

THE ROYAL KENNEL CLUB JUDGING QUALIFICATION SYSTEMS EXPLAINED

From 1 January 2021 until 31 December 2025 there are 2 ways of qualifying in order to award Challenge Certificates in any breed: the OLD system or the NEW system via the JEP (Judges' Education Program). The 2 systems will run in tandem for the transition period but from 1 January 2026 only the JEP route will apply and regardless of which system applies, unless you are already a CC judge of any breed you may not judge until you fulfil the JEP Level 1 requirements. From 1st January 2026 breed clubs will not be required to maintain judges' lists as these will then be maintained by the Royal Kennel Club while C lists will cease.

JUDGES EDUCATION PROGRAM (JEP) - NEW SYSTEM COMPETANCY FRAMEWORK LEVELS & ELIGIBILITY

LEVEL 1

Requirements to meet this level:

- Minimum of 5 years proven interest in pedigree dogs
- Attend a Requirements of a Dog Show Judge Seminar (but not mandatory to take and pass examination at this stage)
- Attend a Conformation and Movement Seminar
- Complete a minimum of 2 full-day stewarding appointments

Eligibility to judge

- Up to 3 classes (4 if one is a Puppy class) for any breed at limited or open shows.

LEVEL 2

Requirements to meet this level:

First breed:

- Take and pass Requirements of a Dog Show Judge examination
- Pass Points of a Dog assessment
- Attend a Breed Appreciation Day (BAD) and pass a Multiple Choice Examination (MCE) for the respective breed
- View Ring Stewarding Seminar and take online quiz
- Complete Critique Writing Seminar and take online quiz

Subsequent breeds

- Attend a Breed Appreciation Day (BAD) and pass a Multiple Choice Examination (MCE) for each breed. (Note: Not mandatory for Group Judges for breeds in the group that they are not approved at level 4, but attendance strongly recommended)

Eligibility to judge

- Unlimited number of classes for the respective breed at Limited, Open or Championship Shows without CCs
- Any Variety classes, Groups and Best in Show at Limited shows

LEVEL 3

Requirements to meet this level:

- Undergo minimum of 3 mentoring sessions with a minimum of 12 months between first and third session
- Be observed judging a Breed Club Show, Breed Supported Entry Show or Championship Show without CCs once mentoring sessions have been undertaken
- Have achieved the relevant hands-on experience in line with the stated requirements for the relevant breed; Basset Hounds are in Royal Kennel Club Band B and the number of dogs required to have judged is 70 via the “old” system or 35 via the JEP
- Complete remaining 10 full-day stewarding appointments (onetime qualification)
- Have owned/bred a minimum of three dogs when they obtained their first entry in The Royal Kennel Club Stud Book – save for exceptional circumstances (one-time qualification)
- Attended the appropriate sub-group Field Trial/Open Gundog Working Test for first gundog breed or Ring Procedure at Licensed Shows (German Shepherd Dog Education Programme) online exam (one-time qualification)

LEVEL 4

Requirements to meet this level:

- Attend and passed a Breed-Specific Assessment run by The Royal Kennel Club

Eligibility to judge

- Award Challenge Certificates in the respective breed
- Any Variety classes, Groups and Best in Show at Open and Limited shows