



OBEDIENCE WORKING PARTY **RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING HEIGHT-CLASSIFIED** **CLASSES FROM MEETING HELD 11 FEBRUARY 2020**

The Working Party reviewed a number of issues raised by the Council at its meeting on 6 February 2020 in regard to height-classified classes.

The Council is invited to note the Working Party's views, which were as follows:

Clarification that the scheduling of height-classified classes would be optional for show organisers

- Height-classified classes would be optional and clubs were not obliged to schedule them.

Clarification of whether clubs may schedule some height-classified classes alongside existing standard classes

- Show organisers may schedule some height-classified classes alongside existing standard classes should they wish to do so, and had complete flexibility in doing so.
- However, where height-classified classes were scheduled, they must include awards for all four heights.

Clarification that competitors may compete at Standard height should they not wish to have their dog measured in order to compete in Small, Medium or Giant

- Measuring may be unduly onerous and may therefore be discouraging to both show organisers and competitors, therefore a dog's height classification should be taken on trust.
- Measuring may be introduced at a later stage if it became necessary.
- Due to insufficient availability of office resources to maintain records of dogs' heights, competitors may be issued with a record book in which to note details of the height at which their dog was competing, and records of any placings, OR an online resource would be made available via which each competitor would declare their interest and intention to compete at a specified height.

[Note: as at April 2020, the office is investigating the potential use of online forms in a standardised format which would be completed by competitors with no office input. There would be a provision for the generation of statistical reports and analysis as required.]

- Having declared a height, a competitor would be permitted to change to Standard height, subject to only one such change being allowed. This policy was recommended in order to prevent difficulties in arranging events such as semi-finals or finals, or for the purposes of calculating points.



Potential to split classes by size, should entry numbers be sufficiently high or conversely to amalgamate classes/results where entries are low

- Where entries were sufficiently high, clubs may if they wished split the class – for example, Small may be judged in one ring, with Medium, Standard and Giant in another ring under a different judge. This would be under the same procedure as was currently in place for splitting standard classes.
- Where entries were low, show organisers may not change a height-classified class into a combined height class i.e. a scheduled height-classified class must be run as such. Conversely, a scheduled standard class may not be run as a height-classified class.
- Regulation G32.j. would apply i.e. in classes with 10 or less entries the award of 1st place may be withheld if in the opinion of the judge the standard of work does not merit the award.
- In order to encourage entries, the number of places should initially remain at 6.
- Clubs may seek sponsorship for rosettes to offset costs, and it was also suggested that rosettes should be supplied by the Kennel Club in the early stages of height-classified classes. It was anticipated that any additional costs to clubs would be offset by revenue from additional entries.
- Trophies may be supplied by clubs for winners of each height category should they wish to do so, but there would be no mandatory requirement.

To review the proposed heights for each category and to confirm whether they are correct

- The Working Party considered concerns that a number of breeds would fall into the Medium or Standard categories and would still be competing against collies, the majority of which would fall into the same categories.
- It was of the view that introduction of an ABC option in order to address this would add unwelcome complexity due to difficulties in clearly defining which dogs may be classed as ABC, and whether wins in ABC classes could count towards progression.
- In the interests of clarity and simplicity, the height categories should remain as proposed, with no ABC option, as follows:

Small:	For dogs measuring 35 cm or under at the withers.
Medium:	For dogs measuring over 35 cm and 43 cm or under at the withers.
Standard:	For dogs which have not been measured, or measuring over 43 cm and 60 cm or under at the withers.
Giant:	For dogs measuring over 60 cm at the withers.

Progression issues – to ensure that dogs do not progress too quickly via height classified classes, and to ensure that class wins may be withheld should the standard not be sufficiently high

- As stated earlier, the award of 1st place may be withheld in a class with 10 or less entries.
- Where a competitor had lost more than (for example) 10 marks, they may be awarded a 1st place but may not count the win, or any progression points, towards progression. This would remove the onus from the judge to withhold an award, and would also provide a clear and easily understood framework for competitors.
- Where a 1st place was awarded on a non-qualifying basis, subsequent places must also be considered to be non-qualifying and progression points may not be counted.



- 20% of the total points available would be a reasonable threshold in all classes.
- It was anticipated that the above measures would address many of the concerns expressed regarding dogs progressing too quickly where the standard of work was not sufficiently high, or where there were low entry numbers.
- It would be a positive step to encourage show organisers to offer special awards for (for example) Best Gundog, Best GSD, etc., as these would prove encouraging for competitors, particularly those new to competitive obedience.

Other issues

The Working Party also considered the following issues relating to height-classified classes:

Timeframe

- Regulations relating to height-classified classes to be implemented in January 2022 (rather than January 2021) in order to give show organisers sufficient time to prepare.
- In the intervening period, clubs would be free to schedule height-classified classes as special classes should they wish to do so.

Judges

- Judges already under contract may not withdraw from an appointment where height-classified classes were scheduled.
- In making any announcements regarding height classified classes, simplicity was key and the emphasis should be on flexibility. Details of how the classes would work would be covered within a separate FAQs document.