



**Code of Best Practice for the
Running of a Breed Seminar and
Judging Competence Assessment**

December 2012

Code of Practice for the Running of a Breed Seminar and Judging Competence Assessment

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Introduction

In setting this Code of Best Practice for Running Breed Seminars and Assessing Judging Competence, the Kennel Club wishes to ensure that those who organise such events are confident and able to tailor their seminars to meet the needs of the Candidates and the Breeds being presented. Generally Breed Club Seminars are run in accordance with helping aspiring

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judges develop through the C and B Lists and therefore it is recommended that the education is split into **two parts**:

Part One should focus on the C List and concentrate on a Breed Talk in line with the requirements set out later in Section 2. This should focus on the basic knowledge an aspiring judge would need to build their understanding and appreciation of the breed. It should be interactive with the use of live models and involve a 'questions and answer' session. It is suggested that this should be followed up with a questionnaire or similar to give delegates the opportunity to test their knowledge of the Breed Standard.

Part Two, which is the basis of this document and focuses on the B List and movement of the judge to the A3/A2 List. It is essential as part of the Criteria for giving CCs in a breed and assesses the Candidate's competence in judging a class of dogs. Please note the Advisory Criteria at www.thekennelclub.org.uk/download/1466/advisorycriteria.pdf

The overall aim of the **Part Two** seminar should focus on providing education on Breed Specific Anatomy, Conformation and Movement, Health and Welfare including all aspects of Fit for Function, Fit for Life. The Kennel Club website provides the latest information at www.fitforfunction.org.uk **Appendix A** is the briefing document that all judges need when taking on an appointment to refresh them on the issues regarding giving awards to fit and healthy dogs.

It should therefore be about the breed and breed judging issues (KC Regulations; completion of records; basic anatomy and general conformation and movement should be covered elsewhere in the judges' education).

There is little point in holding breed seminars if they are not in some way related to the club's judging list. The number of breed seminars should be arranged bearing in mind The Kennel Club's recommendations on the compilation of judging lists. Please note the Advisory Criteria for the Compilation of Breed Club Judging Lists Framework Document **2004/2005** can be found at www.thekennelclub.org.uk/download/1466/advisorycriteria.pdf

It may be that some clubs do not need to make further additions to their lists for some years, while others are woefully short of the number required. Those who have successfully completed a breed seminar have a right to be seriously considered for the Club's lists (especially if they have successfully taken part in an assessment). If they should not be accepted, it would be helpful for them to have the reasons given. They should certainly all be contacted after the seminar with an indication of their achievement and it is recommended that candidate feedback forms are taken into account to improve future events.

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Objectives:

Breed Clubs should

- Ensure that all up and coming breed judges are provided with the opportunity of having quality guidance to make informed decisions when judging their specific breed with emphasis on the key area of 'Fit for Function, Fit for Life'.
- Provide where appropriate a Breed Specific Assessment of Judging Competence for aspiring judges. Candidates successful in demonstrating an advanced knowledge and insight of the breed should be awarded a 'Breed Certificate in Judging Competence' for that breed. It should be stressed that this certificate needs to be filed carefully by the successful candidate as it will be needed for the submission of the first time CC Questionnaire.
- Ensure that seminars are held in accordance with the requirements of the Kennel Club Advisory Criteria for the Compilation of Breed Club Judges Lists Framework Document with particular attention given to the need for the progression of judges through the B Lists to A3/A2 Lists.
- Include the fundamentals of the breed and the particular characteristics, the unique preparation and showing exhibition
- techniques used within the breed making sure these are thoroughly understood.
- Ensure that the Breed Speaker follows the recommended Structure of a Breed Talk (Ref. Section 2) and is up to date with all the 'Fit for Function, Fit for Life' issues.

Planning and Organising Breed Seminars

There are several well-established breed and general schemes which already fulfil the criteria and which are acceptable to The Kennel Club, this document aims to reinforce the good practice and encourage careful planning and organising towards what can be a very controversial exercise.

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1. PLANNING

A breed seminar must be very carefully planned.

A proper budget should be drawn up. In order to make informed decisions about seminar budget there are several considerations required including:

- Experienced Speakers
- Experienced and Qualified Assessors (Page 9 para.3 refers)
- Venue
- Number of Candidates
- Catering
- Travel Expenses
- Accommodation
- Printing
- Committee member support
- Exhibits for Seminar and 5 exhibits for the Assessment

Some clubs have the resources to subsidise a breed seminar others may have to recover the full cost. In general, experts on the breed are likely to give of their time freely, but clubs should not assume this to be the case. People who are in great demand may need to be reimbursed for their time and if you want the best you may have to pay for it.

It is sensible to appoint one person or a small committee to manage the seminar once the club has decided the form that it should take.

Programme

The Programme should be designed to make the best possible use of the day whilst giving due consideration to the Candidates requirements.

A suggested timetable is attached which has proven effective in the Kennel Club Judges Development Programme (**Appendix B**).

The Candidates attending a Breed Seminar should be given time to discuss the finer points of the Breed as well as the opportunity to compare good dogs. The morning programme should consist of a presentation on the Breed given by an established speaker using good quality specimens of the breed during the talk. The afternoon programme will provide an opportunity for Candidates to be assessed in their ability to judge the Breed competently, using different dogs to those used for the talk. ***Breed Clubs may if they wish hold the breed seminar and breed assessment on separate days, the programme being re-timed as appropriate.***

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2. CONTENT AND DELIVERY OF BREED TALK

Prior to the breed seminar, those who are to be actively involved in lectures, discussions or evaluation should be brought together by the seminar leader to discuss precisely how the day is to be managed.

Depending on whether the seminar includes an assessment of Judging Competence or whether it is purely a talk followed by a questionnaire for less experienced judges some consideration should be given to providing extended Breed Standards compiled to accompany the input of the speaker. Most clubs have these and they should be followed in line with the guidelines for the speaker below.

The fundamental points that need to be explained and understood must be agreed for there are nearly always 'key' elements of a breed which have to be conveyed to a new judge. All those involved must be in broad agreement on these fundamental points. There will always be some discussion about the weight certain breed characteristics should be given but in a breed seminar the essential elements should be agreed and everyone should be involved in putting them across consistently.

i. Outline for Breed Talk

Essentially the Breed Speaker(s) should aim to present a session about the Breed that:

- Is well structured ('Structure of a Breed Talk' is given in section ii below)
- Includes good visuals
- Encourages audience participation
- Operates on a semi-formal basis

The Breed Speaker(s) should ideally:

1. Be widely recognised as an 'authority' on the Breed
2. Have a proven track record either as a Breeder, Exhibitor, Handler or Judge
3. Be a good communicator with in depth knowledge of the Breed including health issues
4. Be articulate
5. Demonstrate an enthusiasm about their Breed
6. Have a positive approach with good body language and a clear pitch

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ii. Content and Structure of the Breed Talk

The following is designed to help in the presentation of Breed Specific Talks which should give in depth information and an appreciation of the Breed Standard.

1. Begin at the beginning by relating the History of the 'Function' of the Breed. Make the audience clear and familiar with the 'function' and what the dog requires to carry this out successfully. All aspects of the Breed should be covered including health issues which are Breed Specific
2. Since the 'function' dictates the form of the Breed, the Structure should be explained with the use of drawings, text and live dogs. The explanation should show by diagram and live examples, the front and rear assemblies, outline and balance.
3. As the structure will influence how the dog will move, it is important to explain the style and gait of the Breed. Inform the audience of what assessing good movement, particular to the Breed, entails.
4. Similarly, excellent examples of really good moving dogs and bitches should be available and all aspects of how to evaluate good movement explained.
 - a. What to expect to see as the dog moves away from the judge
 - b. What to expect to see as the dog comes towards the judge
 - c. What the judge can see and evaluate as the dog goes around the ring and is viewed from the side.
5. The head of the dog, the most distinguishing feature, is most important. Examples of good male and female heads should be shown and discussed in depth.
6. Temperament and Style add to the essence of Breed Type and this also requires examples of dogs of the Breed with excellence in the foregoing.
7. To review the correct method of examination/judging of the Breed
8. To get across what makes a dog exceptional, i.e. not just the difference between good and very good, but between good and superb

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9. To be able to imprint on the Candidates' minds what is, in the Speaker's opinion a superb example of the Breed Standard as their yardstick
10. To interact with Candidates by the invitation of questions and subsequent discussion including the use of anecdotes where appropriate
11. To provide, where practical, additional quality dogs which should be presented as being typical, to be moved individually and to invite the Candidates to 'go over' them and discuss the qualities of the dog with the Speaker and any Assessors that are present
12. To be able to summarise the talk into a short list of specifics, which in the Speaker's opinion, make the Breed what it is.

Whilst being realistic in describing attributes or shortcomings for the benefit of Candidates, and encouraging them to get hands-on and ask questions, criticism should never be destructive or hurtful to the Owners/Handlers. This should be made clear at the outset to everyone.

Any dogs used for the assessment should be different to those used during the demonstration phase.

Since all dogs have faults and some dogs have good points it is essential that the audience has a picture of what can be attained in the Breed. It is in this way that it is easier to pick out positive values for the dogs and not slip into the habit of 'fault' judging the breed.

If the people who are bringing the dogs along to the talk are assured that only the positive aspects of the dogs will be shown, demonstrated and commented on then the big impasse of possibly having the dog heavily criticised is forgotten and so it should be easier to get dog people to bring their dogs along.

The length of breed talks vary and a good speaker will hold an audience for a considerable time quite successfully. However if the content of the talk is clear, informative and interesting then one hour should pass comfortably.

Those Speakers with a fundamentally 'different' view of a breed should be avoided where possible! This is not to say that there should be no place for personal opinions and choices but in a breed seminar it is important to give as clear, concise, balanced and conventional a view as possible. The Kennel Club breed

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standard must be the guide and, where it is not clear, all those involved with a breed seminar need to have a view which is consistent with the general interpretation of the standard.

3. GUIDANCE FOR ORGANISATION OF ASSESSMENT

It is most important that when planning this element of the seminar that careful consideration is given to ensuring consistency in the approach for all parties i.e. Assessors and Candidates.

It is recommended that there is a minimum of three Assessors, all of whom have been approved by the Kennel Club to award Challenge Certificates in this specific Breed at least four times.

N.B. the role of Assessor at a Breed Seminar does not affect the Assessors future judging appointments. The role is to assess the ability of the candidates to judge and place the dogs in an order that would have the general agreement of experts. There is no conflict with Kennel Club Regulation F(1) 30 a. (11)

It is recommended that no more than 10 Candidates take part in the Assessment.

The candidates and assessors will assess the dogs together and will be split into five groups of two rotated around the five assessment dogs (Each Assessor should join one of the five groups).

An Outline of the Breed Seminar Assessment Process is included as Appendix C

General notes about the Organisation of the Assessment

- a. Candidates' names should not be used on the paperwork submitted during the first part of the Assessment. Candidates will be given a Reference Number at the start of the Assessment Process and this will be used to identify the documentation submitted by them. Only the Seminar Organiser will know the Candidates' reference numbers. (N.B. in order to maintain anonymity the Seminar Organiser should not therefore be part of the Assessor Panel)
- b. Prior to the Assessment Process, the Seminar Organiser should ensure that all Candidates and the three Assessors are in possession of the appropriate assessment paperwork (**Appendices D1, D2 and D3**). Spare paperwork should be available should any documents need to be re-written.
- c. It should be noted that no observers are permitted during the Breed Assessment other than those persons so authorised to perform a key function of facilitation of the process.

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- d. Prior to the Assessors and Candidates assessing the 5 dogs, the Seminar Organiser should gather the dogs and handlers in the main ring area, issue the dogs identifier using 'Ring Letters A – E' and allow time for the dogs to 'warm-up' on the move.

Assessment Process

Assessors should not voice their opinions or discuss their findings with the Handlers, the Candidates or the other Assessors whilst they are assessing the dogs. It is not intended to place Handlers in an embarrassing position, and Handlers should not have to endure any comments (good or bad) made about their dogs.

(Please note that the Assessors will follow the same Steps 1-3 as the Candidates)

Step 1 – Candidate to make an Initial Assessment of Exhibits (Using Appendix D1 the Candidate Worksheet – one for each exhibit A-E)

- a. The 'class' that Candidates will be asked to judge will consist of 5 dogs. The same dogs will be used for all Candidates. The dogs will be identified by 'Ring letters' A – E.
- b. Candidates will be asked to carry out this assessment on a group basis examining each dog A - E in turn. All Candidates will be in the main ring at the same time and may not confer during the assessment.
- c. It is recommended that no more than 10 Candidates should be assessed at any one time. Where there are 10 Candidates there should be 2 Candidates per dog rotated. (The Organiser should advise each of the Assessors to join one of the groups for the duration of the assessment).
- d. Prior to the individual examination of each dog the exhibits should be moved around the hall so that Candidates and Assessors can get an overall impression of the dogs to be assessed. Each Candidate and Assessor within a group will then take a turn to examine one dog at a time and make notes using the Candidate Worksheet (**Appendix D1**). *(Please note that timings for this task will be adjusted accordingly depending on the number of Candidates undertaking the Assessment. Additionally the Assessors will also be involved in this process).*
- e. This is a closed book assessment process, i.e. no other documentation may be referred to during the completion of Step 1

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- f. Candidates will be asked to make their notes on a separate Candidate Worksheet (**Appendix D1**) for each of the five dogs this form need not be passed to the Assessors.
- g. At the end of the assessment of the first dog, each group will be asked to move onto the next dog and go through the same actions on the second dog.
- h. This action will continue until each Candidate and Assessor has been over, and made notes about all five dogs.
- i. After the class has been judged, the Handlers will be asked to move each of the five dogs so that Candidates and Assessors can collectively see the dog's movement 'coming and going' and in profile.
- j. The Candidates should not voice their opinions or discuss their findings with anyone whilst they are assessing the dogs. It is not intended to place Handlers in an embarrassing situation and Handlers should not have to endure any comments (good or bad) made about the dogs.
- k. The Assessors will also observe the way that the Candidates 'go over' the dogs and make appropriate notes. This information will not be used in the decision to award a 'Breed Certificate in Judging Competence' but may be used as part of the feedback to Candidates.

Step 2 – Candidate to Place the Exhibits (Using the Placings Slip – Appendix D2)

- a. Candidates will be asked to 'place' the five exhibits in order of merit, as though judged as a Class and will be asked to write their decision on the Placings Slip (**Appendix D2**). All the dogs will remain in the hall whilst Step 2 is completed.
- b. This is a closed book assessment process, i.e. no other documentation may be referred to during the completion of Step 2.
- c. Dogs will NOT be 'pulled out'. Placings are made on paper only.
- d. Candidates will be asked NOT to discuss their findings with other Candidates.
- e. Candidates will be given approximately 5 minutes to complete Step 2.
- f. The handlers will not be made aware of the Candidate's placings.
- g. The Assessors will also place the five dogs using the Placings Slip. The Candidates' placings of the dogs will be compared to the placings agreed by the Assessors, when the Candidates' Findings Sheets (**Appendix D3**) are analysed.

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- h. Before moving on to Step 3, Candidates will give their completed 'Placings Slip' to the Seminar Organiser. However, Candidates should remember to make a note of their placings and retain their Candidate Worksheet for use in completion of Step 3.

(As previously mentioned the Candidates' names are not used on paperwork submitted for Assessment. Candidates are given a Reference Number at the start of the Assessment Process and this is used to identify the documentation submitted by them. Only the Seminar Organiser will know the Candidates' reference numbers.)

N.B. As 'judging' is subjective, the placings selected by the Candidates may not necessarily agree entirely with those decided upon by the Assessors – there is no totally 'right or wrong' order. The written critiques on the Findings Sheet will assist the Assessors in understanding the reasoning behind a Candidate's placings.

Step 3 – Candidates and Assessors to write their findings on the 5 dogs placed

- a. Candidates are asked to write their findings on each of the five exhibits placed using Findings Sheets **Appendix D3**.
- b. This is a closed book assessment process, i.e. no other documentation may be referred to during the completion of Step 3.
- c. Candidates should try to balance their findings and should include what they consider as 'merits' and 'demerits' of the exhibits. It is understood that some Judges tend to write only positive comments about their exhibits when publishing their critiques in the Dog Press. However, in this assessment process, it is important that Candidates write exactly what they find, whether they be good or poor points. The Assessors will want to confirm to themselves that the Candidates have demonstrated an advanced practical knowledge of the Breed Standard, and have been able to apply that understanding to the dogs that have been assessed. Candidates need not worry about any spelling mistakes or handwriting errors but the written critiques need to be legible enough to be clear to the Assessors
- d. Assistance in this area from an 'independent person', for those who require it, can be provided if requested.

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Independent Person

It is appreciated that some Candidates, for a variety of reasons, may find a Breed Assessment Process to be a stressful one and that might affect the outcome of their assessment. With this in mind, and with the intention of trying to remove some of the stress, there is provision for a Candidate to have the services of an 'Independent Person' to aid their note taking and the write-up of their findings.

The role of the Independent Person will be to write down what the Candidate dictates to them. The 'Independent Person' will be arranged by the seminar organiser and is not permitted to offer help or guidance to the Candidate in any other way. The 'Independent Person' will not be connected in any way to the Candidate or to the Breed being assessed.

Candidates should advise the seminar organiser if they wish to take up the offer of an 'Independent Person' and this will be arranged for them.

- e. Candidates will be given approximately 90 minutes to complete Steps 1-3 and will be provided with a suitable area for sitting down for ease of completing Step 3.
- f. The Assessors will also make their own notes about these dogs on the Findings Sheets **Appendix D3**. After 'going over' all of the dogs and making their own notes about the dogs, the Assessors will have a private meeting under the direction of their Chairperson/Moderator to discuss their findings and consolidate their approach to the Assessment process.
- g. Candidates will be asked to submit all of their Findings Sheets to the Seminar Organiser at the end of the assessment process.
- h. As before, the Handlers will not be made aware of either the Assessors or Candidates' findings on the dogs.

Assessment of Candidates Findings

- a. The Assessors will meet to reach a consensus of their own Placings and Findings of the assessment dogs.
- b. The Chairperson/Moderator will read out the Placings and Findings for each Candidate (who will remain anonymous at this point).
- c. The Assessors will make an 'Initial Decision' for each Candidate in accordance with the Candidate Results Form (**Appendix E**)
- d. If the Assessors consider that they have all of the information they require, the Chairperson/Moderator should then complete

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the final decision on the Candidate Results Form and record agreed feedback to be given to the Candidate.

- e. It may be that after making their initial decision, the Assessors consider that some clarification from a Candidate might be helpful. In these instances, the Assessors should formulate specific questions for the Chairperson to ask the Candidate. The Candidate may be given the opportunity to clarify their placings and/or findings for the Assessors by way of an interview. *The questions and answers should be recorded on the back of the Candidate Results Form. This information should demonstrate the Assessors decision process.* The assessment process allows for selected Candidates to be interviewed or all of the Candidates to be interviewed.
- f. When the Assessors have the information they require, and the Candidate has left the interview, a final decision should be made. The Chairperson/Moderator should then record the final decision on the Candidate Results Form and also record the agreed feedback to be given to the Candidate.

In view of the above guidance, the Assessment Organisers and Assessors are able to decide which way the Assessment Process is best delivered.

There are, therefore three options:

Option One – no interview process at all

Option Two – selected Candidates given an interview

Option Three – all Candidates given an interview

After the Assessment of Candidate Findings

The Chairperson/Moderator will collect all the completed Candidate Result Forms to be kept on file for reference when sending out Candidate Feedback. The Organising Club should ensure that Candidates receive their results within two weeks of the assessment date.

4. CANDIDATE FEEDBACK

Candidates should be given the opportunity to give feedback on the effectiveness of the seminar and assessment and a sample format is provided as **Appendix F**

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5. PUBLICITY

Details of any breed seminar should be available well in advance – at least a year if you wish to attract established non-specialist judges.

The canine press has special columns devoted to forthcoming educational events (which are free) but some direct advertising is also recommended. Details should be circulated to all showing members (possibly through a club magazine) and individual letters (with a reply slip) sent to all non-specialists whom the organising committee feel should be invited.