

Agility Association of Canada Inc.

Judge's Training and Qualification

Section: Judges

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This Policy and Procedures document outlines the process by which an individual may become an AAC judge. The general duties and responsibilities of AAC Judges are outlined in the Judge's Policy and Procedures Document

A judge licensed by another agility association shall be fully subject to the policy and procedures outlined here, unless deemed exempt by the AAC Board of Directors.

The AAC Board of Directors reserves the right to allow exceptions to the terms and conditions outlined below.

The AAC Board of Directors reserves the right to reject a candidate's application to attend a judge's clinic if it has reason to believe that the candidate would not be an asset to the AAC judge's pool. In such a case, the reasons for refusal of entry shall be disclosed to the unsuccessful applicant.

Judge candidates are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the duties of an AAC judge before applying to attend a clinic. Finding a mentor judge (may be the judge providing the personal reference) who can answer their questions and provide practical advice, or attending a judge's clinic as an auditor are both excellent options.

I- General Eligibility Requirements:

In order to apply for *any level* of AAC-sanctioned judge's training, the applicant must:

- Be eighteen years of age or older on the first day of the judge's clinic being applied for.
- Be a Regular AAC member in good standing for at least 3 consecutive years on the first day of the judge's clinic being applied for.
- Have been involved in the sport of agility *as a competitor* for at least 3 years.
- Have trialed at least one dog to an ATChC (or equivalent), OR put multiple Masters (or equivalent) titles on one or more dogs.
- Be physically capable of performing the duties of judging. Such duties include, but are not necessarily limited to: moving through the ring during building and wheeling, standing for long periods of time, moving into position to judge each dog as it is running without interference or undue distraction to the team on course, being able to clearly see the dog and handler as they move around the course, signalling faults or points so as to be clearly visible to the scribe.
- Have access to Clean Run Course Designer, v. 3 or higher.
- Provide a personal reference from a current Masters level judge, not of the same household as the applicant, attesting to the suitability of the applicant to train as an AAC judge (a separate letter from a different judge is required for each judge's clinic level being applied for).

The following will be considered assets to a candidate's application to attend a judge's clinic, and may be used to prioritise entries:

- Judging experience in other agility organisations, or in related sports (e.g. dog obedience, rally obedience, equestrian events).

- Demonstrating a commitment to the betterment of the sport, by regularly volunteering at trials, in any capacity.
- Knowledge of the sport of agility and its goals, by being a trial host, an agility instructor, or an assistant instructor.
- Currently running a dog at the Advanced level or equivalent (Master's level or equivalent for Master's candidates), or higher.
- STRONG preference will be given to applicants who can document that they have already secured sponsorship from a trial host, who has agreed to provide the required number of classes and dogs (including offering no charge FEO runs, if needed) to fulfill the provisional judging requirements WITHIN ONE YEAR of the date of the judge's clinic. **PLEASE NOTE** that this is an exception to the general AAC prohibition against soliciting assignments. Judge candidates at every level are actively encouraged to seek out sponsorship, and may negotiate (e.g. offer to forgo expenses during a provisional judging assignment) with potential host clubs to secure their provisional assignments.

II- Eligibility to Attend a Starters/Advanced Level Judge's Clinic:

In addition to the general eligibility criteria outlined above, attendance at a Starters/Advanced level Judge's Clinic requires that the candidate must also:

Demonstrate a familiarity with current AAC rules and judging guidelines by scoring 85% or higher on the pre-clinic entrance examination. This is an open book exam. The grade achieved on this exam may be used to prioritize entries – refer to section: "Prioritizing Applications" in the Hosting a Judges Clinic, Clinic Guidelines.

- Design and submit FOUR satisfactory sample courses (must conform to current AAC course design guidelines, as found in the most current version of the AAC Rules and Regulations, and the Judge's Handbook), using CRCD software. These include:
 - ✓ Two Starters Standard courses.
 - ✓ Two Advanced Standard courses.

*At the discretion of the Clinic Facilitators, other courses may be added and/or substituted.

Starters-only judges who wish to upgrade to Advanced judging should refer to Section IX-Upgrading.

III- Eligibility to Attend a Masters Level Judge's Clinic:

In addition to the general eligibility criteria outlined above, attendance at a Masters level Judge's Clinic requires that the candidate must:

- Have completed an approved AAC Starter/Advanced level Judge's Clinic, and received satisfactory scores in all sections of the examination.
- Have successfully completed the provisional judging requirements for Starters/Advanced judges, and be released from supervision.
- Hold a valid Advanced judging permit, with no current suspensions, and no disciplinary actions related to judging on their record.
- Have been judging at the Advanced level for a minimum of 12 months, starting from the time of the candidate's Practical Examination.
- Have judged at least FIVE different assignments, for at least TWO different clubs. These assignments must have been completed with no substantiated complaints from the trial host, and must include the following courses (at least 10 dogs/class required):
 - ✓ Ten ADVANCED Standard courses.
 - ✓ Four ADVANCED Gamblers courses.
 - ✓ Four ADVANCED Snooker courses
 - ✓ Ten additional courses, at least six of which must be at the ADVANCED level.

- Demonstrate a familiarity with current AAC rules and judging guidelines by scoring 90% or higher on the pre-clinic entrance examination. This is an open book exam. *The grade achieved on this exam may be used to prioritise entries.*
- Design and submit FOUR satisfactory sample courses (must conform to current AAC course design guidelines, as found in the most current version of the AAC Rules and Regulations, and the Judge's Handbook) using CRCD software. These include:
 - ✓ One MASTERS Standard course.
 - ✓ One MASTERS Gamblers course.
 - ✓ One MASTERS Steeplechase *or* one MASTERS Jumpers course.
 - ✓ One MASTERS Snooker course.

*At the discretion of the Clinic Facilitators, other courses may be added and/or substituted.

Applicants who have not yet met all of the judging pre-requisites may request permission from the AAC Board of Directors to attend a Masters level judging clinic, but they MUST complete ALL the Advanced judging requirements before they can schedule their Masters Practical Examination and begin provisional Masters Judging; i.e. candidates are not permitted to complete their Advanced judging pre-requisites AND to judge Masters events during the same trial weekends.

Acceptance into a Masters judging clinic under such circumstances is at the sole discretion of the AAC Board of Directors, and will be dependent on the availability of judge's clinics in the area, and on the number and the quality of the other applicants (fully qualified Advanced judges will be given priority).

IV- Auditing a Judge's Clinic.

Interested parties may apply to attend a Judge's Clinic as an auditor. Acceptance of auditors is at the discretion of the clinic host. If it becomes necessary to prioritise applicants for auditor spots, current AAC judges shall be given first priority, followed by the clinic host(s) and members of the AAC Board of Directors. AAC members shall be given priority over non-members.

Auditors are not subject to the eligibility requirements outlined above.

V- The Judge's Clinic and Examination:

AAC judge's clinics will follow the same general format for all levels. The clinic content and testing parameters will be adjusted for each level, and shall reflect the most current AAC rules and course design guidelines. Please note that judge candidates are expected to come to the clinic with a good understanding of both the AAC Rulebook and the Judge's Handbook.

The clinic is divided into two parts:

1. The Seminar. The seminar portion of the clinic will present material in both lecture and practical formats, and will include practice judging at a fun match organised for the clinic. Clinic Facilitators will be evaluating judge candidates during this time, as well as during the examination itself. This section may be used for continuing education by existing judges, and is open to auditors, as per Section IV.
2. The Examination. This will consist of four parts:
 - i) Written examination
 - ii) Oral Examination
 - iii) Course Design Evaluation
 - iv) Practical Judging Examination

Auditors are not eligible to participate in any part of the examination process.

The **Written** and **Oral** parts of the examination will take place at the judge's clinic, after the completion of the seminar portion of the clinic.

The **Course Design** section requires the candidate to submit courses for a full trial within 30 days of the completion of the clinic. The Clinic Facilitator will provide the list of required courses and the equipment and ring parameters to each candidate at the close of the judge's clinic.

For Starters/Advanced candidates, the required courses will generally include the following, and should show an understanding of course nesting.

- Two STANDARD courses, one Starters and one Advanced.
- Two GAMBLERS courses, one Starters and one Advanced.
- Two SNOOKER courses, one Starters and one Advanced.
- Two JUMPERS courses, one Starters and one Advanced.

For Masters candidates, the required courses will generally include the following, and should show an understanding of course nesting.

- One STANDARD course, Masters only.
- One GAMBLERS course, Masters only.
- One SNOOKER course, Masters only.
- One JUMPERS course, Masters only.
- One STEEPLECHASE course.
- One TEAM RELAY course.
- One CHALLENGE course.

The **Practical Judging Examination** will take place during the candidate's first official judging assignment, and will be proctored by an Examining Judge.

Judge candidates are also required to complete and submit any post-clinic questionnaires in a timely fashion.

Required Grades:

The Starters/Advanced candidate must receive a score of 85% or higher in each section, as well as an overall average of 90% or higher, to pass.

If a Starters/Advanced candidate achieves a passing grade in each section, but fails to achieve an overall average of 90%, the candidate may be granted permission to judge at Starters level ONLY.

Masters candidates must score 90% or higher in every section to pass.

Failing One or More Sections of the Examination:

If a candidate fails a section of the examination, he/she must retake it. Candidates may retake either the written, oral, or course design sections of the examination. A fee of \$50 shall be charged to retake any part of the examination. Any necessary re-examination may be proctored by a member of the Board of Directors, or a Masters level judge approved by the Clinic Facilitator.

Re-examinations must be scheduled between 3 and 6 months after the date of the judge's clinic the candidate attended. If more than 6 months passes, and the candidate cannot supply an adequate reason (e.g. ill health), the candidate must attend another judge's clinic.

If a candidate fails two or more sections of the examination, the candidate will be required to attend another judge's clinic.

VI- The Practical Examination:

The candidate must successfully pass the written, oral, and course design sections of the examination before they are allowed to schedule their Practical Examination. In some cases, the Clinic Facilitator may feel that, despite adequate scores in the other sections of the examination, a candidate is not yet ready to proceed to the Practical Examination. The candidate will be informed of this directly, and given recommendations for remedial study. This may include gaining more practical judging experience at fun matches.

Once a candidate is deemed ready to attempt the Practical Examination, it may be scheduled. It is the candidate's responsibility to ensure that satisfactory arrangements between themselves, the host club, and the Examining Judge have been made *well in advance of the trial date*. A list of Examining Judges can be found on the AAC website, www.aac.ca, under the "Judges" tab.

The minimum number of courses required for a complete Practical Examination is as follows. The minimum number of dogs/class shall normally be 10.

1. Starters Only:
 - TWO Starters Standard
 - ONE Starters Gamblers
 - ONE Starters Jumper
 - ONE Starters Snooker
2. Starters/Advanced:
 - FOUR Standard, two each Starters and Advanced
 - TWO Advanced Gamblers, OR one Starters and one Advanced
 - TWO Advanced Snooker, OR one Starter and one Advanced
 - ONE Jumper, either Starters OR Advanced.
3. Masters:
 - THREE Masters Standard
 - ONE Masters Gamble
 - ONE Masters Snooker
 - ONE Steeplechase, OR ONE Masters Jumper
 - ONE Team Relay OR one Masters Challenge

Every attempt should be made to provide the required number of courses and dogs/course, so as to be able to complete the Practical Examination requirements at one trial. If the classes at the trial are small, or if the Examining Judge deems that there were not enough judging challenges to adequately evaluate the candidate's abilities, additional Practical Examinations or structured Supervisions may be required. Conversely, if the class sizes were slightly below the recommended number, but the Examining Judge was satisfied that the candidate was sufficiently challenged by the dogs that ran, they may accept that class as adequate.

Please Note: Candidates who are unable to complete their required Practical Examination courses within one year of the last day of the judge's clinic they attended may be required to attend an additional Judge's Clinic (seminar portion only) prior to any future judging assignments.

An Examining Judge may supervise only one Practical Examination per trial day, as the Examining Judge must be able observe the candidate's *entire* judging assignment, and not just when the dogs are actually on course running. An exception may be submitted for Board approval where extenuating circumstances exist.

Candidates will not be entitled to any judge's fees for the dogs judged during the Practical Examination; however the club is expected to compensate the candidate for any out-of-pocket expenses, *unless other arrangements have been agreed upon*. The host club hiring the candidate will be responsible for any of the Examining Judge's out-of-pocket expenses, and the fees/run normally paid to the judge candidate will instead be paid by the host club to the Examining Judge. Any qualifying scores and/or titles earned shall be recorded under the name of the designing judge, regardless of the outcome of the Practical Examination.

Prior to the scheduled date of the Practical Examination, the Examining Judge will contact the Clinic Facilitator who presided over the clinic attended by the candidate to discuss the candidate's strengths and weaknesses, if any. The Examining Judge should also be prepared to discuss the candidate's interactions with the Course Approver and with the host club prior to the day of judging.

During the Practical Examination, the Examining Judge will be looking for the candidate to display professionalism at all times, and an understanding of, and an ability to correctly apply, AAC rules.

The Examining Judge will be reviewing all aspects of the candidate's performance throughout the entire assignment, including;

- interaction with the host prior to the assignment,
- interaction with the Course Approver,
- quality of the courses submitted,
- arriving at the trial on-time and prepared,
- organisation of courses and supplies,
- ability to manage multiple tasks (course tweaking, measuring dogs, checking of equipment etc.),
- interaction with trial workers,
- interaction with competitors,
- conducting adequate judges briefings,
- involvement in the resolution of any conflicts or disputes,
- actual practical judging, to include;
 - judging position and path
 - timing of calls
 - consistency of calls
 - calling the correct points in games classes

The Examining Judge will complete the Practical Examination Evaluation Form within 5 days of the assignment, and submit it to the Clinic Facilitator, who is ultimately responsible for the candidate's complete evaluation.

During the Practical Examination, the candidate may seek the occasional clarification from the Examining Judge without adversely affecting their exam results; however the candidate is expected to demonstrate the ability to function independently.

The Examining Judge should be prepared to assist the candidate and/or to correct any missed calls discretely. The Practical Examination is not only a test, it is also the candidate's first solo judging experience, and the candidate should be allowed to develop confidence and to find their own style of judging without constant interference.

Failing the Practical Examination:

If at any point during the practical exam, the Examining Judge determines that the candidate's performance is not meeting the minimum AAC criteria, the Examining Judge may take over judging; either for that class, the balance of the day, or the rest of the assignment, as they see fit and *at their sole discretion*.

If it becomes necessary to relieve the candidate, the candidate will be considered to have failed the Practical Examination portion of the clinic. If this is the case, the candidate will receive a full report from the Examining Judge, highlighting the areas of their performance that require improvement, or areas of the AAC rules to review. Additional fun match judging will be required prior to the candidate re-attempting the Practical Examination. This report will also be provided to the Clinic Facilitator, who will coordinate any remedial actions. A second Practical Examination must be administered by a different Examining Judge than the candidate's first Practical Examination.

If a candidate fails their Practical Examination a second time, the candidate will be required to take a second judge's clinic (including the seminar portion), and pass the written, oral and course design sections as above before being allowed to attempt the Practical Examination again. The full clinic fee shall be charged. Should a candidate fail the Practical examination for a third time, the candidate shall be prohibited from further applications to become an AAC judge for a period of no less than three years.

Candidates who successfully complete the Practical Examination will have their results communicated to the Facilitator and, provided the written, oral and course design sections of the examination have also been successfully completed, and the minimum number of courses to be designed and dogs to be judged has been met, will be qualified as AAC Judges for the appropriate level, subject to satisfactory Supervisions.

VII- Supervisions:

Supervisions are judging assignments where the new judge has access to a mentor, who will report to the Clinic Facilitators on the new judge's conduct and confidence. Supervisions are designed to be informal, and to bridge the gap between the Practical Examination and solo judging. The mentoring judge is not reimbursed for their assistance.

The Clinic Facilitator, in consultation with the Examining Judge, will determine the likely number of Supervisions required for the newly qualified judge. These Supervisions may be carried out by any fully qualified Masters judge, and are designed to provide the Clinic Facilitator with feedback on the new judge's performance, and the new judge with some informal support during their first solo assignment(s). The new judge must organise their own supervisions (the expectation is that the new judge will arrange with one of the other judges at the trial to act as mentor), and they must notify the Clinic Facilitator who their Supervisor is well in advance of the assignment.

The minimum number of supervised assignments is one, and there is no maximum number, but if a judge requires more than 3 supervisions, the Clinic Facilitator may request some remedial study for the judge before they can accept any new assignments.

VIII- Provisional Status:

An AAC Judge will be considered "provisional" at any level until they have met all the practical examination judging requirements, and have been released from Supervision.

IX- Upgrading:

A judge is not required to update their license to judge (e.g. a Starters/Advanced judge is not required to attend a Masters clinic), but should a judge wish to earn the right to judge a higher performance level, the following requirements must be met. A Masters Judge is still permitted to judge at the lower performance levels.

1. Starters Only to Starters/Advanced:

A qualified AAC Starters Only level judge has the option to upgrade to AAC Starters/Advanced level judging after fulfilling all the requirements listed below and through one of the process options listed below.

Starters level Provisional Judging Requirements:

- minimum of 1 year Starters level judging experience,
- minimum of 6 Standard courses, 2 Gamblers and 2 Snooker at the Starters level (min 10 dogs at each class)
- minimum of TWO judging assignments, for at least TWO different clubs
- all without any substantiated complaints from the host club(s)

These requirements may include the Practical Examination classes. In addition to the above, the Starter/Advanced candidate must also have been released from Supervision.

Upgrade Option 1

Apply to re-take the complete AAC Starters/Advanced Judge's exams (written, oral, course design and Practical Examination) in association with a Starters/Advanced level AAC judge's clinic. Passing grades will be as described above for all candidates. The fee shall be charged at 50% of the fee for full clinic participation and be payable to the host group. Should the candidate also wish to attend the lecture portion of the clinic, the full fee must be paid (see Option 3). The Practical Examination arrangements will be as for any candidate.

Upgrade Option 2

Apply to re-take the complete AAC Starters/Advanced Judge's exams (written, oral, course design and Practical Examination) privately, with the Clinic Facilitator. Passing grades will be as described above for all candidates. The fee shall generally be charged at 50% of the fee for the last full clinic the judge participated in and will be payable to the Clinic Facilitator. The Practical Examination arrangements will be as for any candidate.

Upgrade Option 3

Apply to attend and participate in a second full AAC Starters/Advanced judge's clinic, inclusive of the seminar portion of the clinic, and to complete the examination sections as for all other candidates. If a candidate elects to participate in the full clinic, the full clinic fee will be charged, payable to the host group. **Please Note:** If this option is chosen, the Judging prerequisites listed above do not have to be met.

2. Advanced to Masters:

A qualified AAC Advanced level judge has the option to upgrade to AAC Masters level judging after fulfilling all the requirements listed below. Upgrading to Masters Judging requires the successful completion of a Masters upgrade clinic, as outlined above.

Advanced level Provisional Judging Requirements:

- minimum of one year Advanced level judging experience,
- have judged a minimum of 10 Standard courses, 4 Gamblers and 4 Snooker at the Advanced level (min 10 dogs at each class)
- Ten additional courses, at least six of which must be at the ADVANCED level.
- minimum of FIVE judging assignments, for at least TWO different clubs
- all without any substantiated major complaints from the host club(s)

These requirements may include the Practical Examination classes.

In addition to the above, the Masters candidate must also have been released from Supervision.

SUMMARY:

Becoming an AAC Judge

A summary of the steps required to become a fully-licensed AAC judge is outlined here:

1. Eligibility to apply for a Judge's Clinic.
2. Eligibility to attend a Judge's Clinic.
3. Attending a Judge's Clinic and passing the required examinations with acceptable grades.
4. Passing the Practical Examination with acceptable grades
5. Fulfilling the provisional judging prerequisites.
6. Being released from supervision.
7. *OPTIONAL*: Applying to upgrade to the next higher level of judging after judging for at least 12 months from the date of the Practical Examination, without substantiated complaints or concerns.

Maintenance of Judging Privileges:

In order to maintain AAC judging privileges, a judge must;

1. Renew his/her AAC membership annually
2. Remain an AAC member in good standing
3. Judge at least once in a two year period
4. Successfully complete any continuing education requirements imposed by the Board of Directors and/or the Judge's Standing Advisory Committee.
5. Pay any licensing fees that may be set by the AAC
6. Remain physically capable of performing the duties of judging (see Section II).
7. Keep current with trends in course design and handling. This may occur through a combination of: continuing to run a dog or dogs competitively, teaching agility classes to multiple breeds, judging in multiple Regions, judging at Regional and/or National events, judging at multiple venues, attending international competitions as a competitor or a supporter, attending judge's upgrade clinics as an observer, taking on-line handling seminars, volunteering at National events, and other similar activities.