1.7	Pitch Perimeter Barrier					
	Fixed Barrier of sound constriction (Concrete or Steel) free from sharp edges on all sides occupied by spectators. Height ideally not to exceed 1.1 metres (nor be less than 0.9 metres at Grade D)	New/Promoted Clubs	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
		Existing Clubs	Yes	Yes	Yes	existing barriers (but not ropes) acceptable
Distance between pitch and barrier to be not less than 1.83 metres		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
1.8	Pitch Standards <i>(Also Rule 24 applies)</i>					
	Grass		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Or Artificial Surface		No (under review)	No (under review)	No (under review)	No (under review)
	Pitch to be well maintained, free from surface depressions and excessive undulations		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Maximum slope allowed		1:41	1:41	1:41	1:41	
1.9	Playing Area					
	Size of Pitch to be a minimum 100 x 64 metres (110 x 70 yards)		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Goalposts and Nets to meet safety standards		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
1.10	Technical Area					
	Two covered trainers boxes to be marked Home and Away or Visitors		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Portable boxes permitted – to be securely fixed when in use		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Boxes to be equal distance from halfway line and be a minimum of 3 metres apart		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Fixed Seats or Benches to accommodate 8 people (bench seating to be a minimum of 4 metres in length)		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Technical Area Marked		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
1.11	Safe Walkway					
	Safe unimpeded passage must be provided between dressing room and field of play with adequate stewarding.		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes



1.12	Floodlighting					
	Average Lux reading– no one reading to be less than one quarter of highest reading	New Installations	180	180	180	180
		Existing Installations	120	120	120	120
	Current Grid from approved contractor within the last 2 years (within 6 months if applying for Grade D or E)		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
1.13	Public Address System					
	PA system to be provided		Yes	Yes	Yes	Not Compulsory
1.14	Entrances - Access to the spectator viewing areas from the turnstile must be via a bound surface to a minimum width of 1 metre					
	Turnstile or Pay box	3 (which must meet segregation requirements)	2	1	1	
		No	No	Acceptable	Acceptable	
1.15	Exits					
	Location and number of exits approved by competent person and meet safety standards – to be clearly signed, ideally with “running man” signs		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
1.16	Emergency Lighting					
	Emergency Lighting system strongly recommended. Adequate artificial lighting to be provided for spectators entering / leaving ground in non daylight hours		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
1.17	Adjoining Pitches					
	There must be no ball games played on adjoining pitches whilst matches are in progress		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
1.18	Emergency Access					
	Emergency Access must be provided		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

2.0	Spectator Facilities				
2.1	Spectator Accommodation				
	Covered Accommodation to be of sound construction of timber/steel/brick/concrete - existing timber stands must pass fire assessment	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Development on at least two sides of the ground	Yes	Preferable	Preferable	Preferable
	Minimum Covered spectator accommodation – standing accommodation must not restrict the view from seating areas	300 including Seating	250 including Seating	200 including Seating	100 including Seating
	Minimum Number of Seats in One Stand	150 including Directors/ Committee/ Press	150 including Directors/ Committee/ Press	100 including Directors/ Committee	50
	Minimum Number of Seats for Directors/Committee and Guests – to be clearly marked Home and Away	24 (of which at least 12 for visitors)	16 (of which at least 8 for visitors)	16	Not Compulsory
	Individual Seating	Preferred	Preferred	Preferred	Preferred
	Or Existing Bench Seating if clearly marked	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
	Hard Standing on all sides of ground accessible by Spectators with a minimum width of 1 metre	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
2.2	Press Seating				
	Dedicated Press Seating with lighting and writing facilities	2	2	No	No
2.3	Terracing				
	Terracing must comply with the requirements of the Guide to Safety at Sports Ground, be in sound condition and of acceptable material	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

2.4	Toilets. Facilities located within the ground for spectators, kept to a high level of cleanliness which must include wash hand basins, warm hand driers and/or paper towels (a paper towel dispenser is required for Grade D and E), a supply of toilet paper and with operational lighting						
	Total Number of facilities excluding Clubhouse	Male spectators	Urinals or equivalent	2	2	Not compulsory	Not compulsory
			WC's	1	1	Not compulsory	Not compulsory
		Female spectators	WC's	2	2	Not compulsory	Not compulsory
	Total Number of facilities including Clubhouse providing they are available at all times on match days	Male spectators	Urinals or equivalent	N/A	N/A	2	2
			WC's	N/A	N/A	1	1
		Female spectators	WC's	N/A	N/A	2	2
2.5	Ground Refreshment Facilities						
2.51	Directors/Committee/Guests						
	A separate room to be provided at the ground, may be temporary or mobile facilities. May be a reserved area at Category F. At Category D and E there must be toilet facilities located nearby		For a minimum of 24	For a minimum of 16	Yes	Not Compulsory	
2.52	Ground Refreshment Facilities						
	Refreshment facilities to be provided – may be temporary or mobile		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
2.6	Disabled Facilities						
	Full account taken of the needs of disabled spectators		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	



3.0	Dressing Room Facilities					
3.1	Players					
	Dressing Rooms of permanent sound construction (excluding shower and toilet areas). Must be clean and secure on match days	New/Promoted Clubs	18 sq meters	18 sq meters	18 sq meters	18 sq meters
		Existing Clubs	12 sq meters	12 sq meters	12 sq meters	12 sq meters
	Minimum Number of Shower Heads		4	4	4	4
	Minimum Number of WC's		1	1	1	1
	Minimum Number of Wash Hand Basins with Hot/Cold running Water		1	1	1	1
	Treatment Table		Yes	Yes	Yes if no separate Medical Room	Yes if no separate Medical Room
3.2	Match Officials					
	Dressing Rooms (excluding shower and toilet areas). Must be clean and secure on match days	New Facilities	6 sq meters	6 sq meters	6 sq meters	6 sq meters
		Existing Facilities	4 sq meters	4 sq meters	4 sq meters	4 sq meters
	Minimum Number of Shower Heads		1	1	1	1
	Minimum Number of WC's		1	1	1	1
	Minimum Number of Wash Hand Basins with Hot/Cold running Water		1	1	1	1
	Separate Provision for Male/Female Officials	New Facilities	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
		Existing Facilities	Preferred	Preferred	Preferred	Preferred
	Audible warning device linked to dressing rooms		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes



4.0	Medical				
	Separate Medical Room – At Category D access must not be via either dressing room	Yes	Not Compulsory	Not Compulsory	Not Compulsory
	Suitably qualified Person in attendance on match days or other appropriate provision	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Stretcher available- location notices in both players and officials dressing rooms	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Suitable treatment room for spectators within the ground	Yes	Not compulsory	Not compulsory	Not compulsory

5.0	Other Requirements				
5.1	Telephone must be available at the ground			Yes	Yes
5.2 (Rule 8.21)	Match Programme to be produced for all matches	Yes	Yes	Yes	Not compulsory
	Team Sheet to be produced for all matches	No	No	No	Yes
5.3 (Rule 34)	Sandwiches and tea/coffee, or other similar light refreshments, to be provided for visiting Club Officials at half time			Yes	Yes
	Liquid refreshments at half time and full time in Dressing Rooms for Players (and prior to match if requested)			Yes	Yes
	Sandwiches and tea/coffee, or other similar light refreshments, to be provided for players and match officials at the end of all matches.			Yes	Yes