

## Options for changes to the Grading System

### Prepared by the Grading Panel

1. Why do we need these proposals:-  
Dogs are moving up the grades too quickly and either end up in G6 or G7, unprepared and not ready to compete at the required standard. Further details on these issues can be found in the Grading Panel's papers for ALC meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> January and 13<sup>th</sup> July 2017)
2. Why have they moved up the grades too quickly?  
A range of factors have compounded this issue. Most notably:
  - Small numbers in classes
  - A lot more Graded classes.
  - A lot more long weekend and week shows
  - More classes to enter per day
  - G1-7 graded classes do not offer enough challenges for all the grades or the time that is set is too lenient.
  - 25 day rule – potentially allows a dog to go from G1 to G7 in less than 6 months
3. The Grading Panel is proposing that changes to the Grading system are made that seek to address this problem.  
  
The Grading Panel is proposing that one of two options is adopted. Both options have only 6 grades, effectively removing the current grade 2, require dogs to have success in agility classes to progress in any grade and requires dogs to win classes to count towards progression. Wins will only count towards progression if the dog is clear (and is within the course time).  
The first option is very similar to the current system but increases the number of wins needed to progress.  
The second option brings in a weighted approach which takes into account class size in progression.  
It is important to note that any changes to the grading structure MUST be considered alongside any changes to the current height and jump classifications as change to the height classification system can and will alter the flow through grades.
4. **Option One: Progression by a non-weighted system**  
In this option wins in all classes are of equal value, irrespective of class size  
The proposed rule change would be :  
H(1)(A)9 - Progression from Grade 1 and 2 require 2 wins of which one must be an Agility class. G3 requires 3 wins of which 2 must be Agility classes, G4 requires 4 wins, of which 2 must be Agility classes, G5 requires 5 wins, of which 3 must be Agility classes and 1 Agility Win must be must be gained in a combined class for grades 5 and 6 or 4, 5 and 6.  
This is best explained in an eligibility table.

Grade		Eligibility
1	Elementary	Open to dogs and handlers which have NOT gained a minimum of two first places in standard classes at Grade 1, of which at least one first place must be gained in Agility.
2	Starter	Open to dogs which are not eligible for Grade 1 and are not eligible for Grade 3, 4, 5 or 6
3	Novice	Open to dogs which have gained a minimum of two first places in standard classes at Grade 2, one first places must be gained in Agility (not jumping classes).
4	Intermediate	Open to dogs which have gained a minimum of three first places in standard classes at Grade 3 two first places must be gained in Agility (not jumping classes)
5	Senior	Open to dogs which have gained a minimum of four first places in standard classes at Grade 4, two first places must be gained in Agility (not jumping classes)
6	Advanced	Open to dogs which have gained a minimum of five first places in standard classes at Grade 5, three first places must be gained in Agility (not jumping classes) and one win must be gained in a combined class for grades 5 and 6 or 4, 5 and 6.

#### 5. Option Two: Progression through a weighted system

In this option wins in classes are allocated different number of points dependent on class size.

The proposed rule change would be:

H(1)(A)9 - Progression from Grade 1 and 2 require 10 points of which 5 must be from Agility classes. G3 requires 20 points of which 10 must be in Agility classes, G4 requires 30 points, of which 15 must be from Agility classes, G5 requires 40 points, of which 20 must be from Agility classes and 10 Agility points must be gained in a combined class for grades 5 and 6 or 4, 5 and 6.

Points are allocated to a win based on the number of dogs entered in competition. This is the number of dogs that must be beaten in order to win 1st place. This is the total number of dogs entered not that actually competed.

Number of dogs entered in class	1 -10	11 - 150	+ 151
1st place (clear within time)	1 point	5 points	10 points

This is best explained in an eligibility table

Grade		Eligibility
1	Elementary	Open to dogs and handlers which have NOT gained 10 points or more in standard classes at Grade 1, of which a minimum of 50% must be gained in Agility. (not jumping classes).
2	Starter	Open to dogs which are not eligible for Grade 1 and are not eligible for Grade 3, 4, 5 or 6.
3	Novice	Open to dogs which have gained 10 points or more in standard classes at Grade 2, of which a minimum of 50% must be gained in Agility (not jumping classes).
4	Intermediate	Open to dogs which have gained 20 points or more in standard classes at Grade 3 of which a minimum of 50% must be gained in Agility (not jumping classes).
5	Senior	Open to dogs which have gained 30 points or more in standard classes at Grade 4, of which a minimum of 50% must be gained in Agility (not jumping classes).
6	Advanced	Open to dogs which have gained 40 points or more in standard classes at Grade 5, of which a minimum of 50% must be gained in Agility (not jumping classes) and 5 points must be gained in a combined class for grades 5 and 6 or 4, 5 and 6.

6. Associated rule changes

Alongside either option the Grading Panel would like the following rules to be reviewed and a number of changes made.

- a. The course time matrix should be reviewed and its use should become mandatory.
- b. Shows should be limited to offering a maximum of THREE progression classes for any dog on one day of the show.
- c. A restriction of the number of grades in Graded classes should be bought in. This should not allow graded classes to have more than three grades in it. So Jumping 1-3 can be graded or combined, but Jumping 1-4 would have to be combined
- d. The maximum number of dogs in class must be 300. Once 301 dogs are entered in a class then the class must be split.
- e. Increase the time between wins and progressing up the grades. The rule should be changed to "In estimating the number of awards won, all wins up to and including 30 days before the start of the competition".
- f. Progression on Agility Warrant points should be retained, but restricted to dogs moving up into grades 2 and 3. However a restriction would be bought in that 50 points must be from Agility Classes. Thus a dog could progress up to G3 by winning 100 points at each grade, using the Agility Warrant points scheme. This would remain at the handlers discretion
- g. The Kennel Club should review the arrangements for issuing licenses and introduce a restriction on open shows being held on the same date within a given radius to avoid shows having very small catchment areas.

7. Transition

As there are now only 6 grades all dogs will move down a grade on the day of implementation apart from Grade 1 dogs that will remain in grade 1. Grade 2 will effectively cease to exist and all dogs new to competing will start in grade 2 unless they are run by a beginner handler who is eligible for Grade 1

8. Notes

The owner has been removed from eligibility criteria for grade one and only the dog and handler are considered.

This does not cover any increased eligibility for Championship classes which will be considered separately.