



**American
Kennel Club®**

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Conformation Judging Approval Process

Revised, effective January 1, 2018

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Whom should I contact with any questions concerning the approval process?

We are happy to answer your questions about the Judging Approval Process. Please send questions to judgingops@akc.org or Tim Thomas, Director of Dog Show Judges, at tjt@akc.org. You also may speak with any Conformation Executive Field Representative.

2. I expect to be granted provisional/permit status with my current application prior to January 1, 2018. How does this change in Policy affect me?

As of January 1, 2018, all conformation judges will fall under the parameters of the new Judging Approval Process including but not limited to the requirements for regular status and eligibility to apply for additional breeds.

3. Will there be required forms to complete for new and additional breed applicants in the new process?

Yes, all applications for judging approval must be submitted on the official AKC forms which are available on the AKC website.

4. How does the new application process differ from the previous for a first-time applicant?

Essentially, the requirements to apply for first time (New Breed) applicants are unchanged. The exceptions are that all applicants must now submit with their application the complete breed exam for each breed applied and effective January 1, 2018, the maximum number of breeds a first-time applicant to apply for is 12. Otherwise, there were some minor housekeeping items that were addressed, but they would not be considered substantive.

There are changes pertaining to the requirements to advance from permit to regular status.

5. I will be applying for breeds for the first time and would like to apply for multiple breeds. How many breeds may I apply for on my first application and am I required to use the same application form (12-5-4 or New Breed Alternate) for all of the breeds that I intend to apply?

New Breed applicants (first time) may qualify to apply for a breed by meeting the requirements of either the 12-5-4 or New Breed Alternative; however, the 12-5-4 is considered the default application and must be used if the individual meets its criteria.

If requesting the approval of multiple breeds, you may apply for up to 12 breeds on your first application. The applications submitted for the grouping of breeds may be a combination of both the 12-5-4 and the New Breed Alternative forms.

6. If I apply for a breed and am denied and I reapply for the same breed later, do I have to pay the application fee again?

No, effective September 1, 2015; applications for judging approval submitted under this policy require a non-refundable \$35 application fee per breed. For any breeds not approved, credit will be assigned for any subsequent application for the same breed(s).

7. When am I required to take the AKC breed exam?

The breed exams remain part of the approval process for all applicants. All applications for approval to judge a breed (New Breed, Additional Breed & Adjunct) are to complete the applicable breed exams online in AKC's Canine College prior to application. The exams are also required for judges approved for a group when a newly recognized breed is added to that group, and for those wishing to complete In-Ring Apprentice Training experiences.

8. Will exams taken at seminars under the previous process be applied toward the exam requirement for applicants under the new?

No, the exam requirement for seminars under the previous approval process was for the purpose of certifying attendance. The exams were shorter in length and attendees were given multiple opportunities to pass the exam to receive credit for attending.

9. What are the requirements to request regular status on my permit breeds?

Judges may submit a request for regular status in permit breeds to Judging Operations once he or she has completed three assignments in each breed with dogs present and judged, and received three observation reports in any combination of the breeds regular status is being requested.

10. Am I required to receive a minimum number of reports on my permit breeds to qualify for regular status?

Yes, in recognition of the learning curve that continues with through one's initial assignments in a breed, there are specific report requirements associated with the advancement to regular status. All judges requesting regular status must be observed three times by different AKC Executive Field Representatives from the combination of breeds submitted for regular status. All judges, regardless of the number of breeds/groups approved, should expect to be observed on permit breeds. Observations in judging procedure or Judges Breed Commentary reports may be requested from the office when concerns regarding one's judging have been brought to its attention.

11. How do I advance to regular status for low entry breeds?

For Low Entry breeds only, if one is unable to satisfy the standard requirements for regular status, Judges may request regular status for low entry breeds once they have been assigned the permit breed

on six occasions regardless of number of entries judged. This would not pre-empt the requirement for additional assignments when one has received JBC reports in a breed recommending further study in that breed.

12. What is expected in the interview with the Executive Field Representative on my applied breed?

The interview is your opportunity to share the knowledge you have acquired about your breed or breeds. Applicants should discuss the hallmark breed type characteristics, strengths and/or weaknesses, disqualification and/or conditions of class, examination techniques and dentition (if applicable). The applicant may use pictures and consult the standard during the interview.

First time judging applicants will also discuss proper procedure, rules, conflicts of interest, the gray areas of the sport, demeanor, special attractions and expectation of judges.

A wicket or scales test is also required if any of the breeds' standards have disqualifications or conditions of class for height or weight.

13. In my interview, am I required to recite each disqualification exactly as printed in the breed standard?

No, applicants should be able to display knowledge as to whether the breed has standard disqualifications and where they apply.

14. Are judges currently approved for measurable breeds still required to take the wicket and/or scales test when applying for additional breeds?

Judges who have been tested on the same apparatus in the previous five years will not be required to be tested. However, the exemption does not include judges who have received a negative observation report on measuring procedure or failed a test on the same apparatus during the five-year period.

15. How am I affected if I failed the wicket or scales test?

Failing a wicket/scales test will result in a hold being placed on the affected breeds pending the passing of a re-exam on the same apparatus. Breeds not affected will progress without delay.

16. Once my application has been reviewed, how soon may I accept assignments?

You may not accept assignments until you have received notification by the AKC that your breeds have been approved. This will follow the review of the total application by the Department, the initial publication in the AKC Gazette. Applicants may receive notification from the Judging Operations Department as soon as two months, but should expect three months from the date the application is received barring unforeseen delays.

17. How do I qualify to apply for additional breeds?

Additional breed applicants, may be approved for up to four complete groups and must meet the minimum number of educational credits (CEUs) for an application for additional breeds to be accepted. The number of CEUs needed is determined whether the breed is low entry or not and the experience of the judge.

Low entry breeds require less CEUs than non-low entry breeds as the expectation is that educational experiences are more difficult to obtain. For both, as judges become approved for more groups, the number of CEUs required is lessened with reductions occurring once a judge is approved for one complete group on regular status and then again once approved for four complete groups.

18. When may I apply for additional breeds and how many breeds may I apply for at one time?

First time applicants must achieve regular status on all permit breeds before being eligible to apply for additional breeds (2nd application).

Current judges may apply for up to 12 additional breeds, but the number requested may not exceed the maximum number of permit breeds allowed at one time if all were approved. The maximum is determined by the number of complete groups currently approved on regular status displayed in the matrix found on page 2 of the Judging Approval Process.

Judges may continue to apply for additional breeds while permit status in others. However, no application may be received within six (6) months of the most recent committee action, and no complete group may be obtained in less than three separate submissions.

Judges may advance up to four complete groups under the traditional process. Request must be submitted in advance for any application that would advance beyond four groups.

19. How do I advance my judging beyond four groups?

Judges wishing to judge more than four complete groups must submit a request to the department prior to submitting application. Request's will be considered based on one's proficiency in current breeds, ring procedure and demeanor. Each subsequent request will be reviewed independently.

20. What experiences may be used to qualify for additional breeds and how are they weighted?

The policy provides 12 general categories of experiences that one may complete to receive CEU credit. In addition, applicants may submit an experience not defined within the policy to be reviewed by the department to determine if it warrants credit toward the requirements. Each experience is assigned a CEU value based on its perceived benefit and is displayed in the matrix found on page 2 as well as explained in detail within the Judging Approval Process.

21. Where can I complete ringside observations?

Ringside observations are a great way to gain knowledge from experts in the breed. There are two ways that you may receive viable experience from ringside observations.

First, you can participate in formal ringside observations at Parent Club National Specialties where formal ringside mentoring is offered. The CEU credit assigned is listed under the category "Attend a Parent Club National Specialty".

You may also complete ringside observations at any show with a major entry present in the breed. The CEU credit assigned is listed under the category "Ringside Observation with Breed Mentor...".

In all cases, the ringside observation form should be used to document the experience.

22. Who may serve as a mentor?

Individuals who are parent club mentors, have 12 years' experience exhibiting or 12 years as an approved judge in that breed may serve as mentor. This applies for the purpose of a long-term mentor, tutoring session, kennel visit, or ringside observation.

23. Are there restrictions associated with the Apprentice Training?

Judges are required to pass the breed exam and submit a \$35 breed fee before completing their first Apprentice Training for that breed. The exam and fee will count toward the subsequent application unless there has been a revision to the breed standard since that time which would require re-taking the exam.

Those who wish to schedule these experiences must make arrangements prior to the show with the consent of the show chairperson and the mentor judge. To be accepted for CEU credit, there must be a major present in the breed. Apprentice Judge is expected to observe the entire entry, but may not be in the ring with any one judge for more than two (2) hours.

24. Will applications be accepted by email or fax?

Yes, applications may be sent to the AKC Judging Operations via fax or email as well as via the US Postal Service, UPS, FedEx, etc. In addition, applications may be submitted electronically through the portfolio feature in AKC's Canine College.

We do ask that applications being sent via electronically to be converted to pdf documents as scanned images will result in extremely large file sizes and may be blocked by your outgoing or AKC's incoming servers.

Applicants who elect to submit their application via email should never include credit card information. It is recommended that they contact Judging Operations via phone once received to submit payment of any required fees.

25. Do I need to submit documentation for educational experiences?

Yes, copies of certificates or other educational experiences should be submitted with your application.

26. How does the review of my application differ under the current process?

The Department will be responsible to review the complete application including the interview report, breed exam results and observation reports.

Applicants will be published twice. Following receipt of the application, the judge's name and list of requested breeds will be published for the 1st time in the AKC Gazette, providing an opportunity for the fancy to comment on the application. The applicant will be advised of any questions or concerns that arise and provided the opportunity to respond before any further AKC action is taken if warranted

Following the interview with the Executive Field Representative, the Department will review the entire application including any comments received from the fancy. If there is not significant cause to withhold approval, the Department will notify the judge of the newly approved breeds and that they may now accept assignments. The judge's name and breeds will be published in the AKC Gazette a second time.

27. If the Department denies approval of any breed(s), do I have the ability to appeal?

Yes, the applicant may, within 15 days of the notice, appeal in writing to the Judging Operations Department. If the department determines no change should be made, the appeal will be forwarded to the Board Appeals Committee. The Board of Directors shall finally determine all appeals. A \$50 appeal fee is required.

28. Has the role of the Executive Field Representative changed?

The Executive Field Staff remain essential to the successful implementation of the policy and our events on the whole. The Executive Field Representative should be looked at as the first person to go to when questions or issues arise. They are there to assist in all matters associated with judging at AKC Conformation Events and will act as mentors and trainers to help prepare judges.

The Executive Field Staff will continue to interview all judging applicants. In addition, they will conduct wicket & scales exams when required as part of the application or as a result of a negative report in measuring or weighing dogs.

Judges will continue to be observed by the Executive Field Staff. Judges approved for less than one complete group on regular status should expect to be observed on their judging procedures and all judges are subject to periodic observation on procedure as well. In addition, all judges assigned permit breeds should expect to have Judges Breed Commentary Reports completed.

29. How does the Judges Breed Commentary (JBC) differ from the Breed Evaluation reports previously submitted by the Field Staff?

The JBC is a modified method to observe breed specific judging. The focus of the experience is the recognition and discussion of breed specific characteristics in the entries present. The emphasis is not on the placements or which dog did or did not win, and thus the restrictions as far as what defines a "sufficient entry" are essentially eradicated. The discussion may include entries from all classes. Comments from the judge and the Executive Field Representative pre-and post-discussion will be provided on the form that will be submitted to the AKC. Completed JBC reports will be reviewed by the Department as part of the process when one requests regular status and when submitting an application for additional breeds.

30. How am I affected if the Field Representative expresses concerns in the post-discussion portion of a JBC report?

Under the new process, additional permit assignments may be required if the JBC recommends further study or indicate concerns recognizing hallmark characteristics and/or Procedural Observations display difficulties with judging procedures.

The JBC reports are reviewed when requesting regular status and when one applies for additional breeds. It is recommended that if a judge should receive a JBC report that expresses concerns that resulted from the post-observation discussion, he or she consider proactively seeking additional JBC reports on the same breed. Subsequent reports without concerns expressed would be viewed as an indicator to the department that the concerns have been resolved.

The judge may also elect to obtain additional education in the breed from qualified mentors, attending seminars, etc., and provide documentation to the department in addition to or in lieu of further JBC reports.

31. As a group judge, what will be the approval process for newly approved breeds in the groups that I judge?

When a new breed enters a group, all judges of that group will automatically be granted the breed once they have passed the breed exam and submitted the \$35 non-refundable processing fee.

32. Are the requirements for Best in Show changing?

The requirements to apply for Best in Show have not changed as judges will continue to be eligible to apply for Best in Show once they are approved for a minimum of one complete group and have judged the group competition on a minimum of five occasions. A \$35 non-refundable fee is required for those requesting the approval to judge Best in Show.

33. For Adjunct breeds, what happens if I fail the exam or refuse to pay the processing fee?

Judges who fail to pass the breed exam or refuse to submit the processing fee prior to the full recognition will lose their Group approval status.

34. If I lose my Group status, how can it be restored?

Judges may apply for approval of any affected breeds under the traditional process for additional breeds.

35. I am currently an inactive judge and considering applying for reinstatement, has the process for this changed from the previously adopted policy?

The requirements for re-instatement have not changed; individuals must submit a non-refundable re-instatement fee of \$35. Re-instatement will be automatic for those inactive for less than one year. Individuals inactive for more than one year must satisfy all requirements of the policy to have their privileges reinstated.

36. How do I get approved to judge the Miscellaneous classes?

Any judge eligible to judge a Group on a regular status may also judge the Miscellaneous class.

37. Has the process for removal of breeds changed?

The revised policy includes a defined process to address when one may have difficulties in a breed. If a judge should receive multiple JBC reports in a breed indicating concerns and/or recommending further study, judge will be placed on "probational status" in that breed. Additional JBC reports on a probationary breed indicating concerns could lead to a recommendation to the Board for the removal of that breed.

Three consecutive JBC report in the probationary breed that do not display concerns or recommend further study from two or more Field Representatives will remove the probationary status. The Department may petition the Board for the removal of one's approval to judge a breed for just cause.

38. Can my parent club recommend me for breeds other than the breed in which they represent?

No, a parent club can only recommend its members to judge their own breed.

39. Do Parent Clubs still have the ability to invite an individual not approved to judge their breed to judge the National or regional specialty?

Yes, that option is still available under the new judging approval process. In addition, this opportunity will now be available to all specialty clubs, not only Parent Clubs. Under this provision, an eligible individual including professional handlers may be approved on a case-by-case, event-by-event basis.

40. How does a specialty club recommend an individual to judge their breed at its specialty?

The parent club must submit the applicable form available on the AKC website to the Judging Operations Department for an eligible individual to judge their breed at a specialty. The individual must meet all criteria, pay the \$35 processing fee, and pass the procedural and anatomy exams as well as a scale and/or wicket tests if applicable.

Once all requirements have been satisfactorily completed, notification will be sent to the individual, specialty club and the Event Department of the approval to judge the specific event requested only.

41. If a non-approved judge is recommended and approved to judge a specialty, can they judge that breed at other events as well?

No, approval is limited to the specific event request and may only be granted for independent, concurrent or designated specialty shows.

42. Can Visiting Judges be approved to judge more than 8 assignments?

Visiting Judges on the exempt list may be approved for an unlimited number of assignments. Those not on the exempt list will continue to be eligible to be approved to judge an unlimited number of specialty shows and no more than eight all breed shows.

43. I am a Visiting Judge now residing in the United States; may I still judge at AKC shows as a Visiting Judge?

Visiting Judges who are currently residents of the United States may only be approved as a Visiting Judge for two years. At the end of the two-year period, they must apply under the AKC system if they wish to continue to judge in the United States while residing here.

44. As a Visiting Judge, can I receive approval to judge breeds not recognized in my own country?

A Visiting Group Judge may gain approval to judge AKC breeds not recognized in their country by passing the applicable breed exam and payment of a \$35 fee per breed. This option only applies to AKC breeds not recognized by the Visiting Judge's registry and located in the corresponding AKC group.

45. I am a Visiting Judge; can I still judge the Group if I choose not to pay the \$35 fee per breed and take the exam for those breeds not approved in my country in the groups that I judge?

Visiting Group Judges who elect not to take the exams and pay the fees for those breeds not recognized by your registry, will be eligible to judge the corresponding AKC group if the breeds eligible to judge constitute 80% of the entries competing in that group at AKC conformation dog shows from the preceding year.