

Agility Liaison Council - Grading Review Panel

Provisional position

Following a period of data gathering and review the Grading Review Panel has agreed upon seven aspects of a revised grading system. These need further work to determine the detail of the system and a number of options are still being considered in some areas before a fully worked proposal can be brought to the ALC.

	Decision	Rationale, Implications and options
1.	The target profile for competing dogs will be a pyramid – majority of dogs in the lowest level and fewest in the top.	Only the best dogs will move up grades. We recognise that not all dogs will progress up a grade during their career. The retention and promotion of the warrant system will complement this.
2.	The same grading structure and progression approach should apply to all heights of dogs.	This is seen to be fair across heights and also will be far easier to understand than having different progression for different heights.
3.	Dogs should never move down the levels/grades	Moving up a grade is an achievement awarded to a dog for life. Even if the dog is not performing consistently at that level it still deserves the accolade that goes with it.
4.	We should retain one grade/level for completely new handlers	This gives an opportunity for new handlers to compete as part of the “official” system but not be competing against experienced handlers with new dogs. There is no need to retain two grades for this purpose – effectively grades 1 and 2 will be merged. This would be restricted by a combination of handler and dog experience but NOT owners. Clubs would be encouraged to put on classes exclusively for this level wherever possible
5	Dogs will need to achieve success in agility classes to progress, not just jumping, at every level.	The sport we are defining is agility and although jumping classes may be taken account in progression no dog should move up any level unless it is achieving success in agility classes. This will remove the current ability for dogs to win up to grade 5 without any success in agility classes. The panel is considering three options: That progression should <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Not take jumping into account beyond the lower levels (equivalent of current grade 4) b) Jumping could account for up to 50% of progression awards throughout the levels c) Jumping could account for up to a third of progression awards throughout the levels.

6.	<p>Eligibility for championships classes will need the dog to have shown recent success against its peers. Dogs that have been awarded championship certificates or reserves championship certificate should be eligible for championship classes for life.</p>	<p>Eligibility for championship classes will be based on success against other dogs in the top grade. This will mean that dogs winning into the top level will have to show success before they can join championship classes and give more weight to top grade classes throughout the year.</p> <p>The panels initial proposal is that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Top level dogs (equivalent of grade 7 dogs) can be awarded qualifying points in all standard classes for their grade (whether graded or combined) b) Points would be awarded to dogs placed in the top 3 in these classes. c) Points acquired in the 18 months before the closing date for a championship class would count towards qualification <p>The 18 month period means that championship shows held at any particular time of the year are not adversely affected by seasonal variation in the number of shows held.</p>
7.	<p>Progression must take into account the competition. Wins against a larger number of dogs will be more “valuable”. This will mean using a points system for progression.</p>	<p>The current system makes all wins of equal weight whether they are against 1 dog or 200 dogs. This is inherently unfair.</p> <p>The concept of winning out is still an important aspect and points should only be given for wins. By weighting the system according to how many dogs are in the competition allows clubs to retain flexibility in standard classes as to whether they wish to offer graded or combined classes.</p> <p>To be managed effectively a points system would require will require a central record of wins and points accrued. This needs further exploration, but is a more realistic proposal now that more shows are using centralised system to record show results.</p>

The Grading review Panel is now working on a proposal for a weighted points progression system which will be discussed further at the next Agility Liaison Council Meeting. A paper summarising progress to date on this will be tabled at the meeting for discussion.

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