



**AMERICAN  
KENNEL CLUB®**

Judging Operations Department  
PO Box 900062  
Raleigh, NC 27675-9062  
919-816-3570  
[judgingops@akc.org](mailto:judgingops@akc.org)  
[www.akc.org](http://www.akc.org)

## **AKC Board of Directors - Judging Approval Process**

*Revised effective: January 1, 2018; Amended January 1, 2019, May 12, 2020 & November 10, 2020*

This newly stated judging approval process (the Policy) replaces any and all prior policies, practices and requirements that are inconsistent with any of its terms and conditions. This Policy emphasizes education as being paramount in one's preparation for application of breeds and is continuous through the process for approval, permit judging assignments, and beyond. The prospective judge must complete sufficient mandatory and/or optional educational experiences to request Permit status. Intended to simplify and quantify the process while giving significant objective guidance to all who desire to be approved to judge at AKC conformation events, the meeting of minimum requirements does not ensure approval. It is recognized that education in each breed is an ongoing process but differs for the newly approved judge and the long time experienced judge.

The progression process is designed to consider the experience of the judge and to provide flexibility in which optional requirements (Qualifying Components) may be chosen to achieve Permit status. It is intended to balance the need to provide a clear, education based path for approval for those aspiring to judge and instill faith in AKC's breeders and exhibitors that those approved to judge their breed are sufficiently prepared, while preserving the mission statement of the AKC in being for the betterment of purebred dogs.

### **THE REQUIREMENT MATRIX**

Attached is a Judge Education Component Requirements Chart that shows the requirements both for the first-time applicant and additional breed applicants. The Chart is divided into 4 sections:

1. The first section is required of all applicants to obtain their first breed(s).
2. The second section has the mandatory requirements for judges depending upon the number of groups they currently judge for both regular and low entry breeds. (For purposes of this Policy a Low Entry Breed (LEB) is defined to be one in which fewer than 3,500 entries of that breed were made at AKC Licensed and Member Dog Shows throughout the United States during the preceding calendar year. The Judging Operations Department (hereafter: the Department) shall publish a list of LEB annually).
3. The third section contains the specific breed Qualifying Component education experiences from which the applicant can choose in order to qualify for Permit status. Each Qualifying Component is assigned a Component Educational Unit (CEU) weighted point allotment shown in the Chart.
4. The fourth section defines the maximum number of breeds for which an applicant may hold Permit status at any given time, based upon the number of groups the judge is approved to judge.

The columns in the Judge Education Component Requirements Chart determine the number of CEU an applicant must present, per breed, based upon the applicant's group approval status. The more groups the applicant is approved to judge, the fewer CEU per breed the application must present.

## JUDGE EDUCATION COMPONENT REQUIREMENTS FOR EACH BREED APPLICATION

### SECTION 1

#### REQUIRED OF ALL INITIAL BREED APPLICANTS

- Meet either the 12-5-4 or New Breed Alternate Method as specified in the Judging Approval Process
- Complete 6 stewarding assignments within 3 years of application
- Complete 6 judging assignments at AKC sanctioned non-point events
- Meet AKC occupational eligibility requirements
- Successfully complete ABC's of Dog Breeding- Anatomy I and Anatomy II courses in AKC Canine College
- Pass Anatomy and Procedural open book test
- Attend AKC Basic Judging Institute

### SECTION 2

#### REQUIRED OF ALL INITIAL AND ADDITIONAL BREED APPLICANTS

COMPLETE GROUPS CURRENTLY APPROVED <sup>1</sup>		
Less than 1	Less than 4	4 or more
X	X	X
X	X	X
X	X	X

Breed Standard Test for Each Breed on the application
Breed Interview with Executive Field Representative for each breed on the application
Pass use of Wicket and/or Scale as applicable

MINIMUM COMPONENT EDUCATIONAL UNITS REQUIRED FOR REGULAR BREEDS	10	8	6
MINIMUM COMPONENT EDUCATIONAL UNITS REQUIRED FOR LOW ENTRY BREEDS	5	4	3

<sup>1</sup>- Complete Groups on Regular Status

### SECTION 3

CEU VALUE	MAXIMUM CEU	COMPONENT EDUCATIONAL UNIT (CEU) DESCRIPTION		
3	6	Judges Education Seminar w/ Hands-on Workshop at National		
2		Judges Education Seminar (only) at National		
1		Ringside Observation with mentor at National		
1		Tutoring session with qualified mentor at National		
3	5	Seminar in Breed with Hands-on Workshop at Advanced Institute		
2		Seminar in Breed (only) at Advanced Institute		
2		Any other Seminar in Breed with Hands-on Workshop (must meet AKC criteria)		
1		Webinar or any other Seminar (only) in breed. (must meet AKC criteria)		
2	2	AKC Canine College breed course (must successfully complete)		
2	5	Long-term Mentor		
1		Kennel Visit/Tutoring Session		
1		Additional Mentor/Kennel Visit or Tutoring Session		
1	5	Ringside Observation w/mentor (must be major entry present in the classes or significant in whole to be of value)		
2	4	In-Ring Apprentice Training		
1		Additional Apprentice Training, different mentor		
2	4	Sweepstakes/Futurity Assignment at National Specialty		
1		Sweepstakes/Futurity Assignment with any specialty		
1	3	Assignment to judge the breed as a replacement judge or foreign assignment at AKC recognized registry		
1	3	Judged breed a total of 3x In Group, BIS, Misc. etc. (includes special attraction groups, supported entry sweepstakes, group show, etc.)		
1	1	Attend Performance Event w/breed present (event pertains to the purpose of the breed)		
2	2	Breeding & Exhibiting – Bred or exhibited 4 dogs to CH in breed		
1	2	Virtual tutoring with breed expert. Low Entry Breeds only may qualify for 2 <sup>nd</sup> CEU.		
tbd*		Other – must attach description of experience		

\*The number of CEU if accepted, will be determined by consultation with the judge and the Department based on the significance of the experience.

### SECTION 4

MAXIMUM NUMBER OF <u>PERMIT BREEDS AT ONE TIME</u>	12	18	24
--	----	----	----

## **FIRST TIME APPLICATION TO JUDGE - NEW JUDGES**

The qualifications for the first-time applicant are specific to breeds in which the applicant has documented hands-on experience in owning, breeding or exhibiting. Eligible fanciers on their first application may apply for up to 12 breeds.

### **12-5-4 Method**

Individuals applying as New Judges must meet the following minimum criteria:

- Have 12 or more years' experience exhibiting in conformation in at least one breed applied for.
- Must be a member of a household where five or more litters in each breed applied for have been bred and whelped.
- Qualifying litters must have been whelped and raised on applicant's premises.
- Qualifying litters must have produced four or more champions.
- Criteria compliance may be with AKC events and registered dogs or with events and registrations of a foreign kennel club whose registry is recognized by the AKC. If foreign, it shall be the applicant's responsibility to adequately document the criteria compliance.

### **New Breed Alternate Method**

If an applicant does not meet the litter and/or champion criteria in the initial breed(s), he/she may apply under the New Breed Alternate Method. Applicants must have 15 or more years' experience in conformation in at least one breed applied for and must be able to document having accomplished any combination of four of the following components in each initial breed:

- Bred at least two champions in the breed requested.
- Bred and raised four litters in the breed requested on his or her premises.

- Breeder of Merit earned in the breed requested.
- Owned or maintained for the duration four dogs in the breed requested that earned championships or grand championships while residing at applicant's home.
- Personally exhibited four unique dogs in the breed requested to their championship, earning all 15 points and both majors, or grand championship, earning all 25 points, three majors and defeating a special on three occasions. (This requirement is the same for owners and professional handlers).
- Personally exhibited two dogs in the breed requested as specials for a minimum of two years or approximately 60 shows. (This requirement is the same for owners and professional handlers).
- Owned at least one dog in the breed requested that sired four champions. (Dog must have resided at applicant's home while used at stud)
- Document 25 years of experience exhibiting dogs in Conformation events.
- Criteria compliance may be with AKC events and registered dogs or with events and registrations of a foreign kennel club whose registry is recognized by the AKC. If foreign, it shall be the applicant's responsibility to adequately document the criteria compliance.

Individuals with extensive experience and abilities beyond those points listed above will be given due consideration.

All New Judge applicants must:

1. Pay a \$35 per breed application fee.
2. Pass the Breed Standard Test described in this Policy.
3. Successfully complete Anatomy I and Anatomy II courses in AKC Canine College
4. Pass Anatomy and Procedure test.
5. Be interviewed satisfactorily by an AKC Executive Field Representative as described in this Policy.

6. Pass a wicket or scales test administered by an Executive Field Representative if a breed applied for is a measurable breed.
7. Attend an authorized AKC Basic Judging Institute prior to requesting regular status but not earlier than two years prior to submission of initial application.

## **PERMIT AND REGULAR STATUS**

The designation of a judge as approved on Permit status is intended to advise exhibitors that the judge has been recently approved for the breed. The Premium List for all shows shall indicate with the use of an asterisk for each Permit breed that the Judge is on Permit status for that particular breed as of the time of AKC's last approval of the judging panel. A judge's education in a breed continues through the Permit assignments and are thus an integral component of the learning curve.

All initial breed applicants must attend a Basic Judging Institute presented by AKC prior to submitting their regular status request, but not earlier than two years prior to the submission of their initial application. Judges must be granted regular status on all of the breeds approved on their initial application before any request for additional breeds may be submitted.

Judges may request regular status in permit breeds upon completion of three assignments in each permit breed with dogs present and judged and having been observed three times by different AKC Executive Field Representatives from the combination of breeds submitted for regular status.

**For Low Entry Breeds Only** - Judge may request regular status once assigned the permit breed on six (6) occasions regardless of number of entries judged.

Additional permit assignments may be required if Judges Breed Commentary (JBC) reports recommend further study or indicate concerns recognizing breed specific characteristics, and/or

Procedural Observations display difficulties with judging procedures.

Staff Committee reviews all requests for regular status to verify accuracy of information supplied and that all criteria have been met. Extenuating circumstances may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Judges may apply for additional breeds before achieving regular status in all permit breeds but may not submit a request for additional breeds within six months of their most recent committee action. The total number of permit breeds may not exceed the maximum number allowed as displayed in the Matrix, Part 4.

#### **APPLICATION TO JUDGE ADDITIONAL BREEDS**

The Judge Education Component Requirements Chart provides for an advancement protocol that is experienced based. Judges approved for multiple groups will be expected to submit applications with fewer CEUs per breed than those with approval for fewer groups.

On each additional breed application, judges applying for breeds within the same group may not exceed 12 breeds in any one submission, and no entire group may be received in less than three (3) separate submissions. On subsequent applications for additional breeds, individual may apply after a period of six-months from the most recent committee action. Judges with current permit breeds may apply for up to the number of breeds if approved, would not exceed the maximum number allowed as displayed in the Matrix, Part 4 (excluding adjunct breeds).

The maximum number of complete groups that may be approved under the regular approval process is four (4).

Judges may submit a request for consideration to advance beyond four complete groups. Each request will be considered based on one's proficiency in current breeds, ring procedure, and demeanor. Each subsequent request will be

reviewed independently.

#### **Specific Breed Education Requirements**

In addition to the mandatory requirements outlined in sections 1 and 2 of the Judge Education Component Requirements Chart, each prospective judge must complete optional requirements. The number of CEU for each breed necessary to be completed to obtain Permit status varies depending upon the experience level of the judge. A judge completing the first group must, when applying for additional breeds, complete more CEUs per breed than a judge already approved for a group or multiple groups. Applicants must keep records to document the fulfillment of the CEU requirements for each breed.

After a judge has been granted regular status on all of the breeds approved on the initial application, an application to judge an additional breed may be presented to the Department when the applicant has completed the number of CEU requirements for said breed as set forth in the Matrix, or as otherwise permitted in this Policy. The application shall be accompanied by the appropriate supporting documentation to demonstrate compliance with the CEU requirements for the applicant and the breed. Part 4 of the Matrix establishes a maximum number of breeds that an applicant may have on Permit status at any one time. Applications for breeds in excess of that maximum will not be accepted.

An applicant for an additional breed shall:

1. Pay a \$35 per breed application fee.
2. Pass the Breed Standard Test described in this Policy.
3. Be interviewed satisfactorily by an AKC Executive Field Representative as described in this Policy.
4. Pass a wicket or scales test administered by an Executive Field Representative if the breed applied for is a measurable breed, except that

an applicant who has passed a similar test in the past 5 years without having received a negative procedural observation report on the device during that time need not again be tested.

5. Complete at least all of the CEU required for the breed for the applicant's level, or as required by this Policy.

It is the intent of this policy is to provide a clear and transparent path for approval while recognizing the difference between equality of opportunity and identical treatment of applicants. Meeting the minimum education requirements to apply does not guarantee approval.

In order to provide mentoring and guidance when a judge submits an application for additional breeds the following process is followed:

The Department assembles and reviews the judge's Judge Breed Commentary (JBC) reports (described later in this Policy), all procedural reports, the interview report and any other materials it may have available. It is anticipated that if the applicant has completed the required CEU, passed the relevant tests and breed interview, and whose JBC and Procedural reports do not display concerns with current judging, the application will be viewed favorably.

If, however, upon such review the Department is of the opinion that the judge should continue his or her education in the breeds for which they are currently approved, rather than being approved for some or all of the additional breeds, the following shall occur:

The Department shall advise the judge of the additional breeds which are approved, its opinion that further education is needed in specific breeds and that the application for those breeds is not approved, and the exact reasons for the opinion providing all documentation upon which that opinion is based.

The judge may agree to withdraw the pending application for the unapproved breeds. The applicant will receive a credit for any fee payment made for breeds withdrawn. It shall be the Applicant's responsibility to document any credit that he or she might be entitled to upon presentation of a later application. The applicant may apply again for any breeds after such withdrawal at such time as the judge chooses.

If the applications for the breeds in question are not withdrawn, the denial of the application for that breed shall be subject to the automatic review described later in this Policy.

#### **FINAL APPROVAL**

Applicants will be published twice in the Secretary's Page of the AKC GAZETTE providing the Fancy an opportunity to be aware of and comment on the judge's application. The first publication will include the applicant's name and requested breeds and shall appear in the first available issue of the AKC GAZETTE following receipt of the application by the Department. Any such response from the Fancy shall be provided to the judge. Upon the review of any responses received the applicant will be advised of any questions or concerns that arise and provided the opportunity to respond.

Applications at every level will be acted on by the Department. Following the interview, the result of the interview with the Executive Field Representative and the complete application process including any comments received from the Fancy will be reviewed by the Department to determine the number of breeds to be approved on Permit status.

Judges will be informed by mail or email of the result of the Department's review. Applicants may not accept assignments until they have received official notification of their status from the Department. If it is the Department's decision that approval of any or all requested breeds should be denied, notification will include the

reasons for denial and if applicable, documentation which contributed to this decision.

The judge's file and AKC's Website will be updated and the judge's name, number and the breeds granted on permit basis will be published in the next available issue of the AKC GAZETTE.

The application fee paid by an applicant for any breed application that is denied shall be credited toward future application of that breed. It shall be the Applicant's responsibility to document any credit that he or she might be entitled to upon presentation of a later application.

The denial of any breed(s) shall be subject to Appeal as described later in this Policy.

#### **Component Educational Units (CEU)**

There are many opportunities for an applicant to obtain education in a breed. The most common are included in the Judge Education Component Requirements Chart. (The Matrix) The passage of time does not eradicate an educational experience. The date of completion of a Qualifying Component is immaterial, however the expectation is that the experience presented was completed for educational purposes. To be accepted as a Breed Mentor, one must be approved by the parent club, or have a minimum of 12 years' experience exhibiting that breed in conformation or approved as a judge of that breed for at least 12 years. With respect to Low Entry breeds and breeds recognized less than 12 years, the Department at its discretion may consider others than those who meet the above criteria.

#### **Qualifying Components:**

##### **1. Attend Parent Club National Specialty.**

Attending a breed's National Specialty is one of the most comprehensive opportunities for one to seek education in a breed. True value can only be obtained when one is actively engaged in the unique opportunities provided.

**A total of 6 CEUs** may be obtained via attendance of a breed's national and participation in the experiences offered.

- a. Attend parent club judges' education program with hands-on workshop held with national specialty – **3 CEU**
- b. Attend parent club judges' education program (only) held with national specialty – **2 CEU**
- c. Ringside observation with a Breed Mentor: **1 CEU** (Maximum 3 CEU with different mentors).
  - Up to three observations from one National may be accepted if completed on different sexes/classes and with a unique mentor. (e.g. dogs/bitches/intersex).
  - Credit will not be given for multiple observations of the same group of dogs.
- d. Tutoring session with qualified mentor at national – **1 CEU**.

##### **2. Attend Approved Seminar/Workshop.**

- Seminar and workshop (if applicable) must meet AKC criteria for credit.
- Seminar/workshop host is responsible for ensuring all requirements are met to ensure attendees receive proper credit.
- Comparison seminars will be accepted for those breeds approved by the Department.
- Must meet AKC criteria for credit. CEU value for each breed presented.
- Seminar Guidelines available on the AKC website or by contacting the Judging Operations Department.
- **Total of 5 CEU possible:**
  - a. Seminar with hands-on workshop in breed at Advanced Institute – **3 CEU**
  - b. Seminar (only) in breed at Advanced Institute – **2 CEU**
  - c. Any other Seminar and Hands-On Workshop in breed - **2 CEU**
  - d. Any other Seminar only in breed – **1 CEU**

- e. Webinar on breed utilizing parent club materials – **1 CEU (maximum)**
3. **AKC Canine College Breed Course** – Successful completion of breed specific course in AKC Canine College - **2 CEU.**
  4. **Mentors, Tutors and Kennel Visits.**  
Credit received for documented educational experience with parent club mentor or individual meeting AKC's criteria (12 years as approved Judge or 12 years exhibiting breed). (With respect to Low Entry Breeds the Department may accept Mentors and Tutors other than those qualified as above.) Multiple experiences with the same individual equates to Mentor. Same individual may not be used as a mentor and/or tutor and/or kennel visit.  
**Total of 5 CEU possible**
    - a. Long Term Mentor – on-going relationship with qualified individual over time preceding application of breed. – **2 CEUs**
    - b. Kennel visit– extended visit at the kennel with a qualified exhibitor/breeder in that breed, speaking in length on its characteristics, examining many dogs and possibly viewing litters. – **1 CEU**
    - c. Tutoring session - at length, in depth discussion on breed to include examination of multiple examples of breed to discuss breed specific characteristics with a qualified individual. – **1 CEU**
    - d. Additional mentor, tutor or kennel visit – **1 CEU each**
  5. **Ringside Observation with Breed Mentor at an AKC show with major present.**  
The emphasis is on the experience, so the totality of the entry may be considered by the Department if/when major is not present. A Breed Mentor may exhibit at the show but must be available for discussion during the major entry. The adjudicating Judge may not serve as a ring side mentor. Only one ringside mentoring may be submitted per breed at an event. Additional mentoring in a breed at the same cluster or weekend is acceptable when completed with different mentors. – **1 CEU, maximum of 5 CEU possible.**
  6. **Apprentice Training**  
In-ring observation with Mentor Judge. The emphasis is on the experience; thus, a major entry must be present. The Department may consider the totality of the entry if/when a major is not present. Apprentice Judge is expected to observe the entire entry, but may not be in the ring with any one Mentor Judge for more than two (2) hours. Prior to the first Apprentice Training session in a breed the Apprentice Judge must complete and pass the breed standard exam referenced in this Policy and pay the required application fee. Exam and fee credited toward future application of that breed. Current test will be required if the breed standard was amended after the passing of the test, but no further fee shall be required. It shall be the Applicant's responsibility to document any credit that he or she might be entitled to upon presentation of a later application.
    - The session must be scheduled prior to the opening of the show, and the consent of the Show Chairman and Mentor Judge must be obtained.
    - The Mentor Judge may discretely comment to the Apprentice Judge about his or her thought process as the classes are judged.
    - The Mentor and Apprentice Judge shall discuss the entry together, alone and in confidence, after judging and the Mentor must certify that the Apprentice was prepared and conversant in the breed's characteristics.
    - Judges who are requested to act as a Mentor Judge should only agree to act as such for breeds in which they have been approved to judge the breed for at least 12 years or an approved judge with 12 or more years' breeding and/or exhibiting experience in that breed.
    - Visiting Judges may act as a Mentor Judge when appropriate.
  7. **Sweepstakes or Futurity assignment with a Specialty show for the Breed.**  
Applies to breed specific sweepstakes or futurity hosted by breed club with a specialty. Sweepstakes/futurities held with supported entries or as part of group special attraction do not apply (see Judged the breed 3x category). - **Total 4 CEU possible**
    - Sweepstakes or futurity at National specialty - **2 CEU.**
    - Sweepstakes or futurity at any other specialty – **1 CEU.**
  8. **Assignment to Judge the Breed**  
As a replacement judge at an AKC Conformation dog show or at a foreign assignment held under the auspices of an AKC Recognized Registry. Entry must be present. For foreign assignments, the applicant is responsible for providing verification, translated to English if applicable. **1 CEU. Total 3 CEU possible.**
  9. **Judge the breed a total of 3 times**  
cumulatively; in the Group at an AKC show, in Best in Show, in the Miscellaneous Class, Sweepstakes/futurity held with a supported entry, at an AKC sanctioned Match, at a Department designated Special Attraction, NOHS, and domestic non-AKC assignments. **1 CEU for each 3 times judged up to a maximum of 3 total CEU.**
    - The Department shall publish a list of Special Attractions accepted under this section of this Policy.
  10. **Attend a Performance Event**  
On an application for a breed, attending a Performance Event where that event pertains
    - Additional Apprentice Trainings may be at the same weekend, cluster or circuit but must be under different Mentor Judges.
    - **Total 4 CEU possible**
      - a. 1st Apprentice Training - **2 CEU**
      - b. Additional Apprentice Training – **1 CEU**

to the purpose of that breed, and the breed is present and competing. – **1 CEU**

- Acceptable Performance Events include: Field Trials, Hunt Tests, Herding Trials, Earth Dog (Terriers and Dachshunds), and Lure Coursing.

11. **Breeding and Exhibiting Experience.**

An applicant who has bred or personally exhibited to their championships four or more dogs of the breed applied for shall be granted – **2 CEU**.

12. **Virtual Tutoring** – One-on-one tutoring session with a parent club approved mentor or recognized expert in the breed utilizing Skype, Zoom, Facetime or similar medium. Experience may include a review and discussion of parent club education materials and/or live dogs. Experience must be at least one-hour in length. – **1 CEU**.

- **For Low Entry Breeds ONLY** – an additional Virtual Tutoring with unique mentor may be accepted if the department determines that insufficient educational opportunities are available in the breed. **(Total 2 CEU)**

Other educational experiences that an applicant believes should be considered a Qualifying Component and earn CEUs should be detailed in writing and discussed with the Judging Operations staff for consideration.

### **BREED EXAMINATIONS**

Successful completion of an open book breed examination shall be required of each applicant for each breed for which Permit status is requested. An application fee of \$35 per breed shall be required of each application. In the event that Permit status for a breed is not granted, any fee paid shall be a credit for any future breed application.

Two or more missed questions is considered failing an exam. The judge will be advised to

retake the breed exam until it is successfully completed. The examination shall be completed online in AKC's Canine College as required with each application for each breed. The fee remitted for completion of the exam shall be credited toward future application of that breed. Link to AKC Canine College:  
<http://www.caninecollege.akc.org>.

### **THE EXECUTIVE FIELD REPRESENTATIVE**

The Executive Field Representatives represent AKC interests at conformation shows. AKC interests include, but are not limited to, judge approval, show committee assistance, and presentations that promote goodwill. Ultimately, exhibitors at conformation events are considered their priority. Their role is to serve as the liaison between the fancy and the AKC.

Executive Field Representatives are the first resource for judges to approach with questions regarding AKC rules, policies, procedure or potential conflicts at AKC events. Discussion of breed judging with an Executive Field Representative on breeds with which the Executive Field Representative is a Breed Mentor is encouraged. Executive Field Representatives will act as mentors and trainers for judges in order to help prepare judges for additional breed judging expertise and shall work with breed specialty clubs to assure education and training of judges in the fine points of a breed. The Executive Field Representative is there to coach, mentor and support all judges with the skills needed to further the sport of purebred dogs.

There are three key roles the Executive Field Representative plays in the Judging Approval Process:

1. New and Additional Breed Interview
2. Judge's Breed Commentary (JBC) Report
3. Procedural Observation

### **1) Executive Field Representative Breed Interview**

An Executive Field Representative will interview each applicant applying for any breed. The purpose of the interview is to ensure the judge has a clear understanding of the breed they are applying to judge and to discuss any potential issues or questions that the judge may have.

All interviews must be scheduled by an appointment booked through the Judging Operations Department. Every effort will be made to conduct the interview at a show local to where the applicant resides or at one at which the applicant will otherwise be available. Alternatively, applicants are welcome to have their interview conducted in the North Carolina office by prior appointment.

**The interview will consist of a breed specific discussion for each breed applied. Applicants should be prepared to discuss the hallmark characteristics of the breed as well as discuss applicable standard disqualifications. As the focus of the interview is a discussion on the breed, regurgitation of the standard is not expected or encouraged.**

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.

Individuals applying for measurable breeds (height and/or weight as a disqualification or condition of class) will be required to pass the applicable wicket and/or scales exam. Additional breed applicants tested on the same apparatus in the five years preceding the submission of the application will be exempt from this requirement excluding those who have received a negative observation report on measuring procedure or failed the applicable wicket and/or scales test during the five-year period.

Interviews for first time applicants should be



approximately 30 minutes in length. Additional breed applicants should expect interviews to be approximately 5 - 10 minutes per breed. The applicant is permitted to use pictures (without notes) and may consult the breed standard during the interview to clarify points or verbiage, but is expected to be prepared to discuss without relying on the standard to read from directly.

Upon request the applicant may schedule the initial interview with a different Executive Field Representative.

## 2) Judge's Breed Commentary

A Judge's Breed Commentary (JBC) is a joint effort of a judge and an Executive Field Representative. The JBC provides a dialogue opportunity for the judge and the Executive Field Representative. It is a mentoring opportunity for new and beginning judges and is intended to assist them in evolving their skills as a judge both in adjudicating their entry as well as their procedural skills.

The ultimate purpose of the JBC is to guide and document a conversation between the judge and the Executive Field Representative at the conclusion of a breed judging assignment. The intent is for an Executive Field Representative to observe the judging of a breed and to facilitate a discussion along a prescribed format where the judge describes and documents the choices made during the judging as well as discusses any procedural or other issues that may have occurred. It is not the Executive Field Representative's role to express opinions about the placements made. Rather, the Executive Field Representative should help the judge describe the dogs judged, the factors which contributed to the particular awards and placements made, the estimated quality of the entry and the overall impressions of the entry all in breed specific language.

The JBC process will be as follows:

1. Judges will check in with the Executive Field

Representative in the morning of the judging assignment. Judges assigned permit breeds should expect to complete JBC reports. In addition, JBC reports for a breed may be requested by the AKC when concerns have been expressed regarding one's judging of that breed. The Executive Field Representative will advise the Judge of the breed(s) which will be observed and a JBC form for each breed to be observed will be provided to the Judge. Following judging the Judge will fill in the Commentary section of the JBC form by describing the entry as a whole and noting any strengths and weaknesses observed in the exhibits. The judge should describe in breed specific language; the dogs awarded (or of which special note was made), the factors which contributed to the particular awards and placements made, the estimated quality of the entry, and the overall impressions of the entry.

2. On a separate form, the Executive Field Representative will also fill in the Commentary section of the JBC form by describing the entry as a whole and noting any strengths and weaknesses observed in the exhibits. The Executive Field Representative should describe the dogs observed, the estimated quality of the entry and the overall impressions of the entry, all in breed specific language. Just as with the Judge, the Executive Field Representative will provide their critique of the entry using breed specific language as appropriate.
3. Once both have completed the appropriate JBC form sections, the discussion shall center on the salient/hallmark characteristics of the breed and the level of the entry that day. Notes regarding the discussion, based upon the Judge's and Executive Field Representative's observations and post-assignment discussion, will be added to the second section of the Executive Field Representative's JBC form using breed

specific format as above. There will be no grade assigned to the report nor is this a "pass/fail" discussion. It is intended to help the new judge to consider the entry and have the opportunity to exchange ideas. While there is no definitive right or wrong due to the subjective nature of judging through one's interpretation, concerns regarding the recognition of breed specific characteristics and/or the recommendation to pursue further education will be noted by the Field Representative.

4. JBC reports will primarily be completed on Permit breeds but may be completed in any breed for a judge not fully approved to judge a complete group, and/or currently approved breeds where prior reports or concerns from the fancy warrant. The entry of the breed for which a JBC will be completed should be sufficient to allow a meaningful comparative discussion of the merits of the dogs in competition. When such an entry exists and an Executive Field Representative is available all efforts should be made to complete a JBC. Although no minimum requirements for the completion of JBC's for a judge are imposed, the more often a newer judge has an opportunity to engage in a JBC with an Executive Field Representative, the more value the JBC will have as an educational tool. The classes in which the dogs in competition are entered are immaterial.
5. The JBC completion shall be at the discretion of the Executive Field Representative, but a judge may request an Executive Field Representative to conduct a JBC completion. A judge may make notes during the breed judging and it should be recognized by all that a bit more time for judging the breed is appropriate.
6. The Executive Field Representative and Judge will sign and date the reports. The



Executive Field Representative will scan the reports and provide the Judge a copy. The Executive Field Representative will file the completed JBC with the Department.

7. If a Judge believes an Executive Field Representative has gone beyond the intent of this policy during the Judge's Breed Commentary, that belief may be reported to the Executive Secretary of the American Kennel Club. Any such report must contain the specific instance(s) where a policy violation is alleged to have occurred and how it had an adverse impact on the JBC for the Judge. Upon receipt of such a complaint the Executive Secretary shall compile a response to the complaint from AKC staff and submit the complaint, the response and all other relevant facts to the Board Appeals Committee for review and disposition. The Board Appeals Committee may take any action it deems appropriate with respect to the JBC at issue.

### 3) Executive Field Representative Procedural Observations

Adherence of a judge to basic requirements in the ring is essential. AKC Executive Field Representatives will observe a judge in accordance with this Policy to educate as necessary and assure that the judge is adhering to such requirements.

A Procedural Observation Report filed by the Executive Field Representative and provided to the judge shall document the observation. Judges approved for less than a complete group can expect to be observed while all judges will be subject to periodic procedural observation. The current Policies with respect to *Fitness to Judge* and *Judges Unable to Perform* are continued.

Procedural observations shall focus on the basic criteria below:

- 1) Professional and courteous conduct to all

participants

- 2) Compliance with the Rules Applying to Dog Shows
- 3) Proper, efficient and safe ring procedure
- 4) Timeliness of Judging
- 5) The physical and mental ability to adequately perform the duties of judging

Judges found to be deficient in such Procedural Observation Reports shall be given the opportunity to be mentored and trained in correcting such deficiencies. In the event that the Department believes that such deficiencies continue it may advise the judge of such belief and that the judge will be required to attend an AKC approved training session (AKC Basic Institute or similar course) within six months following the notice. Judges aggrieved of this decision by the Department may appeal to the Board Appeal Committee. Requests for Appeal must be filed within 15 days of the letter of notification by contacting Judging Operations and submitting a \$50 Appeal fee.

Should a judge who is approved for a breed or breeds which may be weighed or measured receive a procedural report identifying a deficiency in the weighing or measuring of an entry during judging, the judge shall be required to be interviewed by a different Executive Field Representative and demonstrate proficiency in the use of scales or a wicket, as applicable. Failure to demonstrate proficiency in the use of the scales or wicket may affect approval of affected breeds.

### CONTINUING EDUCATION

Approved judges have an obligation through experience and ongoing study to demonstrate sound knowledge of current procedures and policies related to judging at AKC Conformation events.

As the sound judging procedure, ring control,

and a thorough knowledge of AKC Rules and Policies is essential to inspire the confidence of the fancy, all approved Conformation judges are required to successfully complete a re-certification course on current judging procedures and policies every five years.

The re-certification course shall be completed online in AKC's Canine College. Fee for recertification course \$50. Judges who fail to successfully complete will be marked inactive and ineligible to accept assignments until such time this requirement is met.

### REMOVAL OF BREED APPROVAL

Multiple JBC reports from AKC Executive Field Representatives indicating concerns regarding the recognition of breed specific characteristics and/or the recommendation to pursue further education in any breed, places the judge on probation for the affected breed.

- Any additional JBC reports from AKC Executive Field Representatives displaying concerns will result in review by the Department and potential recommendation to the Board of Directors for the removal of the applicable breed.
- Three consecutive JBC reports that do not display concerns or recommend further study in that breed from two or more AKC Executive Field Representatives will remove judge's name from probationary status.
- Judges receiving negative reports on weighing or measuring will be required to pass the applicable scale and/or wicket test.
- Failure to pass this test in two attempts will result in the removal of all applicable breeds until such time the judge sufficiently demonstrates proper procedure associated with weighing and/or measuring.
- Judges on probation may not apply for additional breeds.
- Removal of breed for a Group judge – judge may continue to judge the Group on pending

panels only; any additional assignments will not be approved for any removed breed and affected Group until such time as the breed has been re-instated.

- Removal of breed for a Best in Show judge – if removal of breed results in judge no longer being approved for regular status for one complete group, the judge may continue to judge Best in Show on pending panels only. Any additional assignments will not be approved for any removed breed and affected Best in Show until such time as the breed has been re-instated.
- Request to Appeal may be requested within 30 days by contacting Judging Operations and submitting a non-refundable \$50 Appeal fee.

Judges may apply for reinstatement of affected breed(s) after six months and a realistic effort to re-educate themselves.

Should the Department determine that a judge's approval to judge a particular breed should be removed for cause other than as described, after notice to the judge and an attempt to re-educate the judge, the Department may petition the Board of Directors to remove such approval. Such a Petition shall be presented to the Board at its first available meeting. The Board of Directors may set any terms it deems appropriate for the reinstatement of the judge's approval to judge any such breed for which approval has been removed.

### **BEST IN SHOW**

Best In Show approval:

- Must have current approval for one full Group on regular status.
- Must have judged the group at least 5 times on regular status.
- A non-refundable \$35 fee required.
- Recent observation reports will be reviewed in consideration of approval.

### **MISCELLANEOUS CLASS JUDGING APPROVAL**

Any judge eligible to judge a Group on regular status may also be approved to judge the Miscellaneous Class.

### **NEWLY RECOGNIZED BREEDS**

Once a new breed enters a Group, all judges eligible to judge the Group are automatically granted the breed after passing the appropriate breed standard test and submitting a \$35 per breed fee.

Failure to pass the breed standard test and/or submit the \$35 fee will result in the removal of Group approval status. An Affected judge may continue to judge the Group on pending panels only and additional assignments will not be approved for any affected Group until such time as the breed has been approved. Judges who fail to meet these requirements prior to the full-recognition date may apply for approval of affected breed(s) under the traditional process for additional breeds.

### **REINSTATEMENT/REACTIVATION**

All judges who voluntarily request resignation must submit a letter to Judging Operations.

- Judges who become AKC employees (and members of their immediate household) will be placed on inactive status and need not submit a letter to Judging Operations; additionally, judges who have not been heard from for five years or more and cannot be located are also placed on inactive status.
- Judging Operations Department will publish the names on the Secretary's Page in the next available Gazette.
- Judges requesting reinstatement of their judging privileges must do so in writing and successfully meet the current criteria. AKC Staff will review and validate the request and the Board will be notified at its next meeting. The judge's name and approved

breeds/groups will be published as Reinstated on the Secretary's Page of the next available Gazette.

- Current employees (and members of their immediate household) who have letters on file "resigning" their judging privileges are considered to be on inactive.
- A \$35 fee is required for reinstatement.

### **Criteria:**

- Judges who have been on resigned/inactive status for **less than one** year would receive automatic reinstatement/reactivation.
- Judges who have been on resigned/inactive status for **more than one** year may not need to reapply under the current system if they can document continuous in-depth activity in the sport (see Note).
- Judges who have been on resigned/inactive status **for more than one** year must reapply under the current system if they cannot document continuous activity in the sport (see Note).
- Eligibility and the reason for reinstatement/reactivation must be reviewed and validated by Staff.
- All individuals resigned/inactive for more than one year must be interviewed on current Rules, Regulations, Policies, Guidelines and Breed Standards; pass a Procedural Examination, Anatomy Test, and meet current requirements.
- Only previously approved breeds/groups may be reinstated/reactivated. In the case of a Group(s) with a newly recognized breed(s), breed standard test(s) must be passed and a non-refundable \$35 fee required for each newly recognized breed.
- Requests received from resigned/inactive judges meeting all eligibility requirements would receive automatic reinstatement/reactivation from AKC staff for all previously approved breeds/groups.

Note: Continuous in-depth activity may include but not be limited to: judges who resigned to exhibit dogs on breed/group level; employment with AKC; licensed superintendent; dog food salesperson or solicitor; publisher of a dog publication; other occupation or involvement at Conformation events on a weekly or monthly basis.

#### **PARENT CLUB'S RECOMMENDATION FOR AKC APPROVAL ON A MEMBER OF THEIR CLUB TO JUDGE THEIR BREED**

- Parent Clubs are invited to submit recommendations, not to exceed three members each year.
- Submit certified copy of meeting minutes at which action was taken by the Parent Club Board.

#### **Requirements from Applicant/Judge**

- All Recommendations by Parent Clubs must include 20 years in the breed by applicant with breeding/exhibiting success.
- Must include 10 years membership in Parent Club.
- Must be occupationally eligible.
- Must be 21 years of age.
- Procedural and anatomy test required and if applicable, scale and wicket test required.
- If for the first breed, pass procedural interview with AKC Executive Field Representative.
- Must pass breed standard test
- A \$35 per breed fee is required.

#### **PARENT CLUB'S MAY REQUEST APPROVAL OF AN ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUAL TO JUDGE A BREED SPECIALTY SHOW**

#### **Requirements for Applicant/Judge**

- Any eligible individuals including, but not limited to, professional handlers may be approved on a case-by-case, event-by-event request from the Parent Club for approval to

judge a specialty in its breed.

- Must be 21 years of age.
- Must be occupationally eligible, except that professional handlers may be approved under this policy.
- Should be knowledgeable, with success in breeding/exhibiting/handling in the breed for 15 years or more.
- Procedure and anatomy test required and if applicable, scale or wicket test required.
- A \$35 per breed fee is required for non-approved judges.
- Individuals may not be approved for more than one specialty per calendar year and no more than five specialties cumulatively.

#### **VISITING JUDGE POLICY**

- Visiting judges who do not trade or traffic in dogs may be eligible to judge at AKC events, any breed(s) for which they are approved by an AKC recognized registry as listed in AKC's Special Registry Services.
- Visiting Judges invited to judge AKC events must abide by all Bylaws, Rules, Policies and Guidelines governing the sport of purebred dogs put forth by The American Kennel Club including the requirement to judge in accordance to AKC approved breed standards.
- Judges from countries in which the AKC recognized registry registers breeds recognized by the American Kennel Club may judge all breeds and groups for which they are approved by their home kennel club to award championship points (including CC's or CAC's).
- Visiting judges who are invited to judge (breeds and) groups, which contain breeds not registered in their country of origin, may apply for, take the test for and pay a \$35 fee for each breed. Upon successful completion of this process, such judges will be approved by

the American Kennel Club to judge those breeds in the future. Visiting judges who decline to apply under this process may continue to be approved for such groups as they were previously approvable under the terms, conditions, agreements and understanding under previous policy, provided that they judge breeds constituting at least 80% of the annual entries in that group at the time they are first approved for that group, based on the previous year's count of entries.

- Visiting group judges where the AKC group contains breeds registered in their country, but which are not within their corresponding group and for which they are not approved to judge, may be approved for such group(s), provided that they judge breeds constituting at least 80% of the annual entries in that group at the time they are first approved for that group, based on the previous year's count of entries.
- Visiting judges from an AKC recognized registry may be approved to judge up to eight days of All-Breed and/or Limited-Breed assignments in one calendar year. A multi-day event will count as one day. Assignment to judge the AKC National Championship is exempted from this limit.
- Individual breed judges may be approved to judge that breed at an unlimited number of AKC specialty shows and up to eight days of AKC All-Breed shows if they are approved to judge that breed in their own country and by an AKC recognized registry regardless of their residency.
- AKC Club where a Visiting Judge is approved to judge its event, must provide an interpreter if the Visiting Judge does not speak and read English AND is unable to provide an interpreter themselves.
- Visiting Judges are subject to observation by AKC Executive Field Staff. Negative Observation Reports may result in denial of continued approval to judge AKC events, or

the necessity to pass a procedural and/or breed examination(s).

- Visiting Judges are not eligible for approval to judge Jr. Showmanship Classes at AKC events.
- A visiting judge who has established residence in the U.S. will only be approved as a visiting judge for two years, after which they will be required to apply under the AKC system.
- Visiting judges must document residency if U.S. mailing address is submitted.

We invite visiting judges into our system. Visiting judges who wish to judge more than eight All-Breed shows per year may apply under AKC's visiting judges' approval process as follows:

- Individuals must have judged at AKC shows for over eight years and have been an approved judge for ten years in their own country.
- Visiting judges who have judged the breeds requested on the initial application at least eight times in the U.S. over the past three years will not be required to meet the match show judging and stewarding requirements or to judge Permit assignments.

The following information is applicable to the visiting judge's initial AKC judging application:

- Applicant may apply for up to fourteen breeds based on the required background and experience.
- Applicant must complete the judging application for submission to AKC Judging Operations Department and be published in the AKC Gazette.
- Applicant must successfully complete all Anatomy and Procedural "open-book" exams.
- Applicant must speak and read English OR arrange for an interpreter when judging at AKC events.

- Educational background and preparation in country of residence will be considered for the breeds requested.
- Three assignments in the U.S. must be completed before being eligible to submit a second application, which will be processed under the current AKC system.
- Judges applying under this process must conform to AKC's occupational eligibility and Conflict of Interest rules and guidelines.
- Visiting judges choosing AKC approval will no longer be approved to judge AKC events using their previous visiting judging qualifications.

#### **VISITING JUDGE EXEMPT LIST**

Visiting judges on the Exempt list will be approved to judge unlimited assignments in the United States. The Board of Directors shall approve the addition of all persons to the Exempt list.

#### **APPEAL PROCESS**

Applicants aggrieved of a decision of the Department may appeal by writing to the Judging Operations Department. Requests for Appeal must be filed in writing to the Judging Operations Department within 15 days of the letter of notification and the submission of a \$50 Appeal fee. To be accepted the request must include the applicant's reasons for the disagreement and justification as to why the denied breed(s) should be approved including additional experiences or preparation that preceded the submission of the application.

The Department shall review the position of the applicant and shall respond appropriately, in writing, within 15 days of receipt. If the Department concurs with the applicant, the previously denied breed(s) will be granted. If the Department determines no change should be made on any or all the previously denied breeds, their appeal will be forwarded to the next

available meeting of the Board Appeals Committee (BAC). The Department shall notify the applicant the Appeal has been forwarded to the BAC and provided a minimum of two weeks advanced notice of the date and location of the hearing.

The Appeals process offers three options: (1) the applicant may appear in person, with or without counsel, (2) the applicant may attend via a conference call, or (3) the BAC, without additional input from the applicant, may review all material submitted in connection with the application. Notice must be provided to the AKC in advance if counsel will be present.

If appearing, applicants are granted 30 minutes to present their case. If your attorney will appear with you, he or she may advise you but may not otherwise speak or address the committee. No new supporting information may be supplied. The BAC, serving as arbiter, has two options: (1) concur with the Department's action, which concludes the process, or (2) recommend full or partial approval of previously denied breeds, which requires approval of the Board.

No appeal of any issue shall delay or reverse any approval to judge any breeds not involved in the appeal.

#### **FORMS**

The Department shall prepare appropriate forms for use by Applicants in making application under this Policy, to evidence each Qualifying Component CEU, Executive Field Staff Procedural Observations, the JBC and to effectuate any appeal. Forms may be digital and all submissions may be made in digital media.

Should the Department believe that an interpretation of this Policy is required it shall present a request for such interpretation to the Board of Directors

## AKC CODE OF SPORTSMANSHIP

*PREFACE: The sport of purebred dog competitive events dates prior to 1884, the year of AKC's birth. Shared values of those involved in the sport include principles of sportsmanship. They are practiced in all sectors of our sport: conformation, performance and companion. Many believe that these principles of sportsmanship are the prime reason why our sport has thrived for over one hundred years. With the belief that it is useful to periodically articulate the fundamentals of our sport, this code is presented.*

- Sportsmen respect the history, traditions and integrity of the sport of purebred dogs.
- Sportsmen commit themselves to values of fair play, honesty, courtesy, and vigorous competition, as well as winning and losing with grace.
- Sportsmen refuse to compromise their commitment and obligation to the sport of purebred dogs by injecting personal advantage or consideration into their decisions or behavior.
- The sportsman judge judges only on the merits of the dogs and considers no other factors.
- The sportsman judge or exhibitor accepts constructive criticism.
- The sportsman exhibitor declines to enter or exhibit under a judge where it might reasonably appear that the judge's placements could be based on something other than the merits of the dogs.
- The sportsman exhibitor refuses to compromise the impartiality of a judge.
- The sportsman respects the AKC bylaws, rules, regulations and policies governing the sport of purebred dogs.
- Sportsmen find that vigorous competition and civility are not inconsistent and are able to appreciate the merit of their competition and the effort of competitors.
- Sportsmen welcome, encourage and support newcomers to the sport.
- Sportsmen will deal fairly with all those who trade with them.
- Sportsmen are willing to share honest and open appraisals of both the strengths and weaknesses of their breeding stock.
- Sportsmen spurn any opportunity to take personal advantage of positions offered or bestowed upon them.
- Sportsmen always consider as paramount the welfare of their dog.
- Sportsmen refuse to embarrass the sport, the American Kennel Club, or themselves while taking part in the sport.