



Head of Academy Football

Full-time | Permanent | Coleraine

Job Title: Head of Academy

Reports to: Chairman

Location: Based at Coleraine FC (The Showgrounds) with regular travel required

Hours of Work: Full-time

Salary: Competitive, plus expenses

Closing Date: 23rd June 2025

Overview:

Coleraine FC is seeking a strategic and progressive Head of Academy to lead and manage the club's entire academy structure from grassroots to U20, including the scholarship programme. This is a pivotal leadership role in shaping the future of the club and driving our ambition to build the best academy in the Irish League.

The successful candidate will have full strategic and operational oversight of all academy activity. They will be responsible for creating and maintaining a high-performance, player-centred environment that nurtures young talent both on and off the pitch. This includes embedding best practices across coaching, welfare, education, and recruitment in alignment with the club's long-term vision, values, and first-team philosophy.

This role represents a major step forward in Coleraine FC's wider professionalisation journey. While building for the future, we are committed to valuing the good work already being done. The new Head of Academy will be expected to lead with integrity, emotional intelligence, and respect for existing staff, fostering a collaborative evolution of our academy system.

Key Responsibilities:

1. Strategic Leadership & Vision

- Set and execute a long-term vision and development plan for the academy aligned with Coleraine FC's club-wide strategy.
- Establish and embed structured academy processes, policies, and standard operating procedures to ensure consistency, accountability, and long-term operational excellence.

- Work closely with the Chairman and First-Team Manager to ensure the academy's game model, player profiles, and tactical framework mirror first-team expectations.

2. Player Development & Pathways

- Create, implement, and monitor Individual Player Development Plans (IDPs) for all academy players.
- Ensure training is age-appropriate, stimulating, and in line with long-term player development principles.
- Establish clear, measurable pathways from academy to first-team and onward progression (loans, transfers, trials).

3. Coaching Team Management

- Recruit, lead, and develop a high-quality coaching team across all age groups.
- Ensure all academy staff hold relevant UEFA qualifications in line with IFA licensing standards.
- Provide structured CPD and performance reviews for all coaches to ensure alignment with the academy's technical, tactical, and cultural standards.

4. Talent Identification & Recruitment

- Lead the club's youth recruitment strategy, working closely with local clubs, schools, scouts, and community programmes.
- Build and maintain relationships across the North Coast and beyond to identify and attract top youth talent.
- Organise and oversee talent ID events including open trials, holiday camps, and outreach programmes.

5. Education, Welfare & Personal Development

- Champion a holistic development model that prioritises academic achievement, character development, and emotional well-being.
- Liaise with schools, parents, and external welfare support services to ensure each player is supported on and off the pitch.
- Oversee life-skills, safeguarding, and personal development programmes in line with IFA and UEFA best practices.

6. Infrastructure, Facilities & Resources

- Identify short- and long-term academy infrastructure needs and work with senior leadership to plan upgrades.
- Oversee the allocation and maintenance of academy equipment, facility use, and logistics.
- Lead on integration of performance analysis, sports science, and injury prevention strategies.

7. Compliance, Licensing & Reporting

- Ensure full compliance with all IFA, NIFL, and UEFA academy standards, including coach qualifications, medical, safeguarding, and governance requirements.
- Implement robust safeguarding policies in coordination with other club/academy staff; ensure all staff complete AccessNI checks and safeguarding certifications.
- Prepare and lead the club's academy components for UEFA and IFA club licensing processes.
- Provide regular progress reports to the Chairman on academy KPIs, budgets, and player progression.

What We're Looking For

- UEFA A Licence (or Elite Youth A Licence) essential; additional academic qualifications in sports science, coaching or education desirable.
- Significant experience in youth coaching and leadership roles within a professional football environment.
- Deep understanding of modern coaching methodologies, youth development principles, and age-phase frameworks.
- Demonstrated ability to lead cultural change, manage stakeholders, and implement best practice in dynamic environments.
- High emotional intelligence and interpersonal skills; able to inspire, manage and develop people across all levels.
- Strong organisational, administrative, and strategic planning skills.
- Deep knowledge of the local/national football landscape and established relationships with schools, clubs, and regional FAs.

What This Role Offers

- A chance to lead a high-impact transformation project within a club undergoing ambitious growth.
- Full autonomy to shape a professional academy structure with strong backing.
- Opportunity to define a legacy and influence the next generation of elite Northern Irish players.
- The satisfaction of building a programme that balances performance, personal development, and community engagement.

If you are passionate about youth development, driven by professional standards, and ready to lead change in a collaborative and respectful way, we want to hear from you.

This job description is not exhaustive. Additional duties may be required as the needs of the club evolve.