

FIFA Quality Programme for Virtual Offside Lines (VOL)

How to obtain certification for Virtual Offside Lines for VAR
systems

01 July 2019, version 1.0

Introduction

A Virtual Offside Line is a graphic overlay of a line on a broadcast image to depict the relative position of two players in order to determine which player is closest to the goal-line and thus either in an onside or offside position. While this tool has been used for visualisation for a number of years, the introduction of Video Assistant Refereeing Systems has made more accurate and real-time delivery of such lines critical in order to correctly assess decisions involving tight calls around player positions.



Image 1 – Virtual Offside Line (in yellow)

The FIFA Quality Programme for Virtual Offside Lines has been developed with the aim to test whether a technology is capable of depicting such a virtual line in a number of challenging test scenarios proving that the provider can overcome the technical difficulties associated with drawing such an accurate line.

The Video Assistant Referee (VAR) protocol requires that Virtual Offside Lines are tested to the FIFA Quality Programme when they are used in connection with a VAR system in international club competitions.

5.3.5 Graphics¹

Graphics (e.g. offside lines) should only be used if the methodology is accurate and the competition has confirmed that the technology provider or production team meets minimum specification standards of the FIFA Quality Programme for Virtual Offside Lines. It is particularly important that the graphics (especially for offside) are accurate and take full account of the requirements of the Laws of the Game.

There should only be one provider of the graphics so that those used by the VAR and referee are the same as those seen by the television viewers, and the participants. This should prevent discrepancies that could bring the final decision into question.

The tests are performed by accredited independent test institutes and certified systems are listed on the Football Technology Innovation website www.football-technology.fifa.com for end-user guidance.

¹ Reference to VAR Protocol in the Laws of the Game

The following document is a guide for any company seeking to test and certify their Virtual Offside Line Technologies to the requirements of the FIFA Quality Programme.

Certification process for Virtual Offside Line Systems

This document contains the process for any provider to obtain certification for a system that generates Virtual Offside Lines. A core use of such systems is for Video Assistant Referee (VAR) with other broadcast uses equally thinkable. FIFA has developed a repeatable test protocol which will apply to any technology seeking to be certified in accordance with the below process.



Any provider that wishes to have their system approved and certified in accordance with the FIFA Quality Programme must comply with the following steps and fulfil all criteria:

Step	Action
Step 1 Application & requesting the test	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✔ Company profile ✔ General Liability Insurance ✔ Details on the system to be tested
Step 2 Performance Test	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✔ Test by an FIFA-accredited test institute in 2 different stadiums
Step 3 Licence Agreement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✔ Licence agreement with FIFA ✔ Administration fee to be paid
Step 4 FIFA Certification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✔ Submission of positive test report by the FIFA-accredited test institute ✔ Approval to use VOL Technology as part of the VAR

Step 1 | Application & requesting the test

For the application as a licensee and the participation at the test events for Virtual Offside Lines interested providers shall submit the below information. Please fill this information out carefully as it is to be used as basis for the Licence Agreement.

Company Profile	
Company name	
Legal address	
Main Business	
Contact person	
Person(s) authorised to sign (contract)	
E-Mail address	
Phone number	
Product Brand Name	
Manufacturer (if different from company)	

Product Liability Insurance

The proof of a General Liability Insurance during the whole period is an essential part of the Licence Agreement. This insurance is primarily in the interest of the licensee itself to ensure protection in case of any claim in connection with the use of the system. In order to be eligible to enter into a Licence Agreement with FIFA the following criteria must be met:

General Liability Insurance – minimum Requirements	
1	Name and address of licensee (policyholder)
2	Territorial scope of application: worldwide coverage needed (incl. USA & Canada), no exclusions allowed
3	Period – Coverage needed throughout whole contract period
4	FIFA must be named as a co-insured party
5	Coverage: A minimum of CHF 5 million per claim

If the national insurance market does not provide adequate insurance solutions, it is helpful and constructive to use an insurance broker with access to the international insurance market. The applicant has to provide written confirmation from the insurance company that the product liability insurance will be concluded as per the terms and conditions of the Licence Agreement.

Details of product to be tested

Product details	
Name of product	
Product code (if applicable)	
Version of the software	
Any other relevant information	

Step 2 | Performance Test

Each system must have been tested in accordance with the test manual for the FIFA Quality Programme for Virtual Offside Lines in two distinct locations and provide a passed test report from an independent FIFA-accredited test institute in relation to each of these tests.

FIFA will be offering test events on a regular basis (min. 6 month intervals). Each test event will consist of two test days to be carried out at two stadiums designated by FIFA with a minimum broadcast setup of 4 cameras as per the test protocol. Testing will be carried out by FIFA-accredited Test Institutes which will be periodically assessed by FIFA and external reviews to ensure compliance with the test methods. Outside of these official test events, there is no possibility of currently being tested.

Further information about upcoming test events are available on www.football-technology.fifa.com or will be provided upon request (quality@fifa.org).

Step 3 | Licence Agreement

Following submission of the company details and the two positive test reports, FIFA will provide a standard non-commercial contract for the provider to sign. This agreement provides the official basis for the certification to be possible and governs the use of the FIFA marks and outlines the details of the product certification such as rights and obligations for both parties arising from this approval.

In addition, FIFA will invoice an administrative fee to cover the cost of testing events, programme development, certification and spot-checking. This fee is standard for all companies.

Companies who decide not to sign a Licence Agreement with FIFA will not receive any detailed test results from FIFA or the FIFA-accredited test institute.

Step 4 | Approval & publication

Upon both parties signing the contract and the administrative fee having been covered, the provider will receive access to the FIFA Quality Programme database where certified products can be managed and new tests can be requested. In addition, a certificate can be downloaded for each certified product that will also feature on the website: www.football-technology.fifa.com. This list is updated on a daily basis and

constitutes the only confirmation (with the certificate) of the system's approval. FIFA does not issue any letters or confirmation e-mails to any providers.

Annex 1: Frequently Asked Questions

Contract

What is the contract period?

The agreement is a standard contract and is valid for 2 years

What happens with my products if my contract expires?

Certified products will be listed on FIFAs website until the expiration of the certification status. A re-test of the products without a valid Licence Agreement is not possible.

Which marketing rights will I get by signing the contract?

The company and all certified products will be listed on FIFA's website (football-technology.fifa.com). Additionally, company receives the right to use the FIFA Quality marks in connection with their tested and certified products.

Product certification

What is the certification period?

Products that were successfully tested to the FIFA Quality standard for VOL will be certified for 2 years (24 months) from the day of the approval of the test results by FIFA.

What happens when the certification expires?

In order to be used in accordance with the VAR protocol, VOL systems need to be certified. VOL products therefore need to be re-tested every 2 years. To apply for a re-test contact FIFA (quality@fifa.org) or consult FIFAs website (football-technology.fifa.com) to find out about the next VOL test event.

Product Test

How much does it cost to test my product?

Companies only have to cover their own costs to participate at the test. No additional fee will be charged prior or during the test by FIFA or the FIFA-accredited test institute. Once the Licence Agreement has been signed and the (positive) test results have been shared, an administrative fee will be payable to FIFA.

Will I receive a test report?

The test institute will share the test results and a test report with FIFA. Once the Licence Agreement is signed FIFA will share the detailed test report with the company. Companies who fail to meet the criteria will receive the test report without a signed Licence Agreement.