

**JUDGES EDUCATION PROGRAMME**  
**REVIEW**  
**Report & Recommendations**  
**MAY 2026**

## **PURPOSE**

The Royal Kennel Club (RKC) Judges Education Programme (JEP) Review has been commissioned by the Board; and aims to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the JEP ensuring it continues to meet its objectives of improving judging standards, supporting breed education, and preparing competent, capable and confident judges for the future.

## **WHAT IS THE JEP?**

In short, from 2027, it is the sole means by which UK resident judges of RKC licensed dog shows will be trained, educated, evaluated, assessed and overseen.

## **REVIEW PANEL**

The appointment of the Review Panel followed an open call for volunteers, which attracted 75 applications. The selection process was anonymised and independently scored, with shortlisted candidates interviewed prior to appointment.

The Review Panel is chaired by Board and Judges Committee member David Craig and comprises Julien Barney, Rachel Berrington, Sue Bull, Alayna Morland, Sue Shinkfield, and Frank Whyte. The panel is supported by Barry Jones, Judges Education Manager at the RKC.

## **COMMENCEMENT AND WORK COMPLETED**

The Review Panel met for the first time on 7 November. It has now completed 20 online meetings and is ready to provide its Report & Recommendations.

The Review Panel thanks the stakeholders who have taken the time and effort to share their many and comprehensive views, ideas and suggestions.

All feedback received formally and informally has been considered.

## **REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Review Panel's current work has concluded.

The Review Panel has completed a detailed review of the JEP in its current form, considering the requirements and eligibility to judge at each of the current Levels 1 to 6.

It has formulated a range of recommendations for improvements and where possible, identified whether these are (1) high priority or lower priority actions and (2) short-term or medium-term actions.

The recommendations outlined in the report represent an interconnected package of improvements for the JEP. Taken together they have the potential to make a significant positive impact to judge education and training, dog showing and pedigree dogs more generally. Taken in isolation each recommendation will have a reduced impact.

The panel is unanimous that the overall effectiveness and impact of its work will result from maintaining the integrity of its package of recommendations as a whole, wherever possible.

The Review Panel is willing and ready to reconvene in its current or a revised form should the RKC require its input and assistance regarding the implementation of its recommendations.

## **WHY THIS MATTERS**

Judging at a RKC dog show is a privilege and responsibility. Exhibitors and their dogs have a right to expect a capable and impartial judge. One who is quality assured; and suitably educated and trained for the task with a focus on conformation, movement and health. Judging and dog showing must be open to all and inclusive. Encouragement and enablement are key.

Judges play a pivotal role in helping to protect the future of pedigree dogs and dog showing.

## **THE STAKEHOLDERS**

- Pedigree Dogs
- Judges (all levels, including overseas & student judges)
- Exhibitors
- Show Organisers
- Accredited Trainers
- Breed Clubs & Councils
- Breed Education Coordinators (BECs)
- Mentors & Observers
- Breed Specific Assessment (BSA) Assessors
- Eye for a Dog Assessors & Observers
- Stewards
- Health & Welfare Individuals & Teams
- Young Royal Kennel Club
- The Royal Kennel Club Office (e.g. Judges Education Team)
- RKC Board & Management Committees

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The JEP is not perfect nor is it fundamentally flawed.

There are opportunities for improvements to benefit all stakeholders and most importantly pedigree dogs.

Whilst it is clear some areas of the JEP are working relatively well others are not.

## GENERAL THEMES

The work of the Review Panel identified central themes for attention and improvement that apply across all aspects of the JEP:

- **General canine knowledge and understanding**, specifically concerning conformation and movement, physical examination skills and matters regarding exaggeration, health and wellbeing.
- Clearer understanding about what **the role and skills of a dog show judge** necessitate and require.
- Stronger and more consistent **breed-specific knowledge and understanding**, i.e. building on the solid grounding in general canine knowledge and applying it to breed-specific conformation, movement, and hands-on examination.
- A re-emphasis on more **practical hands-on education and training and judging experience**.

## ATTENTION AREAS

- **Improved general canine knowledge and understanding** to be better reflected and embedded through improved curriculum and approach for delivering training and education on Conformation and Movement, Requirements of a Dog Show Judge and Points of a Dog Assessment, with a rebalance to focus on more practical hands-on learning and understanding. Plus, better recognition of the needs of judges in training who may require additional learning support, accessibility arrangements, or reasonable adjustments.
- Greater emphasis on **evidenced experience** in pedigree dogs and activities, including a specific requirement for **active support and involvement with breed clubs** and canine clubs and societies, e.g. attendance at events, membership and management etc.
- More **breadth of judging** exposure and experience.
- **Breed club engagement and involvement** is critical and integral to helping deliver improved training and education to judges at both the general canine and breed-specific levels. For example, through the sharing of information and best practices; and more use of “have-a-go” days or experiences that can be used by an aspiring judge and exhibitor to demonstrate their involvement in pedigree dogs and activities.
- **Earlier and clearer readiness to progress checks** with more stewarding experience at early stages and mentoring to be commenced sooner.
- **Eye for a Dog** to be more targeted, optional at Level 4 unless judging AV/Groups/BIS at open shows when it should be mandatory. With the core principles of Eye for A Dog delivered more thoroughly and consistently at Level 1 of the JEP through improvements to the existing curriculum and methods of delivery for non-breed specific foundational judge training.
- **Clearer requirements for Group and Best in Show** judge approvals.
- An appreciation of the **wider community of volunteer stakeholders**; and a better understanding of their needs, requirements, and expectations, e.g. Breed Education Coordinators, mentors, assessors, and show organisers.
- **Improved governance** of the JEP to improve consistency and outcomes with the availability of more audit and enforcement tools and options.

## **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

In undertaking its task, the Review Panel identified and agreed key principles and goals to guide its work which in turn should be reflected and applied throughout the JEP:

- Clarity
- Certainty
- Consistency
- Objectivity
- Inclusivity & accessibility
- Encouragement & enablement
- Progression
- Avoidance of minimum criteria
- Avoidance of exceptions procedures
- Re-engagement of breed clubs & councils
- Training & support for volunteers
- Financial reality & sustainability
- A judge's existing eligibility shall remain\*, i.e. no retroactive removal of judging eligibility

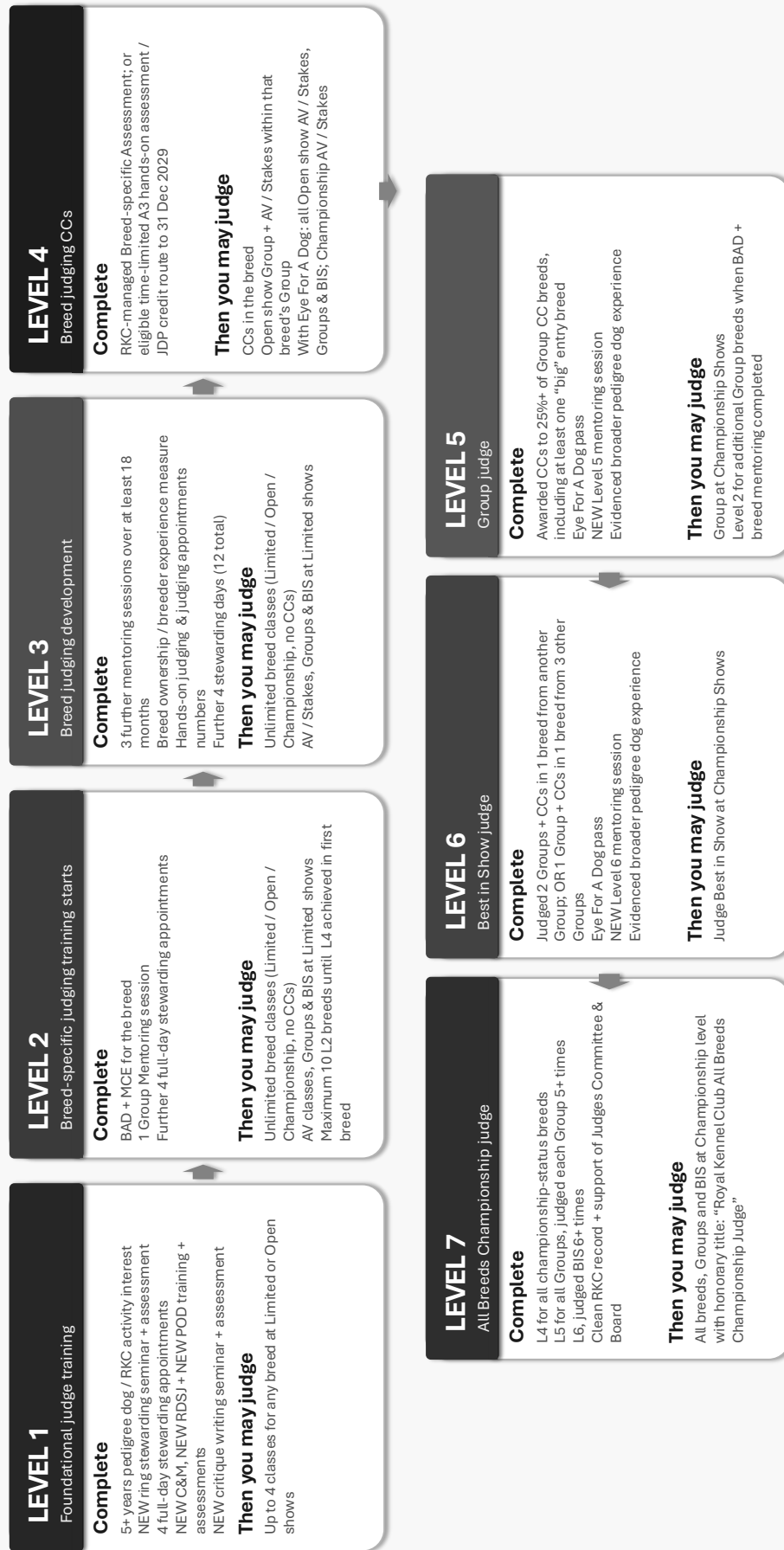
*\*Subject to extended breaks in judging activity that will necessitate refresher training before judging can recommence; and recommendations concerning continuing professional development for judges.*

## THE DETAILS

Page	Title	Description
9	JEP Programme Summary	Sets out a <b>summary overview</b> of the Review Panel's recommendation for the JEP in its future state.
10	Comparison Summary	Sets out a <b>summary comparison</b> of Appendix A v. Appendix B and the rationale for change.
15	Proposed Implementation Timeline	Sets out a <b>proposed timeline</b> for implementation of the Review Panel's recommended changes.
18	Appendix A	Sets out the Review Panel's recommendation for the <b>JEP in its future state</b> . Detailing each JEP Level (1 to 7), the requirements to attain each level and the eligibility to judge at each level.
31	Appendix B	Sets out the <b>JEP in its current state</b> . Detailing each JEP Level (1 to 6), the requirements to attain each level and the eligibility to judge at each level.
46	Appendix C	Outlines the Review Panel's recommendations regarding the <b>transition</b> for the JEP in its current to future state, including <b>proposed timeline</b> .
50	Appendix D	Recommendations concerning <b>mentors &amp; mentoring</b> .
65	Appendix E	Recommendations concerning <b>Breed Education Coordinators</b> .
73	Appendix F	Recommendations concerning <b>oversight, audit, enforcement</b> and general system management and control.
79	Appendix G	Recommendations concerning <b>policy judges</b> .
80	Appendix H	Recommendations concerning <b>overseas judges</b> .
83	Appendix I	Recommendations concerning <b>licensing</b> and miscellaneous matters.
89	Appendix J	Recommendations concerning <b>health &amp; wellbeing</b> .

# Judges Education Programme (JEP): L1 to L7

Future-state high-level summary based on Appendix A



## Summary: JEP Future State (Appendix A) v. JEP Current State (Appendix B)

**Purpose: to highlight the key changes proposed in Appendix A, the improvements over the current JEP arrangements in Appendix B; & the rationale for those changes.**

*Overall strategic intent: Appendix A seeks to make the JEP more educational, practical, consistent and transparent. Whilst better supporting judge development, show organisers, breed clubs and the wider interests of pedigree dogs & dog shows.*

### Key recommended improvements

<p><b>STRONGER FOUNDATIONS</b> More practical, non-breed specific training at L1, with new curriculum for critique writing, stewarding, conformation and movement, requirements of a dog show judge, and points of a dog. Principles of Eye For A Dog delivered through revised L1 training courses &amp; seminars.</p>	<p><b>MORE EVENLY MEASURED DEVELOPMENT</b> Breed-specific mentoring to start at L2 with group mentoring and then progress to L3. Stewarding requirements to be spread more evenly across L1 to L3.</p>
<p><b>MORE PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE</b> Hands-on judging numbers revised plus a new judging appointments measure adds breadth and brings back geographic spread to practical judging experience.</p>	<p><b>BETTER MENTORING QUALITY</b> A new mentoring framework, trained mentors and clearer protocols aim to replace tick-box activity &amp; a race for completion mentality with constructive development.</p>
<p><b>HEALTH AND WELFARE FOCUS</b> Breed Watch, health &amp; wellbeing and avoiding exaggeration embedded across all aspects of JEP training, education, mentoring and assessment at all levels.</p>	<p><b>CLEARER ADVANCED PROGRESSION</b> L4 BSA to be re-modelled based on feedback. L5 Group and L6 BIS requirements become more objective, with new mentoring and clearer evidence of broader pedigree dog experience.</p>
<p><b>CONTROLLED FLEXIBILITY</b> Judging eligibility flexibility for show organisers plus safeguards, e.g. limits on excessive L2 breed expansion before a judge demonstrates sufficient competence in their first breed.</p>	<p><b>NEW PINNACLE STATUS</b> A new Royal Kennel Club All Breeds Championship judge level (L7) available from 2030 creates an aspirational judge status, absent from the current JEP.</p>

## Level-by-level comparison

Level	Theme	OLD JEP (Appendix B)	NEW JEP (Appendix A)	Rationale
Pre-level 1	Have-A-Go	None.	No mandatory requirement. Breed clubs and show organisers to be encouraged to offer Have-a-Go experiences.	For people interested in learning about a breed, dog showing and judging in an informal zero pressure setting. Opportunity for in-person, practical learning with hands-on opportunities including mock classes for would be exhibitors and judges.
Level 1	Involvement in pedigree dogs	Five years interest stated, no formal evidence listed.	Five years interest must now be evidenced through defined activities	Clearer and more robust evidence requirements introduced. Emphasis on active involvement and support with breed club(s), canine club(s) & society(ies). Broader examples given as to what is expected here.
Level 1	Stewarding	Minimum 2 full-day stewarding appointments.	Minimum 4 full-day stewarding appointments New ring stewarding seminar & assessment.	Stewarding requirement doubled at entry level to strengthen early practical experience along with a new updated ring stewarding seminar & assessment.
Level 1	Seminars	Attend Conformation & Movement seminar & attend Requirements of a Dog Show Judge seminar & pass exam. Pass Points of a Dog assessment.	Attend new Conformation & Movement seminar. Attend new Requirements of a Dog Show Judge seminar & pass assessment. Attend new Points of a Dog seminar & pass assessment.	Revamped curriculum for L1. Refocus on more practical hands-on learning & understanding to ensure general canine knowledge established & demonstrated. The principles of the Eye for a Dog Assessment to be delivered through new seminars and assessments at L1.
Level 1	Critique Writing	L2 requirement.	Attend new critique writing seminar & pass assessment.	Judging with a requirement to produce critiques under regulations and/or judging contract terms should require mandatory critique writing training and assessment.
Level 2	Stewarding	No additional stewarding required at this level.	Additional 4 full-day stewarding appointments (8 total).	Stewarding is now staged across early levels L1 to L3 rather than concentrated later.

Level	Theme	OLD JEP (Appendix B)	NEW JEP (Appendix A)	Rationale
Level 2	BAD & MCE	Attend BAD & Pass MCE	Attend BAD with new mandatory requirements to be covered.  Pass MCE with revised approach to bank of questions.	Improved & more consistent content for BAD: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- judging for health and wellbeing &amp; Breed Watch</li> <li>- practical breed specific physical hands-on examination techniques and requirements</li> <li>- breed specific conformation and movement</li> <li>- breed purpose and history</li> </ul> MCE bank of questions to cover checked for validity & consistency and to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- generally accepted extended breed standard</li> <li>- health &amp; wellbeing &amp; Breed Watch</li> </ul>
Level 2	Mentoring	No mentoring requirement at Level 2.	x1 Breed Group Mentoring session required.	Mentoring introduced earlier in the judging pathway, including re-emphasis on hands-on experience and learning. Mentoring to include new mandatory areas of focus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- judging health and wellbeing without exaggerations; and</li> <li>- for Breed Watch category 2 and 3 breeds and their specific points of concern; and</li> <li>- practical breed specific physical hands-on examination techniques and requirements; and</li> <li>- breed specific conformation and movement.</li> </ul>
Level 2	Ring stewarding seminar	Required at Level 2.	Moved to Level 1.	Earlier exposure to ring procedure and expectations.

Level	Theme	OLD JEP (Appendix B)	NEW JEP (Appendix A)	Rationale
Level 3	Mentoring structure	Minimum x3 mentoring sessions over at least 12 months.	x3 mentoring sessions (4 in total inc. L2 group mentoring session) over at least 18 months with defined formats.	Extended and more structured mentoring with specific learning contexts. To include new mandatory requirements for x1 Judging Appointment plus x1 Student Judge mentoring sessions. New mentor training.
Level 3	Observed judging	Formal observed judging appointment required.	Removed as a standalone requirement.	Observation replaced by broader mentoring-based evaluation, including x1 Judging Appointment mentoring session.
Level 3	Hands-on experience	Hands-on experience requires 50% of traditional route numbers.	Hands-on experience increased to 75% of traditional route numbers.	Higher practical judging exposure required before progression.
Level 3	Judging appointments	No minimum judging appointments required.	New required number of judging appointments with geographic spread.	Introduces clearer broader practical judging experience.
Level 3	Special requirements	Sub-group field trial/open gundog working test for first gundog breed. Ring procedure for German Shepherd Dogs online exam.	To be replaced with a mandatory requirement to cover breed purpose and working attributes within BAD and mentoring sessions for all breeds.	There are more effective and efficient ways to deliver an understanding and appreciation of a breed's purpose within BADs, mentoring and via other learning aids (e.g. video tutorials). This shall be made a new mandatory requirement for all breeds.
Level 4	Eye for a Dog	Mandatory for 4th and subsequent CC breeds	Optional unless wishing to judge AV/Stakes classes at Open or Championship shows plus all Groups and Best in Show at Open shows. Required to advance to more extensive judging.	Greater flexibility based on judge choice. Higher bar for those wishing to judge any Variety/Stakes classes at Open or Championship shows plus all Groups and Best in Show at Open shows. Eye For A Dog remains to evidence and support depth of canine understanding & judging competence and ability for those wishing to progress to more extensive and advanced levels of judging.

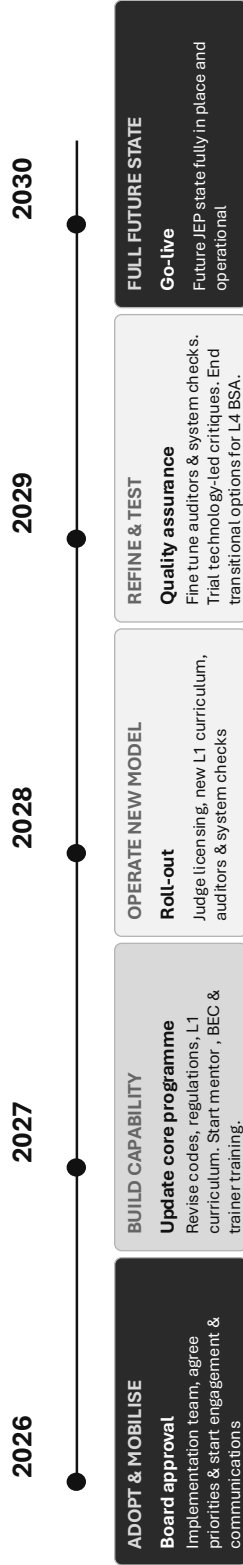
Level	Theme	OLD JEP (Appendix B)	NEW JEP (Appendix A)	Rationale
Level 5	Group coverage threshold & breed numbers per group	Minimum 20% of CC breeds in group	25% of CC breeds in group + x1 Level 5 Mentoring Session + Evidenced broader pedigree dog experience.	Higher experience threshold for group judging approval. Remove minimum requirement. Set clearer rule. New L5 mentoring session to help determine readiness to progress.
Level 6	Route to BIS	Judged 1 group + CCs in 2 other groups	Judged at least 2 Groups & CCs in x1 breed from x1 other Group OR judged at least 1 Group & CCs to at least x1 breed from x3 other Groups + x1 Level 6 Mentoring Session + Evidenced broader pedigree dog experience.	More flexible but higher overall experience. Set clearer rule. New L6 mentoring session to help determine readiness to progress.
Level 7	All breeds championship show judge	None.	New level for all breeds judging status.	The lack of L7 all breeds championship judge is an omission from the current JEP. L7 should be an aspirational pinnacle of a RKC judge's career for those wishing to pursue it.

## Conclusion

The recommended JEP future state at Appendix A is best understood as a strengthening and modernisation of the JEP. The principal improvement is a shift from a largely staged compliance model to a more rounded education and development pathway: stronger early training, earlier and better mentoring, more meaningful practical judging experience, clearer assessment, greater consistency, and a stronger emphasis on health & wellbeing and evidenced judging and pedigree dog experience and competence.

# JEP Transition & Implementation Timeline (proposed)

Proposed multi-year roadmap for moving from current state to the recommended future state of the JEP



**Strategic intent**

- deliver visible improvements before the end of 2026
- phase medium-term changes through 2027–2029
- establish a stable future model by 2030
- no major further changes for ten years, subject to normal best-practice review & operational refinements

# Implementation Roadmap: 2026–2027 (proposed)

Adoption, mobilisation and the build phase for the recommended future -state of the JEP

<p><b>2026 Q2</b> <b>Board decision</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• JEP Review report to Board</li> <li>• Recommendations adopted in full</li> <li>• Implementation to be approved</li> </ul>	<p><b>2026 Q3</b> <b>Mobilise delivery</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation team established</li> <li>• Action plan &amp; priorities agreed</li> <li>• Stakeholder communications start</li> <li>• BSA improvements trialled</li> <li>• L1 curriculum revamp starts</li> <li>• Codes &amp; Regulations updates begin</li> <li>• Accredited trainer needs reviewed</li> </ul>	<p><b>2026 Q4</b> <b>Visible early wins</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BEC engagement begins</li> <li>• BSA improvements refined</li> <li>• Trainer recruitment undertaken</li> <li>• Find A Judge improvements visible</li> <li>• Mentor lists updated</li> <li>• BAD and MCE content updated</li> </ul>	<p><b>2027 Q1</b> <b>New foundations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Licensing model developed</li> <li>• New Codes in place</li> <li>• New Regulations in place</li> <li>• BEC engagement continues</li> <li>• Mentor training begins</li> <li>• Accredited trainer training begins</li> </ul>	<p><b>2027 Q2</b> <b>Training roll-out</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New L1 curriculum phased in</li> <li>• Mentor training continues</li> <li>• Trainer training continues</li> <li>• BEC training starts</li> <li>• “Super” BEC pool developed</li> <li>• Auditor pool &amp; JEP system checks developed</li> </ul>	<p><b>2027 Q3</b> <b>Capability build</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trainer training continues</li> <li>• L1 curriculum phased-in</li> <li>• Mentor training continues</li> <li>• BEC training &amp; engagement continues</li> </ul>	<p><b>2027 Q4</b> <b>Ready for launch</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Judge licensing plan communicated</li> <li>• Trainer training continues</li> <li>• L1 curriculum introduction concludes</li> <li>• Mentor training continues</li> <li>• BEC training &amp; engagement continues</li> </ul>
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*Agree priorities, resource the implementation team, communicate clearly, and sequence changes so judges in training are treated fairly.*

# Implementation Roadmap: 2028–2030 (proposed)

Operational roll-out, refinement and transition to a stable future-state model

<b>2028</b>	<b>Operate new JEP model</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Judge licensing starts</li><li>• JEP auditors and system checks in place &amp; trialling starts</li><li>• New accredited trainer network operational</li><li>• New L1 curriculum fully operational</li><li>• Mentor training ongoing</li><li>• BEC training and engagement ongoing</li></ul>
<b>2029</b>	<b>Refine &amp; test</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• JEP auditors and system check system refined</li><li>• Medium-term Find A Judge improvements visible</li><li>• Real-time technology-led critiques trialled</li><li>• A3 hands-on / JDP credit option in lieu of L4 BSA comes to an end</li></ul>
<b>2030</b>	<b>Future full state</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Future JEP state fully in place and operational</li><li>• Move into sustained stabilisation period</li><li>• No significant further JEP change for ten years, subject to normal review and operational refinements</li></ul>

Current judging eligibility remains, refresher training if extended break in judging activity; progression to a new JEP level triggers move to the future-state JEP model.

**APPENDIX A** JEP in its future state.

Detailing each JEP Level (1 to 7), the requirements to attain each level and the eligibility to judge at each level.

## LEVEL 1 – FOUNDATIONAL NON-BREED SPECIFIC TRAINING

### ENTRY TO JUDGING AT LIMITED & OPEN SHOWS

#### REQUIREMENTS

- **5 or more years interest in pedigree dogs** and Royal Kennel Club (RKC) canine activities.

To be evidenced by one or more of the following:

- Active support and involvement with breed clubs and canine clubs and societies, e.g. attendance at events, membership and management etc.
  - Exhibiting/showing
  - Breeding
  - Participation in canine activities such as agility, obedience, field trials, working trials, rally, heelwork to music, Good Citizen Dog Scheme (GCDS) training and YRKC
- 
- Complete **NEW Ring Stewarding** seminar and pass the associated online assessment
  
  - Complete a **minimum of 4 full-day stewarding appointments**
  
  - Attend **NEW Conformation and Movement** training, including seminar hosted by a Kennel Club Accredited Trainer
  
  - Attend **NEW Requirements of a Dog Show Judge** training, including seminar hosted by a Kennel Club Accredited Trainer and pass the associated exam
  
  - Attend **NEW Points of a Dog** training, including assessment conducted by a Kennel Club Accredited Trainer
  
  - Complete **NEW Critique Writing** seminar and pass the associated online assessment (for first breed only)

## **ELIGIBILITY TO JUDGE AT THIS LEVEL**

Up to **FOUR** classes for any breed at **Limited** or **Open** shows

### **COMMENTARY**

Have-a-go judging events and training to be encouraged as a JEP pre-L1 opportunity and experience. Some breed clubs are already pro-actively doing this. An informal setting in which to provide aspirant judges with an understanding of dog show judging, explaining how to progress their judging through the JEP and most importantly an opportunity to start understanding the ins and outs of hands-on physical assessment of a dog; and starting the process of developing an understanding and appreciation of canine conformation and movement.

Use JEP to develop better engagement with our breed and dog clubs, associations and societies more generally. Encourage aspirant judges to be more actively involved with such clubs, especially regarding volunteer roles and becoming a committee member or officer etc.

General acceptance JEP is not currently equipping judges with a suitable grounding in a combination of general and practical canine knowledge, particularly as it applies to conformation and movement, health & wellbeing, and physical hands-on examination skills. L1 Curriculum to be reformatted with mix of online self-paced learning, online real-time seminars and in-person learning.

More investment in Accredited Trainer network (numbers and geographic spread) with better support and consistency of course content and delivery.

The principles of Eye For A Dog to start at L1 through a redesigned approach to C&M and POD training.

Stewarding experience vital judge preparation and training. Supports the show organiser community. Stewarding experience requirements to be more equally distributed across L1 to L3.

Judges should not be eligible to judge with a regulatory requirement to complete critiques without having been required to complete critique writing training. Critique Writing course to be updated.

Judges to be required to complete original critiques within 6 weeks of their judging appointment; and their primary obligation must be to upload their critiques online to the RKC Judges' Critiques website. Judges may continue to choose to share the critiques more widely; but this will not discharge their regulatory obligation.

Spot checks to be performed on the quality of critiques being produced.

Judges repeatedly failing to produce critiques on time or to the required and expected quality standard to be subject to a judging suspension.

Longer-term solution to investigate better use of technology to enable real-time or close to real-time production of critiques at general and group championship shows.

Simplify judge's eligibility to judge to give greater flexibility to show organisers.

## LEVEL 2 – FORMAL BREED SPECIFIC TRAINING STARTS

### DEVELOPMENT OF BREED JUDGING

#### REQUIREMENTS

- Attend a **Breed Appreciation Day (BAD)** and pass the **Multiple-choice Exam (MCE)** for respective breed
- Complete **1 Group Mentoring** session
- Complete **a further 4 full-day stewarding appointments**, 8 in total (for first breed only)

#### ELIGIBILITY TO JUDGE AT THIS LEVEL

- **Unlimited classes** for the respective breed at **Limited, Open, and Championship** shows without CCs
- **Any Variety classes, Groups and Best in Show** at **Limited** shows
- Judge to be **restricted to maximum of 10 L2 breeds** until such time they achieve L4 for their first breed.

#### **COMMENTARY**

New framework and requirements to be implemented to ensure better and more consistent content for BAD.

To include mandatory content:

(1) judging for health and wellbeing without exaggerations for all breeds, with added focus for Breed Watch category 2 and 3 breeds

(2) practical breed specific physical hands-on examination techniques and requirements

(3) breed specific conformation and movement

(4) breed purpose and history\* - with added focus for all working and task specific breeds, to include practical examples of working dogs in action through improved use of multimedia training and education resources linking-in with a breed's working, field and other trials communities to achieve this.

MCE bank of questions for each breed to be periodically checked for quality and consistency. MCE to include the option for some limited questions in addition the RKC breed standard such as (1) from a generally accepted extended breed standard and (2) on topics specific to judging for health and wellbeing without exaggerations, especially for Specific Points of Concern for Breed Watch category 2 and 3 breeds. Consideration to be given to adapting to the Q&A format to try to improve the educational value & validity of the MCE. The nature of the MCE is acknowledged as having educational limits, it is in essence a memory test.

Mentoring to commence earlier in the programme for a judge in training. To be achieved through Group Mentoring starting at L2. Improved Code of Best Practice (COBP) for Mentoring. See Appendix D for detailed recommendations regarding Mentors & Mentoring.

Breed clubs to retain option to hold online or in-person BAD and MCE.

Judges must demonstrate judging competence and progress in their first breed before broadening their judging into too many other breeds.

*\*To be repositioned from L3 for gundog field trials attendance and broadened to cover all breeds.*

## LEVEL 3 – DEVELOPMENT OF BREED SPECIFIC TRAINING

### CONTINUED BREED JUDGING AT NON-CC LEVEL

#### REQUIREMENTS

- Complete at least 3 further successful\* **mentoring** sessions with at least 18 months between the 1<sup>st</sup> (L2) and 4<sup>th</sup> (L3) session.

Sessions must include:

- **1-to-1** mentoring session
- **Judging Appointment** mentoring session
- **Student Judge** mentoring session

*\*Successful means mentor has identified the judge in training (the mentee) as being ready to progress.*

- Demonstrate **Breed Ownership/Breeder Experience** (for first breed only)
  - Three Stud Book Numbers; or
  - Owned/bred a Champion; or
  - Two CCs (either with one dog or one CC each with two dogs); or
  - Three CCs (split over two dogs); or
  - Majority support from RKC recognised Breed Club(s); or
  - A fallback exceptions route for circumstances not captured by the above measures. For example, achievements evidenced in other ways: including where credit is not reflected on registrations, a judge with overseas breed ownership/breeder experience and ownership/breeder experience for a breed without or with only recent championship status etc.
- Demonstrate **Judging Experience**
  - Satisfy the breed's **Hands-on\*** judging experience measure
  - Complete the breed's **Judging Appointments\*** measure with a reasonable geographic spread
- Complete **a further 4 full-day stewarding appointments**, 12 in total (for first breed only)

*\*See new Hands-on Numbers & Judging Appointments table for details.*

## **ELIGIBILITY TO JUDGE AT THIS LEVEL**

- **Unlimited classes** for the respective breed at **Limited, Open and Championship** shows (no CCs)
- **Any Variety/Stakes Classes, Groups and Best in Show** at **Limited** shows

### **COMMENTARY**

New Code of Best Practice to be implemented for Mentors & Mentoring. Mentor lists for all breeds to be reviewed and updated. Only active Mentors to be included. Must include a broad mix of breed specialists and breed experienced group judges. RKC Office to have remit to amend and update lists when necessary.

A programme of online and in-person training for Mentors to be developed and rolled out. Mentoring is the backbone of the JEP. RKC Office, BECs and breed clubs to work together to ensure only suitable individuals who are clear on their role & responsibilities and who have received mentor training act as Mentors.

The goal of mentoring is to enable a judge to develop their confidence, knowledge and experience in their breed specific judging. Objective, honest and productive feedback is critical to the process working well. It is not a tick box exercise nor is it a race. All mentoring sessions to include a requirement to address: (1) judging for health and wellbeing without exaggerations for all breeds; but with added focus for Breed Watch category 2 and 3 breeds; (2) practical breed specific physical hands-on examination techniques and requirements; and (3) breed specific conformation and movement.

New protocols to be available for Student Judge mentoring sessions so all stakeholders are clear on their roles & responsibilities; and the expectations for what best practice looks like for this type of mentoring. General & group championship shows to be encouraged, and where necessary required, to support and provide for Student Judge mentoring.

Observation to be replaced with a Judge Appointment mentoring session. A non-CC level appointment, e.g. special awards classes, open show or championship show without CCs. To be encouraged alongside breed club shows, wherever possible. Observer lists to be amalgamated with Mentor lists.

See Appendix D for detailed recommendations regarding Mentors & Mentoring.

Stud Book Number requirement to be revised to be more suitable, relevant and flexible by being based on a breed ownership/breeder experience measure. It is recognised the current exceptions procedure will still be needed but is likely to be utilised infrequently given the updated approach.

General acceptance JEP is not currently equipping judges with a suitable level of practical hands-on breed specific judging experience. L3 to be revised to address this.

Hands-on judging numbers to be updated to reflect approximately 75% the traditional questionnaire route instead of the current 50% requirement. A new measure to be introduced regarding the number of breed specific judging appointments for a judge to have undertaken. This will also include a requirement to ensure practical judging experience includes a reasonable geographic spread.

The latter measure is something many will already be familiar with. It is not intended that this measure be onerous in assessing. For example, if a judge's practical judging appointment experience has all been completed in the same limited area (e.g. Scotland, Northwest, Northeast, Yorkshire & Lincolnshire, West Midlands, East Midlands, West & South West, East, South, London & South East, Wales & Northern Ireland) this would not be considered sufficient judging appointment experience.

The hands-on judging tiers for JEP to be realigned to the tiers associated with Stud Book Bands A to E and CC allocations. Efforts must continue to try to ensure a greater level of simplicity and consistency, wherever possible.

A new approach to hands-on judging numbers and judging appointments to be adopted to better reflect a judge's growing experience as they progress their career. A revised set of measures outlined in an open and transparent way for group judges wanting to develop their CC judging of more breeds in their group.

## HANDS-ON JUDGING NUMBERS & JUDGING APPOINTMENTS

JUDGING TIER	CC BAND	STUDBOOK BAND	TRADITIONAL ROUTE	OLD JEP	1st x5 CC BREEDS		> x5 CC BREEDS*		GROUP (not policy)*		GROUP (policy)*	
					NEW JEP	JUDGING APPOINTMENTS	NEW JEP	JUDGING APPOINTMENTS	NEW JEP	JUDGING APPOINTMENTS	NEW JEP	JUDGING APPOINTMENTS
1	1	A	30	15	20	4	15	3	12	2	10	1
1	2	A	30	15	20	4	15	3	12	2	10	1
2	3	B	40	20	30	6	20	4	17	3	15	2
2	4	B	40	20	30	6	20	4	17	3	15	2
3	5	C	70	35	50	8	40	5	30	4	25	3
3	6	C	70	35	50	8	40	5	30	4	25	3
4	7	D	120	60	90	10	70	6	55	5	45	4
4	8	D	120	60	90	10	70	6	55	5	45	4
5	9	E	180	90	135	12	100	10	75	8	65	5
6	10	E	250	125	180	14	140	12	115	10	90	6

\*With Eye for a Dog Assessment pass

For more details concerning Policy judges refer to Appendix G

### What can be used for Hands-on judging numbers?

- Breed classes at Championship Shows without CCs
- Breed classes at Open Shows
- Special Award Classes at breed club shows
- Supported Entry Shows
- Breed classes at Limited Shows
- Overseas appointments
- Shows where a single dog of a breed is present\*
- Dogs judged at single breed dog of the year competition\*
- Dogs judged at inter or intra-club single-breed matches\*
- AVNSC and AV imported register classes\*
- Mock/training class or A3 hands-on assessment class, only one such event can be claimed with a maximum of 5 dogs

*\*Hands-on numbers under these categories shall be capped at 20% of the required hands-on number for the breed, i.e. 80% or more of a judge's hands-on numbers must come from other categories of hands-on judging experience.*

## What cannot be used for Hands-on judging numbers?

- AV & stakes classes
- Fun & companion classes
- Referee & similar judging appointments
- JEP mentoring sessions (other than Judging Appointment mentoring)

## What can be used for Judging Appointment experience?

Single breed classes judged at RKC licenced shows\* such as:

- Championship Shows without CCs
- Open Shows
- Special Award Classes
- Supported Entry Shows
- Limited Shows

*\*Or equivalent for overseas judging appointments*

**Non-CC breeds shall be classified as Tier 2 breeds unless their breed club has agreed to them being classified a Tier 1 breed.**

## VARIETY BREEDS

- Dachshund (Tier 6): **180 Dachshunds** of any combination of the six varieties
- Poodle (Tier 5): **90 Poodles** of any combination of Poodle (Miniature), Poodle (Standard) and Poodle (Toy), which must include a minimum of 20 of each variety
- German Spitz (Tier 3): **50 German Spitz** of any combination of German Spitz (Klein) and German Spitz (Mittel)
- Fox Terrier (Tier 3): **50 Fox Terriers** of any combination of Fox Terrier (Smooth) and Fox Terrier (Wire)
- Bull Terrier (Tier 4): **90 Bull Terriers** of any combination of Bull Terrier and Bull Terrier (Miniature)
- Belgian Shepherd Dog (Tier 3): **50 Belgian Shepherd Dogs**, any combination of Groenendael, Tervueren, Malinois and Laekenois
- Chihuahua (Tier 5): **135 Chihuahuas**, any combination of Long Coat or Smooth Coat

## LEVEL 4 – CHAMPIONSHIP LEVEL

### BREED JUDGING AT CC LEVEL

#### REQUIREMENTS

- Attend and pass a RKC managed **Breed-specific Assessment** for the breed; or
- Provide evidence of an **A3 Hands-on Breed Judging Assessment\*** pass for the breed completed prior to 31 December 2025 in accordance with the legacy Kennel Club Code of Best Practice for the Running of a Breed Seminar & Judging Competence Assessment; or
- A **Judge's Development Programme (JDP)\*** credit\* in the breed

*\*This option shall only be available until 31 December 2029 and it cannot be used if the A3 Hands-on Assessment is being utilised in lieu of a BAD attendance and MCE pass under L2.*

#### ELIGIBILITY TO JUDGE AT THIS LEVEL

- Award **Challenge Certificates (CCs)** in the breed
- Judge the **Group** and AV/Stakes classes within that group for the given breed at **Open** shows, e.g. a judge achieving L4 CC status in a Toy breed shall be eligible to judge the Toy Group and Toy AV/Stakes classes at open show level.
- Judge **Any Variety/Stakes Classes at Open or Championship shows** plus all **Groups and Best in Show** at **Open** shows with **Eye For A Dog** assessment pass

#### **COMMENTARY**

RKC Office to maintain oversight and control of the BSA; but with increased support from breed clubs and councils to find improved ways to manage BSA volumes and workloads. This will include consideration of when, where and with whom BSA take place. Better use to be made of suitably trained BECs and other RKC delegates to assist as facilitators with the delivery of BSA.

Based on feedback from candidates and assessors, the format of the BSA is to be remodelled. It shall cease being 100% written. Assessors shall discuss and question candidates on their placings and findings before reaching a decision as to whether they are ready to progress to awarding CCs.

Where a candidate is assessed as not being ready to progress to award CCs clearer feedback and follow-up learning actions to be provided.

Code of Best Practice for BSA to be revised alongside modified candidate paperwork to simplify and better guide candidates through the process.

In response to feedback from stakeholders, historic A3 hands-on breed specific judging assessment passes completed in accordance the previous KC code of best practice or a JDP credit in the breed shall be accepted in lieu of a BSA for L4. This shall be a time limited option until the end of 2029. It shall also assist some breeds with potential short-term judge supply challenges.

Awarding CCs in a judge's first breed shall no longer automatically lead to the ability to judge all groups, AV/stakes classes and BIS at open show level. Group judging and AV/stakes classes shall be restricted to the given breed's Group. A judge has the option to unlock judging all groups, AV/stakes classes and BIS at open show level plus AV/stakes classes at Championship show level if they achieve a pass in the Eye for a Dog Assessment.

## LEVEL 5 – GROUP JUDGE

### CHAMPIONSHIP LEVEL GROUP JUDGING

#### REQUIREMENTS

- **Group judging experience:** awarded CCs to **25% or more** of the breeds currently allocated CCs in the Group, **including at least one** of the Group's **six breeds with the highest average breed entries** at Championship Shows. Meaning:
  - **Hound:** 5 breeds - including 1 of Afghan Hound, Basset Hound, Beagle, Dachshund, Rhodesian Ridgeback, Whippet
  - **Gundog:** 7 breeds - including 1 of Retriever (Golden), Retriever (Labrador), Spaniel (Cocker), Irish Setter, Retriever (Flat Coated), Pointer
  - **Terrier:** 6 breeds - including 1 of Staffordshire Bull Terrier, Border Terrier, Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier, Cairn Terrier, Bedlington Terrier, Bull Terrier, Irish Terrier
  - **Utility:** 5 breeds - including 1 of Bulldog, Dalmatian, French Bulldog, Tibetan Terrier, Poodle, Tibetan Spaniel
  - **Working:** 4 breeds - including 1 of Newfoundland, Boxer, Dobermann, Great Dane, Rottweiler, Siberian Husky
  - **Pastoral:** 5 breeds - including 1 of Bearded Collie, Border Collie, Collie (Rough), German Shepherd Dog, Shetland Sheepdog, Samoyed
  - **Toy:** 5 breeds - including 1 of Cavalier King Charles Spaniel, Chihuahuas, Papillon, Japanese Chin, Pomeranian, Pug
- Attended and passed the **Eye For A Dog** assessment
- Successfully completed **NEW Level 5 mentoring** session
- Evidenced **broader pedigree dog experience**

## **ELIGIBILITY TO JUDGE AT THIS LEVEL**

- Judge the relevant **Group at Championship Shows**
- Level 2 for all breeds in relevant Group **only where** the judge has:
  - Attended a **BAD**; and
  - Successfully completed a **Breed Mentoring** session

### **COMMENTARY**

Remove minimum criteria for group judging experience.

Introduce more objective measure of 25% of CC breeds in group.

Maintain requirement for “big” breed CC judging experience in group.

Eye for a Dog Assessment pass remains.

New Level 5 mentoring session to be undertaken by experienced group judge with focus on:

(1) Group ring procedure and timings.

(2) Assessing the judge’s breed knowledge and understanding in the group for the breeds in which they do not award CCs

(3) Addressing breed watch and health & well-being aspects across all breeds in the group

(4) Understanding the wider expectations and scrutiny of group winners from inside and outside the pedigree dog world

Evidenced broader group and pedigree dog experience to be more clearly defined to include:

- Judge’s judging experience in their non-CC breeds in the group
- Judges’s judging experience of the group at open show level, 7 or more group appointments at open show level is expected
- Judge’s judging experience of the group in AV/AVNC/stakes classes
- Judge’s ownership, breeding and exhibiting experience and success

To unlock L2 for breeds in the group in which they do not award CCs, a judge must demonstrate a level of breed interest, knowledge and understanding. This is to be evidenced by (1) attending a BAD; and (2) successfully completing x1 breed mentoring session. The type of mentoring session will be for the judge to choose.

## LEVEL 6 – BEST IN SHOW JUDGE

### CHAMPIONSHIP LEVEL BEST IN SHOW JUDGING

#### REQUIREMENTS

- Previously judged at least **2 Groups** at general or group championship level and awarded CCs to at least **one breed from one other Group**; **or**
- Previously judged at least **1 Group** at general or group championship level and awarded CCs to at least **one breed from three other Groups**
- Attended and passed the **Eye For A Dog** assessment
- Successfully completed **NEW Level 6 mentoring** session
- Evidenced **broader pedigree dog experience**

#### ELIGIBILITY TO JUDGE AT THIS LEVEL

- Judge **Best in Show at Championship Shows**

#### COMMENTARY

Remove minimum criteria for BIS judging experience.

Introduce more objective measure for BIS judging experience.

Eye for a Dog Assessment pass remains.

New Level 6 mentoring session to be undertaken by experienced BIS judge with focus on:

(1) BIS ring procedure and timings.

(2) Assessing the judge's breed knowledge and understanding in the group(s) and breeds they are not approved for at championship level

(3) Addressing breed watch and health & well-being aspects across all breeds and all groups

(4) Understanding the wider expectations and scrutiny of BIS winners from inside and outside the pedigree dog world

Evidenced broader judging and pedigree experience to be more clearly defined to include:

- Judge's judging experience in the group(s) and breeds they are not approved for at championship level
- Judge's judging experience of BIS at open show level, 5 or more BIS appointments at open show level is expected
- Judge's judging experience of AV/AVNC/stakes classes
- Judge's ownership, breeding and exhibiting experience and success

## LEVEL 7 – ALL BREED CHAMPIONSHIP JUDGE

### ALL BREEDS CC LEVEL JUDGING

#### **REQUIREMENTS**

- To be **L4 for all breeds** with championship status; and
- To be **L5 for all Groups** and to have judged each Group at general or group championship level on **5 or more occasions**; and
- To be **L6** and to have judged BIS at general or group championship level on **6 or more occasions**; and
- To have a **clean RKC record**, i.e. no fines; and
- To have the **support** of the **RKC Judges Committee** and **Board**

#### **ELIGIBILITY TO JUDGE AT THIS LEVEL**

- All breeds, Groups and BIS at Championship level and to use the honorary title of **“Royal Kennel Club All Breeds Championship Judge”**

#### **COMMENTARY**

The lack of L7 all breeds championship judge is an omission from the current JEP.

L7 should be an aspirational pinnacle of a RKC judge's career for those wishing to pursue it.

Only a modest number of judges are likely to achieve this status at any point in time.

L7 judges should not be considered earlier than 2030 until such time that the JEP is the sole means by which UK resident judges of RKC licensed dog shows are trained, educated, evaluated, assessed and overseen; AND most of the JEP Review recommendations have been implemented.

**APPENDIX B** JEP in its current state

Detailing each JEP Level (1 to 6), the requirements to attain each level and the eligibility to judge at each level.

## **LEVEL 1**

### **Requirements to meet this level:**

- Minimum of five years proven interest in pedigree dogs
- Attend a Conformation and Movement seminar hosted by a Kennel Club Accredited Trainer
- Complete a minimum of two full-day stewarding appointments
- Attend a Requirements of a Dog Show Judge seminar and pass associated exam (either in person or online via Kennel Club Academy, exam effective from 1 January 2024)
- Pass the Points of a Dog assessment conducted by a Kennel Club Accredited Trainer (effective from 1 January 2024)

### **Eligibility to judge**

Up to three classes (four if one is a puppy class) for any breed at limited or open shows.

## **LEVEL 2**

### **Requirements to meet this level**

#### First breed

- 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 judge 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 (no CCs).

Any variety classes, groups and best in show at limited shows.

## **LEVEL 3**

### **Requirements to meet this level**

- Undergo minimum of three 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
- 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 Kennel Club Stud Book – save for exceptional circumstances (one-time qualification for first breed in which a judge awards CCs)
- 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)
- Have achieved the relevant hands-on experience in line with the stated requirements for the relevant breed:

### **Eligibility to judge**

- Unlimited number of classes for the respective breed at limited, open or championship shows (no CCs)
- Any variety classes groups and best in show at limited shows

## HANDS-ON REQUIREMENTS FOR LEVEL 4 (CC BREED STATUS)

TIER	BREEDS	TRADITIONAL ROUTE	JEP ROUTE
Tier 1	<p><b>Hound group:</b> Basset Fauve De Bretagne, Basset Griffon Vendeen (Grand), Bloodhound, Finnish Spitz, Greyhound, Ibizan Hound, Norwegian Elkhound, Otterhound, Pharaoh Hound</p> <p><b>Gundog Group:</b> Brittany, German Wirehaired Pointer, Retriever (Chesapeake Bay), Retriever (Curly Coated), Spaniel (Clumber), Spaniel (Irish Water)</p> <p><b>Terrier Group:</b> Australian Terrier, Cesky Terrier, Glen Of Imaal Terrier, Irish Terrier, Kerry Blue Terrier, Lakeland Terrier, Manchester Terrier, Norwich Terrier, Sealyham Terrier, Skye Terrier, Welsh Terrier</p> <p><b>Utility Group:</b> Shar Pei</p> <p><b>Pastoral Group:</b> Australian Cattle Dog, Collie (Smooth), Hungarian Puli, Norwegian Buhund, Polish Lowland Sheepdog, Swedish Vallhund</p> <p><b>Working Group:</b> Bouvier Des Flandres, Mastiff</p> <p><b>Toy Group:</b> Lowchen (Little Lion Dog), Maltese</p>	30 dogs	15 dogs

TIER	BREEDS	TRADITIONAL ROUTE	JEP ROUTE
Tier 2	<p><b>Hound Group:</b> Basenji, Basset Griffon Vendeen (Petit)</p> <p><b>Gundog Group:</b> Bracco Italiano, Irish Red &amp; White Setter, Large Munsterlander, Spaniel (American Cocker), Spaniel (Field), Spaniel (Sussex), Spanish Water Dog</p> <p><b>Terrier Group:</b> Airedale Terrier, Bedlington Terrier, Dandie Dinmont Terrier, Norfolk Terrier, Parson Russell Terrier, Scottish Terrier</p> <p><b>Utility Group:</b> Akita, Keeshond, Schipperke, Schnauzer</p> <p><b>Pastoral Group:</b> Briard, Finnish Lapphund, Lancashire Heeler, Pyrenean Mountain Dog</p> <p><b>Working Group:</b> Giant Schnauzer, Portuguese Water Dog, St. Bernard, Tibetan Mastiff</p> <p><b>Toy Group:</b> English Toy Terrier (Black &amp; Tan), Griffon Bruxellois, Italian Greyhound, Pekingese</p>	40 dogs	20 dogs

TIER	BREEDS	TRADITIONAL ROUTE	JEP ROUTE
Tier 3	<p><b>Hound Group:</b> Basset Hound, Borzoi, Deerhound, Irish Wolfhound, Saluki</p> <p><b>Gundog Group:</b> German Shorthaired Pointer, Hungarian Vizsla, Hungarian Wire Haired Vizsla, Italian Spinone, Retriever (Nova Scotia Duck Tolling)</p> <p><b>Terrier Group:</b> Cairn Terrier, Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier, West Highland White Terrier</p> <p><b>Utility Group:</b> Boston Terrier, Chow Chow, Japanese Shiba Inu, Japanese Spitz, Miniature Schnauzer</p> <p><b>Pastoral Group:</b> Australian Shepherd, German Shepherd Dog, Old English Sheepdog, Samoyed, Welsh Corgi (Cardigan), Welsh Corgi (Pembroke)</p> <p><b>Working Group:</b> Alaskan Malamute, Bernese Mountain Dog, Bullmastiff, Dogue de Bordeaux, Leonberger, Newfoundland, Siberian Husky</p> <p><b>Toy Group:</b> Affenpinscher, Bichon Frise, Chinese Crested, Havanese, King Charles Spaniel, Miniature Pinscher, Yorkshire Terrier</p>	70 dogs	35 dogs

TIER	BREEDS	TRADITIONAL ROUTE	JEP ROUTE
Tier 4	<p><b>Hound Group:</b> Afghan Hound, Beagle, Rhodesian Ridgeback</p> <p><b>Gundog Group:</b> English Setter, Gordon Setter, Pointer, Spaniel (English Springer), Spaniel (Welsh Springer), Weimaraner</p> <p><b>Utility Group:</b> Bulldog, Dalmatian, French Bulldog, Lhasa Apso, Shih Tzu, Tibetan Spaniel, Tibetan Terrier</p> <p><b>Pastoral Group:</b> Bearded Collie, Border Collie, Collie (Rough), Shetland Sheepdog</p> <p><b>Working Group:</b> Dobermann, Great Dane, Rottweiler</p> <p><b>Toy Group:</b> Japanese Chin, Papillon, Pomeranian</p>	120 dogs	60 dogs

TIER	BREEDS	TRADITIONAL ROUTE	JEP ROUTE
Tier 5	<u>Gundog_group</u> : Irish Setter, Retriever (Flat Coated), Spaniel (Cocker)  <u>Terrier_group</u> : Border Terrier, Staffordshire Bull Terrier  <u>Working_group</u> : Boxer  <u>Toy_group</u> : Cavalier King Charles Spaniel, Pug	180 dogs	90 dogs

TIER	BREEDS	TRADITIONAL ROUTE	JEP ROUTE
Tier 6	<u>Hound group:</u> Whippet	250 dogs	125 dogs
	<u>Gundog group:</u> Retriever (Golden), Retriever (Labrador)		

All non-CC breeds are to be classed as tier 2 breeds with the exception of the Catalan Sheepdog, Greenland Dog, Estrela Mountain Dog, Hovawart, German Longhaired Pointer and Pyrenean Sheepdog (Long Haired), which are tier 1 breeds, at the request of the breed clubs.

For those breeds with varieties:

- Dachshund: 125 Dachshunds of any combination of the six varieties
- Poodle: 75 Poodles of any combination of Poodle (Miniature), Poodle (Standard) and Poodle (Toy), which must include a minimum of 15 of each variety
- German Spitz: 35 German Spitz of any combination of German Spitz (Klein) and German Spitz (Mittel)
- Fox Terrier: 35 Fox Terriers of any combination of Fox Terrier (Smooth) and Fox Terrier (Wire)
- Bull Terrier: 40 Bull Terriers of any combination of Bull Terrier and Bull Terrier (Miniature)
- Belgian Shepherd Dog: 35 Belgian Shepherd Dogs, any combination of Groenendael, Tervueren, Malinois and Laekenois
- Chihuahua: 100 Chihuahuas, any combination of Long Coat or Smooth Coat

The following types of event may be used to claim hands-on experience numbers:

- Breed classes at championship shows without CCs
- Breed classes at open shows
- Breed classes at limited shows
- Mock/training classes at breed club shows (practical judging days) – only one occasion can be claimed and a maximum of five dogs
- Dogs judged at Kennel Club approved assessments, maximum of five dogs – only one occasion and a maximum of five dogs. Cannot be used in addition to mock classes
- Dogs judged at inter or intra-club single-breed matches
- Special award classes at breed club shows
- Supported entry shows
- Dogs judged at single breed dog of the year competitions

- Overseas appointments

Dogs judged at the following types of event may NOT be included in a judge's hands-on experience:

- AVNSC and variety classes
- At fun days
- Conjointly with other judges at events where the candidate judge is not required to give independent judgment on the dogs
- Any JEP mentoring sessions
- Shows where a single dog of a breed is present cannot be counted as part of a judge's hands-on experience

## **LEVEL 4**

### **Requirements to meet this level**

- Attend and passed a breed-specific assessment for the specific breed run by The Kennel Club
- For 4<sup>th</sup> and subsequent breeds - Attend and pass the Eye for a Dog assessment

### **Eligibility to judge**

- Award Challenge Certificates in the respective breed
- Any variety classes, groups and best in show at open and limited shows

## LEVEL 5

### Requirements to meet this level

- Have awarded CCs to a MINIMUM of 20% of the breeds currently allocated Challenge Certificates in the group including at least one of the 6 breeds with the currently highest average breed entries in the group at championship shows.

**Hound Group** – 4 breeds (incl. 1 of Afghan Hound, Basset Hounds, Beagle, Dachshunds, Rhodesian Ridgeback, Whippet).

**Gundog Group** – 6 breeds (incl. 1 of Retriever (Golden), Retriever (Labrador), Spaniel (Cocker), Irish Setter, Retriever (Flat Coated), Pointer

**Terrier Group** – 5 breeds (incl. 1 of Staffordshire Bull Terrier, Border Terrier, Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier, Cairn Terrier, Bedlington Terrier, Bull Terriers, Irish Terrier)

**Utility Group** – 4 breeds (incl. 1 of Bulldog, Dalmatian, French Bulldog, Tibetan Terrier, Poodles, Tibetan Spaniel).

**Working Group** – 3 breeds (incl. 1 of Newfoundland, Boxer, Dobermann, Great Dane, Rottweiler, Siberian Husky).

**Pastoral Group** – 4 breeds (incl. 1 of Bearded Collie, Border Collie, Collie (Rough), German Shepherd Dog, Shetland Sheepdog, Samoyed).

**Toy Group** – 4 breeds (incl. 1 of Cavalier King Charles Spaniel, Chihuahuas, Papillon, Japanese Chin, Pomeranian, Pug).

- Have attended and passed the Eye for a Dog assessment
- Other experience within the group will also be taken into account and Judges should ensure that their judging history for all other breeds within the group is uploaded to the JEP Platform before submitting.

### Eligibility to judge

- Relevant Group at Championship Shows
- Unlimited number of classes of any breed within the approved group at open and limit shows and non-CC classes at Championship Shows

## **LEVEL 6**

### **Requirements to meet this level**

- The MINIMUM criteria for approval to award Best in Show at Championship shows are to have previously judged at least one group and to have awarded challenge certificates to at least one breed from two other groups. Judges are also expected to have adequate experience in judging across all groups.
- Have attended and passed the Eye for a Dog assessment
- Judges should ensure that their judging history for all other breeds across all groups is uploaded to the JEP Platform before submitting.

### **Eligibility to judge**

- Best in Show at Championship Shows

## **APPENDIX C** Transition & Timeline

The Review Panel accepts and understands the communication to stakeholders of its changes to the JEP will be vital to the success of moving from the JEP in its current state to the future recommended state.

Lessons must be learned from recent experiences on such matters.

The Review Panel was not tasked with addressing matters of practical implementation. In short, the Review Panel was tasked with producing a “wish list” of improvement recommendations.

Nevertheless, the practical aspects and ability of our recommendations to be implemented on-the-ground have been a consideration for the Review Panel in general terms.

Therefore, the Review Panel has produced a high-level suggested timeline with which its range of improvement recommendations could be taken forward. This is of course subject to more detailed planning, analysis and agreement concerning available time and resources to make this happen.

The Review Panel is recommending:

- It's report and the recommendations it contains are adopted in full by the Board.
- An implementation team is quickly established and an action plan agreed and work on implementation started without delay.
- Short-term deliverable improvements to be seen before the end of 2026.
- Medium-term deliverable improvements to commence in 2027 and 2028 and continue into 2029.
- End goal for the recommended JEP future state to be fully implemented and operational no later than 2030.
- A period of sustained stabilisation with no significant further changes to the JEP for a period of ten years, subject to normal periodic best practice review and operational refinements.
- Judges in training at or near completion of an existing level to be given a period in which to progress based on JEP in its current state, e.g. L3 judges looking to progress in the short-term to L4.

- Acceptance of the principle that judges in training progressing to a new level shall be required to follow the new JEP future state model as soon as practicably possible, subject to implementation logistics.
- A judge's existing eligibility to judge shall remain. Subject to extended breaks in judging activity that will necessitate refresher training before judging can recommence; and recommendations concerning continuing professional development for judges.

## **TIMELINE (proposed)**

### **2026**

- Q2
  - JEP Review report to Board
  - JEP Review recommendations adopted by Board
- Q3
  - Implementation group established
  - Implementation plan & priorities agreed
  - JEP improvement communications start
  - BSA improvements trialled
  - L1 curriculum revamp starts
  - Work to update Codes of Best Practice
  - Work to be update Regulations
  - Accredited trainer needs reviewed & agreed
- Q4
  - Improved engagement activities with BECs begin
  - BSA improvements refined
  - New accredited trainer recruitment undertaken
  - Start of Find A Judge improvements visible
  - RKC, BECs & breed clubs work to update mentor lists
  - RKC, BECs & breed clubs develop updated BAD content
  - RKC, BECs & breed clubs develop updated MCE content

### **2027**

- Q1
  - Judge licensing model developed
  - New Codes of Best Practice in place
  - New Regulations in place
  - Improved engagement activities with BECs continue
  - Mentor training begins
  - Accredited trainer training begins
- Q2
  - Phased introduction on new L1 curriculum begins
  - Mentor training continues

- Accredited trainer training continues
- Improved engagement activities with BECs continue
- BEC training starts
- Develop pool of “super” BECs
- Develop pool of JEP auditors & system of JEP checks
- Q3
  - Accredited trainer training continues
  - Phased introduction on new L1 curriculum continues
  - Mentor training continues
  - BEC training & engagement activities continue
- Q4
  - Communication of judge licensing plan
  - Accredited trainer training continues
  - Phased introduction on new L1 curriculum concludes
  - Mentor training continues
  - BEC training & engagement activities continue

## **2028**

- Judge licensing starts
- JEP auditors & checks system in place & trialling starts
- New accredited trainer network in place and operational
- New L1 curriculum fully operational
- Mentoring training ongoing
- BEC training & engagement ongoing

## **2029**

- JEP auditors & checks system refined
- Medium-term Find A Judge improvements visible
- Real-time technology led critiques trialled
- A3 hands-on/JDP credit option in lieu of L4 BSA to come to an end

## **2030**

- Future JEP state fully in place & operational

## **APPENDIX D Mentors & Mentoring**

Mentors and mentoring are the backbone of the JEP and are critical for delivering breed specific training and education.

Observation is to be replaced with an additional Judging Appointment mentoring session; and the period over which a judge should successfully complete their required 4 mentoring sessions should not be less than 18 months.

The JEP is not a tick-box exercise nor race.

The Review Panel is recommending:

- Mentoring to commence at L2 in the form of Group mentoring.
- Three further successful mandatory mentoring sessions for L3:
  - 1-to-1 mentoring session
  - Judging Appointment mentoring session
  - Student Judge mentoring session
- The purpose of each mentoring session is clear in that it is to help impart and assess breed specific knowledge and understanding, with an emphasis on the Judging Appointment and Student Judge mentoring sessions determining whether a judge is ready to progress to a Breed Specific Assessment.
- The Observers list for a breed will be amalgamated with the breed's mentors list.
- Mentor lists are reviewed and only active mentors are displayed.
- A new system of training mentors to be developed, trialled, refined and rolled out as soon as practicably possible, i.e. train the trainer initiatives.
- All mentors to be given a period in which to complete new mandatory mentoring training.
- A revised approach for how feedback is to be provided from mentor to the judge in training mentee.
- An acceptance of the principle that not everyone is going to be best suited to undertake the role of mentor.
- Group judges who have awarded CCs to a breed on 2 or more occasions may apply to the RKC Office for inclusion as a mentor for the breed. The RKC Office may approach such judges for inclusion as a mentor for a breed.

- All mentoring sessions to include a requirement to address:
  - judging for health and wellbeing without exaggerations; and
  - added focus for Breed Watch category 2 and 3 breeds and their specific points of concern; and
  - practical breed specific physical hands-on examination techniques and requirements; and
  - breed specific conformation and movement.
- New guidelines and protocols to be introduced for Student Judge mentoring sessions so all stakeholders are clear on their roles & responsibilities; and the expectations for what best practice looks like for this type of mentoring.
- Consideration for general & group championship shows to be encouraged, and where necessary required, to support and provide for Student Judge mentoring.
- A reformed procedure and mechanism for mentee and mentor feedback to BECs and the RKC Office on the quality of their mentoring experience.
- Code of Best Practice for Breed Mentoring to be reviewed and updated based on the recommendations being made, and from user experience and feedback. The Review Panel has prepared draft proposed materials in support of this.

## **CODE OF BEST PRACTICE FOR BREED MENTORING**

The Review Panel has prepared the following draft proposed materials in support of this task.

### **What is mentoring?**

Mentoring is the act of one individual offering help and support to another individual, with the goal of professional and personal development. Mentoring is often conducted between two people in the same network. Mentoring is therefore a method of helping someone reflect, learn and develop.

In the context of the Judges Education Programme, mentoring is a learning and development experience where a mentee is assisted by a mentor in developing breed specific skills and knowledge. All mentoring should include a focus on breed knowledge and understanding, general canine knowledge and understanding, and general judging competence. The importance of health and well-being should also be included.

As a judge progresses through the JEP levels mentors will change to those with the relevant group judging and best in show judging experience. Mentoring is a continual developmental process and there is an **expectation** that it will take place (and be documented) throughout a judge's career. This is especially important should, at any time, a mentor feel their mentee is not ready to progress to the next level. The mentor will highlight any developmental goals for the mentee to cover before their next formal mentoring session. It is the mentee's responsibility to evidence that they have engaged in additional activities to help them achieve any highlighted developmental goals. If, at any time, a mentee has not satisfactorily completed a formal mentoring session and has not engaged in additional activity they will have to repeat the mentoring session in question.

### **What is a mentee?**

A mentee is an individual with specific professional, personal (or both) goals they are looking to achieve. The role of the mentee is to continuously learn, accept constructive feedback and listen carefully to their mentor. In the context of the JEP, a mentee is a judge in training.

### **Benefits of mentoring**

Being mentored provides the mentee with the opportunity to:

- Acquire new knowledge and skills
- Improve self-awareness and confidence
- Discuss challenges and aspirations with a neutral person
- Gain insight from their experiences

Mentors also benefit, as they can:

- Build and improve their own skills
- Gain new insights from their mentee

### **Responsibilities**

Mentoring involves empowering, enhancing and facilitating rather than telling someone what to do.

Mentees are responsible for:

- Understanding what mentoring is and each role within the relationship
- Agreeing and committing to mentoring
- Setting the agenda and purpose for the relationship
- Clarifying to your mentor what you would like to achieve
- Observing confidentiality

A mentor is responsible for:

- Understanding what mentoring is and each role within the relationship
- Making a genuine commitment to the mentoring relationship
- Seeking further clarity on objectives, to be clear on the required outcome by giving both positive and constructive feedback
- Dealing professionally with any conflicts of interest that arise
- Observing confidentiality

### **Joint Roles and Responsibilities**

Both mentor and mentee should ensure that they:

- Feel comfortable to proceed with the relationship and the mentor must ensure they have the necessary skills and experience to learn from their mentor and support their mentee
- Prepare for the session and are clear on expectations
- Complete all relevant forms and records as required by the RKC to progress to the next level
- Have a clear understanding of and an agreement of the level of confidentiality required within the mentoring relationship
- Adhere to the rules of mutual trust and respect

A mentor should have the following skills and attitudes:

### **Skills**

- Communication and interpersonal skills

- Ability to facilitate learning
- Analytical skills
- Ability to listen and to provide feedback

### **Attitudes**

- Willingness to share expertise and time
- Commitment to helping the development of colleagues less skilled or experienced in their area of expertise
- Commitment to their development as a mentor, reflecting on their mentoring practices and seeking improvement.
- Commitment to the role of judging
- Respect for colleagues

### **Eligibility criteria for breed mentees**

To be eligible to undertake a mentoring session, mentees must meet all the requirements and be registered at L2 for the respective breed.

### **Eligibility criteria for breed mentors**

Breed judges who have bred/owned at least 2 UK champions in the breed (Champion or Show Champion) and awarded CCs at least 2 times.

Group judges who have awarded CCs to the breed at least 2 times.

Those who do not meet the above criteria but are supported by at least 50% of breed clubs (except where there is one breed club and they have the support of that club) or by the breed council and the RKC Judges Committee. In all cases, mentors should be people with recognisable and demonstrable levels of experience in the breed.

### **Organisation of mentoring**

The following mentoring methodologies will be employed:

- Breed group mentoring
- One-to-one mentoring
- Judge appointment mentoring
- Student Judge mentoring
- Level 5 mentoring for group judges
- Level 6 mentoring for best in show judges

Methods used are dependent on the level of the judge.

## Judging levels and mentoring method

JEP LEVEL	MENTORING METHOD	FOCUS ON
Pre-L1	No formal mentoring required. However, there is an <b>expectation</b> that mentees will seek out breed experts to discuss the breed in detail. They should also find out about breed specific health matters.	'Have a go' judging sessions, informal mentoring at shows or in breed clubs. Document experiences in 'JEP Journal' as evidence of involvement in pedigree dogs.
L1	No formal mentoring required. However, there is an <b>expectation</b> that mentees will continue to seek out breed experts to discuss the breed in detail. Start of formal JEP learning and education. Accredited Trainer seminars provide an opportunity for informal mentoring to continue as part of the process to develop general canine knowledge & understanding.	Developing the principles of Eye For A Dog by way of L1 mandatory curriculum.  Make best use of Accredited Trainer knowledge & experience.
L2	Mandatory breed group mentoring as part of BAD (first formal mentoring session). Can be arranged separately for those completing online BADs or if numbers dictate. Organised by breed clubs.	Hands-on experience. Specific breed watch and wider health and well-being matters. How to approach dogs that are nervous, dealing with inexperienced handlers etc.
L3	Three further mandatory mentoring sessions: 1-to-1, Judging Appointment & Student Judge.  Judging Appointment and Student Judge mentoring sessions to determine whether a judge is ready to progress to L4 Breed Specific Assessment.  JEP L2 and L3 mentoring sessions should take place over a minimum of 18 months.	Hands-on experience along with reflection on ring organisation & procedures, placing of dogs, what went well and could be better if.

JEP LEVEL	MENTORING METHOD	FOCUS ON
L4	No formal mentoring required. However, there is an <b>expectation</b> that mentees will actively continue to seek out breed experts to continually improve and enhance their learning. They should also seek opportunities to observe and learn from other breeds as well. They should document and record such interactions.	Honing judging 'craft'. Reflecting on their own practice.
L5	A new mandatory mentoring session to be introduced. Must be successfully completed as ready to progress to be L5 eligible. The session will be organised and managed by the RKC using an experienced judge from the group in question.	Group ring procedure and timings. Assessing the judge's breed knowledge and understanding in the group for the breeds in which they do not award CCs, specifically addressing the breed watch and health and well-being aspects for those breeds. Wider expectations and scrutiny of group winners from inside and outside the pedigree dog world.
L6	A new mandatory mentoring session to be introduced. Must be successfully completed as ready to progress to be L6 eligible. The session will be organised and managed by the RKC using an experienced general championship BIS judge.	BIS ring procedure and timings. Assessing the judge's breed knowledge and understanding for the breeds in which they do not award CCs, specifically addressing the breed watch and health and well-being aspects for those breeds. Wider expectations and scrutiny of BIS winners from inside and outside the pedigree dog world.

## **Expectations of the Mentor**

In all forms of formal mentoring, the mentor must be confident that their mentee is ready to progress to the next level. They should be confident to add developmental goals to the mentee form if required for the mentee to progress satisfactorily. Subsequent mentors should check the mentee's previous mentoring form to ensure that additional activity has been undertaken to achieve that goal.

### **Breed Group Mentoring – Expectations of the Mentor**

- Ability to assess dogs quickly but with detail, in a focused way.
- Ability to manage a group of around four people, who may have different personalities and be at different stages of experience.
- Awareness of the welfare of dogs and handlers, ensuring they are given opportunities to change positions and relax between assessments.
- Going over dogs in a breed specific manner.
- Discuss the merits and demerits of an individual dog.
- Identify which merits and demerits are most significant in relation to function and health.
- Keep moderation at the forefront of the conversation.
- Discuss placings and clearly explain the reasoning behind them.
- Discuss and accept different types within the breed.
- Give feedback – both positive and negative – in a constructive way.

### **One-to-One Mentoring – Expectations of the Mentor**

- Go through Breed Watch and the current level at which the breed is placed.
- Explain that only a snapshot of the dogs is being seen on that day, and that presentation can vary depending on venue, weather, and stage of the show season.
- Make clear that the judge has the best position in the ring for assessing aspects others cannot easily see, such as teeth, condition, and the most accurate view of movement.
- Talk through correct ring procedure specific to the breed.
- Going over dogs in a breed specific manner.
- Discuss the merits and demerits of an individual dog.
- Identify which merits and demerits are most significant in relation to function and health.
- Keep moderation at the forefront of the conversation.
- Discuss placings and clearly explain the reasoning behind them.
- Discuss and accept different types within the breed.
- Give feedback – both positive and negative – in a constructive way.

## **Judging Appointment Mentoring – Expectations of the Mentor**

- Meet with the judge beforehand and agree the method to be used, for example whether more detailed critiques are required.
- Go over dogs in a breed specific manner.
- Discuss the merits and demerits of an individual dog.
- Identify which merits and demerits are most significant in relation to function and health.
- Keep moderation at the forefront of the conversation.
- Discuss placings and clearly explain the reasoning behind them.
- Discuss and accept different types within the breed.
- Give feedback – positive and negative – in a constructive way, including what went well and what could be improved.

## **Student Judge Mentoring – Expectations of the Mentor**

- Agree the method beforehand to ensure a clear understanding of expectations.
- Hold a structured debrief after the judging to gain a full understanding of placings and why dogs were/were not rewarded. Reference to breed watch if applicable.
- Be confident in articulating their thoughts about the merits and demerits of the dogs quickly.
- Be able to judge in good time and be confident this can be maintained throughout with the student judge.
- Be able to place the dogs whilst articulating reasoning.
- Be able to manage the ring and react to or identify dogs or exhibitors who may not be as comfortable and adjust accordingly using their experience as a judge.

## **Expectations of the Mentee**

In all forms of formal mentoring, the mentee must be ready to progress to the next level when their mentor feels they are ready to do so. Any developmental goals highlighted in the mentee form will need to be evidenced as being covered through additional activity, by the mentee for them to progress satisfactorily.

## **Breed Group Mentoring – Expectations of the Mentee**

- Ability to assess dogs quickly but with detail, in a focused way
- Ability to contribute in a group of around four people, who may have different personalities and be at different stages of experience.
- Awareness of the welfare of dogs and handlers - particularly when going over the dogs.
- Going over dogs in a breed-specific manner.
- Discuss the merits and demerits of an individual dog.

- Identify which merits and demerits are most significant in relation to function and health.
- Keep moderation at the forefront of the conversation.
- Discuss placings and clearly explain the reasoning behind them.
- Discuss and accept different types within the breed.
- Take constructive feedback.

### **One-to-One Mentoring – Expectations of the Mentee**

- Meet with the mentor beforehand and agree on the method to be used, for example whether more detailed critiques are required.
- Go over dogs in a breed-specific manner.
- Discuss the merits and demerits of an individual dog.
- Identify which merits and demerits are most significant in relation to function and health.
- Keep moderation at the forefront of the conversation.
- Discuss placings and clearly explain the reasoning behind them.
- Discuss and accept different types within the breed.
- Take constructive feedback and talk about what went well and what could be improved.

### **Judging Appointment Mentoring – Expectations of the Mentee**

- Meet with the mentor beforehand and agree on the method to be used, for example whether more detailed critiques are required.
- Go over dogs in a breed-specific manner.
- Discuss the merits and demerits of an individual dog.
- Identify which merits and demerits are most significant in relation to function and health.
- Keep moderation at the forefront of the conversation.
- Discuss placings and clearly explain the reasoning behind them.
- Discuss and accept different types within the breed.
- Take constructive feedback and talk about what went well and what could be improved.

### **Student Judge Mentoring – Expectations of the Mentee**

- Agree the method beforehand with the mentor to ensure a clear understanding of expectations.
- Discuss the merits and demerits of the dogs.
- Talk about placing the dogs whilst articulating reasoning.
- Consider and appreciate how the judge is managing the ring.

- Take part in a debrief after the judging to gain a full understanding of placings and why dogs were or were not rewarded. Reference to Breed Watch if applicable.

### **Additional points for consideration**

Mentoring should also give a judge the confidence and ability to deal with dogs who:

- Are worried, anxious or scared
- Are uncontrollable in the ring
- Are lame, unwell or if the judge has welfare concerns

Mentoring should give a judge the understanding, knowledge and confidence to be able to:

- Withhold if necessary (and understand the regulations around doing so)
- Ask handlers and their exhibits to leave the ring where circumstances dictate
- Consider and react accordingly to environmental welfare issues e.g. dogs being judged in hot weather, sun in eyes etc.

### **Duration of mentoring sessions**

#### **Breed Group Mentoring**

It is anticipated that Breed group mentoring sessions would last for a minimum of 90 minutes which includes an initial outline of the session, time to go over the dogs present, an in-depth discussion of findings and more general discussion at the end. The additional time is necessary because where 3-4 mentees are involved it allows for individual attention. Mentors and mentees should therefore allow up to 2 hours for this type of mentoring to give themselves time for reflection after the session, to make notes and record outcomes.

#### **1-2-1 Mentoring**

It is anticipated that 1-2-1 mentoring sessions should last for a minimum of 1 hour which includes an initial outline of the session and time for a general discussion at the end. Mentors and mentees should therefore allow up to 90 minutes for this type of mentoring to give themselves time for reflection after the session, to make notes and record outcomes. In some cases, mentees may wish to organise multiple mentoring sessions in one day (at say a championship show). However, best practice dictates that in order to focus and reflect fully on the breed(s) being judged mentees arrange no more than 2 sessions in a day.

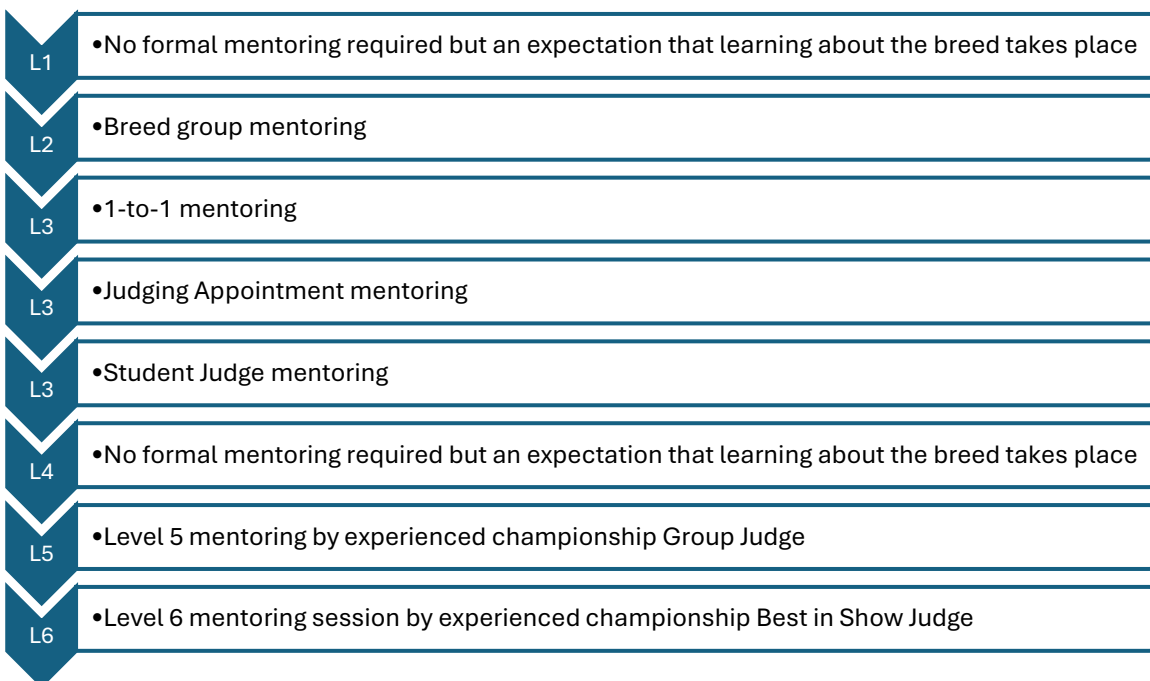
#### **Judging Appointment Mentoring and Student Judge Mentoring**

It is anticipated that for these mentoring sessions the duration would be agreed in advance of the session taking place. Agreement and discussion with the show organiser is also advised.

## Progression

For all formal mentoring sessions, the mentor and mentee must complete the relevant forms and records as required by the RKC to progress to the next level. If a mentor thinks that their mentee is not ready to progress (at any level) and requires additional mentoring or has additional developmental needs, then feedback and advice must be given with clear objectives for the mentee to focus on. It is the mentee's responsibility to evidence that additional developmental activity has taken place. In cases where a mentoring session is not satisfactorily completed or additional developmental activity has not taken place, then the mentoring session must be repeated and should be reorganised. It is a requirement that all formal mentoring sessions be satisfactorily completed before progressing to the next JEP level.

## Mentoring Summary



## **Student judge mentoring guidelines**

Student judge mentoring takes the format of the judge in the training, the student judge (the mentee) assessing an entry alongside a more experienced breed judge. The more experienced judge should have given CCs in the breed more than once, be a group judge (with experience in the breed) or is a judge recorded on the mentor list for the breed.

Student judge mentoring can take place at general or group championship shows or breed club championship shows to ensure there are enough dogs present to give a full and valuable experience.

Student judge mentoring is the final mandatory mentoring session at Level 3 and has (as with all the formal mentoring sessions) to be satisfactorily completed before the mentee can progress to a Breed Specific Assessment (BSA) at JEP L4.

### **Basic organisation**

1. The Breed Education Co-ordinator (BEC) must ensure that the show society and mentor are happy for a student judge to be present in the ring while judging is taking place, prior to the event. The BEC must make the approach to the mentor in the first instance, and then the show organiser.
2. Exhibitors must be made aware that a student judge will be present in the ring before judging commences. Ideally this should be listed in the show schedule and catalogue and/or a notice placed outside the ring on the day.
3. Ring stewards must also be fully aware that there will be a student judge in the ring.
4. At any time exhibitors can ask that their dogs are not 'gone over' by the student judge. In this instance they should notify the steward who will inform the mentor and student judge.
5. At all times, the mentor oversees the ring and only they have the authority to place dogs and dismiss or ask that they are withdrawn from the ring.
6. The mentor should always 'go over' dogs before the student judge.
7. There should be an appreciation that the mentor's prime role is to act as a judge on the day and this should be taken into account so that their entry is judged in a timely and efficient manner having regard to the show management and exhibitors.

### **Process**

The mentor and student judge should meet before judging commences to agree the methodology to ensure a clear understanding of expectations. This should include how many classes the student judge will be present for, how many dogs the student judge will 'go over' and the methodology for doing so.

The mentor should also discuss their priorities when assessing the breed including any reference to differences between puppy and adult exhibits, breed watch, health and wellbeing issues. Please note it may not be appropriate for the student judge to 'go over' puppies.

It is important that the presence of the student judge in the ring does not impair judging but gives them an opportunity to see the dogs clearly. This may be to the side of the ring.

### **Going over dogs**

Going over dogs is an integral part of learning about breeds. The student judge should be given ample opportunity to 'go over' and observe movement in as many dogs as possible but within the time constraints of the show organiser.

### **Methodology**

There is no prescribed method of organising the student judge mentoring in the ring. The mentor should always 'go over' the dogs first.

Any of the following methods may be appropriate:

1. The student judge 'goes over' the dogs immediately after the mentor. Both observe movement.
2. The student judge 'goes over' selected dogs immediately after the mentor. This could be the first 2 dogs in each class, or dogs selected by the mentor to bring out certain discussion points. Both observe movement.
3. The student judge 'goes over' the dog on a separate table (remember to request if this is the methodology) or area of the ring such as when the dogs are back in line after movement has been observed.
4. The student judge 'goes over' a number of predetermined dogs such as 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> placed dogs in Postgraduate, Limit and Open classes as well as those dogs given Best Puppy and Best Veteran.

The student judge should take their own brief notes on the dogs so they can articulate their thoughts about the merits and demerits of the dogs quickly and be able to place the dogs whilst stating their reasoning.

After judging the mentor and student judge should meet privately and hold a structured debrief to gain a full understanding of placings and why dogs were/were not rewarded. Reference to breed watch if applicable. Mentors should also give their overall impressions and once all dogs have been examined.

The debrief may also include the mentor asking questions of the student judge to establish the extent of their knowledge of the breed, whether they were able to identify dogs who might not be as comfortable in the ring and what adjustments they might take in such

circumstances. Student judges are also encouraged to ask questions of their mentor, relating to the breed, during the judging process, including reasons for placings.

The student judge may be encouraged to verbally critique some of the winning dogs and compare this with that of their mentor.

At all times care should be taken to ensure confidentiality is maintained.

### **Progression**

As with all JEP formal mentoring sessions the mentor and mentee must complete the relevant forms and records as required by the RKC to progress to the next level. If a mentor thinks that their mentee is not ready to progress beyond Level 3 and requires additional mentoring or developmental activity, then feedback and advice must be given with clear objectives for the mentee to focus on, so that a new student judge mentoring session can be organised. It is a requirement that all formal mentoring sessions be passed successfully before progressing to the next JEP level.

## **APPENDIX E** Breed Education Coordinators

Breed Education Coordinators (BECs) are the cornerstone of the JEP.

Close working between BECs and their supporting breed club(s) is vital for the successful progression of judges through their breed specific education and training.

Whilst this close working is critical it is also important for the BEC to operate in a semi-independent manner as the bridge and link between the breed club(s), judges in training, mentors and the RKC.

The role of the Breed Education Coordinator (BEC) is one of coordination and oversight within the JEP. For the success of the JEP, it is important for the breed club(s) and BEC to be working hand-in-glove. Their collective focus and effort must be on helping judges in training progress via the JEP in a timely way when they satisfy the prevailing requirements. Encouragement and enablement are important to the success of the JEP. Maintaining a pipeline of future judges at all levels is critical for supporting the future of pedigree dogs and dog shows.

The Review Panel is recommending:

- A new framework for BECs encompassing a Code of Best Practice to set out in a clearer and simpler way the requirements and responsibilities of the role.
- An acceptance of the principle that not everyone is going to be best suited to undertake the role of BEC.
- A new series of online and in-person engagement opportunities and mandatory training sessions for the volunteer community of BECs to be led by the RKC Office.
- An improved means for discussing, agreeing and sharing best practices between BECs.
- Developing a pool of proactive, engaged, and successful BECs to become ambassadors for the JEP and to be RKC Office delegates for some aspects of the JEP, e.g. facilitators at Breed Specific Assessments and in time to undertake future BEC training sessions.

## **CODE OF BEST PRACTICE FOR BREED EDUCATION CORDINATORS**

The Review Panel has prepared the following draft proposed materials in support of this task.

### **1. Purpose**

This Code sets out the standards, responsibilities and expected conduct of Breed Education Coordinators (BECs) working within the Royal Kennel Club (RKC) Judges Education Programme (JEP).

Its aim is to promote consistency and fairness in breed specific training and education for judges, support the structured development of judges in training; and safeguard the integrity of Breed Appreciation Days (BADs) and Multiple-Choice Examinations (MCEs) and mentoring.

Above all, it seeks to uphold confidence in both the JEP and the breed concerned.

### **2. Core Principles**

In carrying out the role, a BEC is expected to:

- Act impartially and without favour
- Maintain appropriate confidentiality
- Work in a transparent and consistent manner
- Promote equal opportunity and accessibility
- Uphold the reputation of the breed and the RKC
- Support judges in training in a professional and developmental capacity

The role requires sound judgement, excellent communication skills, diplomacy and adherence to regulations and guidelines.

### **3. Knowledge and Competence**

A BEC should maintain a sound and up-to-date understanding of the JEP. This includes familiarity with:

- JEP levels, requirements and eligibility to judge
- BAD and MCE, mandatory and recommended content
- Mentoring types, mandatory and recommended content
- RKC regulations and JEP related Codes of Best Practice

### **4. Breed Appreciation Days (BADs)**

BEC works in liaison with their breed club(s) in the organisation and delivery of BADs. This includes providing support and guidance on:

- Educational content
- Examination arrangements

While breed clubs host these events, the BEC has a responsibility to ensure that the Code of Best Practice are satisfied.

#### **4.1 Health & Wellbeing**

Health & wellbeing and Breed Watch priorities must feature prominently within the educational content delivered at Breed Appreciation Days.

### **5. Multiple-choice Exam (MCE)**

#### **5.1 Question Bank Development**

The BEC is responsible for producing and maintaining a secure bank of MCE questions based on the current RKC requirements. Questions should be:

- Accurate and clearly worded
- Unambiguous
- Relevant to RKC requirements (e.g. breed standard: breed type, function and construction)

The question bank must be reviewed periodically to ensure continued accuracy and relevance. This review should include monitoring the effectiveness of questions, reviewing pass rates; and identifying patterns of low pass rates to determine whether amendments or clarification are required.

## **5.2 Setting Examinations**

Multiple-Choice Examinations (MCEs) must be set to a consistent and appropriate standard for BADs and in line with the Code of Best Practice.

Reasonable adjustments should be made where appropriate to ensure that additional needs are met, in line with equality and accessibility principles.

A clear marking scheme should accompany each paper. Care should be taken to ensure consistency between exams; and to safeguard the integrity and confidentiality of examination materials.

## **5.3 Marking & Recording Results**

Examinations must be marked objectively and fairly in line with the Code of Best Practice.

Results should be recorded accurately and communicated within a reasonable timeframe.

Records of exam papers and outcomes must be stored securely and handled in accordance with data protection requirements.

# **6. Mentoring**

## **6.1 Organisation**

The BEC facilitates mentoring opportunities for judges in training. Working with the RKC Office to maintain an up-to-date list of active mentors.

## **6.2 Oversight**

BECs should signpost judges in training to mentoring opportunities where appropriate as part of their progression through the JEP.

The BEC must ensure all mentors have completed mandatory training required for the role; and understand their responsibilities under the JEP.

Mentoring must be conducted in line with the relevant Code of Best Practice.

BEC must ensure that:

- general canine health & wellbeing matters and breed-specific health & wellbeing matters are covered; and
- breed specific physical examination expectations and techniques are covered.

BEC should work collaboratively with their breed club(s) and the RKC to agree priorities regarding Breed Watch and health & wellbeing concerns, which will subsequently help inform and focus the judge in training during future mentoring sessions, Breed Specific Assessments and possible judging audits and performance checks.

## **6.3 Fair Access**

BECs are obliged to provide judges in training with reasonable, equitable and timely access to mentoring opportunities.

Any actual or perceived conflict of interest must be declared and managed appropriately to ensure transparency and maintain confidence in the process.

## **7. Communication Standards**

Clear and regular communication underpins the role. BECs should respond to communications in a timely fashion, preferably within 72 hours.

## **7.1 With Judges in Training**

The BEC should:

- Provide guidance on the JEP
- Circulate BAD dates and examination information
- Share relevant updates to Codes of Best Practice
- Signpost judges to relevant training opportunities
- Respond professionally and in a timely manner

## **7.2 Mentors**

Expectations regarding conduct, documentation and reporting must be clearly communicated. Updates to the JEP processes and requirements should be shared promptly and consistently.

## **7.3 Mentor Lists**

Provide clear guidelines on mentor nominations and develop contingency plans for breeds with limited mentors e.g. wider use of group judges.

## **7.3 General Conduct**

Important information must be shared equitably. Informal or preferential communication that could create unfair or perceived advantage should be avoided.

## **8: Breed Specific Assessments (BSAs)**

The BEC and their breed club(s) are jointly responsible for organising and facilitating BSAs in conjunction with the RKC.

- BECs may request the RKC organise or endorse the organisation of BSAs when there are sufficient judges in training at L3 ready to progress to L4.
- BECs should help to manage the process of working with their breed club(s), assessors, candidates and the RKC to make the BSA a success in accordance with the Code of Best Practice.

## **9. Liaison with the Royal Kennel Club (RKC)**

BECs act as a key point of contact with the RKC in relation to:

- Record keeping

- JEP compliance
- Clarification regarding BADs and MCE
- Mentoring records
- General JEP management for their breed

Required returns must be submitted accurately and within the specified timeframe.

Records must be maintained to support reporting requirements.

## **10. Record Keeping and Data Protection**

The BEC must maintain secure records relating to:

- BAD attendance
- MCE papers and results
- Mentor lists
- Mentoring sessions

All records must comply with UK data protection legislation and be transferred securely and promptly if the role changes as directed by the RKC and/or their breed club(s).

## **11. Workload Delegation and Deputy BECs**

BEC & their breed club(s) may nominate a deputy BEC to help with the role, this is recommended.

- The BEC is still the main point of contact and accountable for a deputy BEC.
- Larger breeds may benefit from having one or more deputy BECs to assist with the workload.
- A deputy BEC can help with providing a level of continuity.
- A deputy BEC can help to ensure representation at BADs, MCE and BSA when the BEC cannot attend.

## **12. Health & Wellbeing (including Breed Watch)**

BEC working with the relevant team(s) at the RKC will ensure all aspects of the RKC requirements regarding judging for health & wellbeing without exaggerations, with a focus

on Breed Watch category 2 and 3 breeds and their specific points of concern are adequately covered by way of:

- BADs
- MCE
- Mentoring sessions

## **APPENDIX F** Oversight, Audit, Enforcement & System Management

The Review Panel is in full agreement that a range of tools and options to oversee, audit, enforce and manage the various aspects of the JEP are required.

In simple terms, the ability to continually test the JEP is delivering on its key outcome to produce competent, capable and confident dog show judges.

The Review Panel is recommending:

- The adoption of a system of random spot checks (“observations”) on judges judging at all levels of show.
  - To assess general judge competence
  - To assess breed, group and BIS specific competence
  - To be undertaken with the RKC Office working with experienced judges as auditors, consideration to be given to developing a pool of respected recently retired or semi-retired judges to undertake this task.
- The provision of clear and honest feedback and action points for judges as they move through the JEP and as they undertake their judging appointments.
- The acceptance of the principle that a judge with objectively identified development needs and actions may have their judging level(s) temporarily removed and/or reduced allowing them time to rectify matters.
- The acceptance of the principle that a BEC, mentor, assessor or breed club with objectively identified development needs and actions applicable to the JEP may have their JEP role(s) temporarily or permanently removed.
- An absolute focus on all aspects and roles within the JEP working together to encourage and enable judges in training to progress in a timely way when they satisfy the prevailing requirements.
- Develop and implement a Breed Judging Quality Assurance process along similar lines to the Health Monitoring Form for L5/Group and L6/Best in Show judges. Such judges have a pivotal role to play in helping to flag Best of Breed judging quality concerns. Details to be discussed, agreed, trialled and rolled out.
- The acceptance of the principle that continuing professional development (CPD) for judges is necessary and valuable. Content and timing to be discussed and agreed during the implementation stage of the recommendations.

## **OVERSIGHT, AUDIT, ENFORCEMENT & SYSTEM MANAGEMENT:**

### **AN OVERVIEW**

The Review Panel has prepared the following draft proposed materials in support of the task of overseeing, auditing, enforcing and managing the JEP.

The following represents the key elements proposed as a start point to assist with the ongoing management and support of the JEP. Additional planning, procedures, training, education and personnel will have to be agreed and implemented for the ongoing validation and development of a quality system to meet the requirements of stakeholders. Available time and resources will impact all of what follows.

### **SECTION A: AREAS COVERED DIRECTLY & INDIRECTLY BY THE JEP**

#### **1. Executive & RKC Board commitment**

- A clear and unequivocal documented statement of intent and commitment to support all aspects and values of the JEP and its goal to deliver competent, capable and confident dog show judges for the benefit of pedigree dogs and dog shows.

#### **2. Codes of Best Practice (COBP) etc.**

- Review Codes of Best Practice, immediate and ongoing.
- Set, plan, timescale and frequency for periodic review.
- Develop new COBP, e.g. for BECs. Revise rules & regulations to ensure they adequately and suitably cover the JEP. Enhance the Accredited Trainer network. Revamp curriculum for L1 training and education (Conformation & Movement, Points Of A Dog, Requirements Of A Dog Show Judge, Critique Writing, and Stewarding).
- Train and refresh all relevant parties on their respective roles and responsibilities and COBP for the JEP.

### 3. Breed Education Co-ordinators (BEC)

- Train all BECs to the new COBP, to start as soon as possible.
- Training via a mix of online and in-person sessions.
- Confirm what is required for annual returns to RKC and what actions will be taken when and by whom.
- Audit/Monitor/Support: ongoing. Agree plan and timescale for periodic review.
- Look to share best practices across the BEC community.
- Develop a pool of trusted proactive BECs to act as ambassadors for the JEP and RKC Office delegates, where appropriate.

### 4. Breed Standards

- Reviewed to current and ongoing timescales.
- Audit/Monitor judging competence of breeds to current standard, especially regarding any recent changes.
- Other considerations within breed standards: Breed Watch, Health Monitoring Form, IHA and Nose2tail assessments.

### 5. Judges & Judging

- Observe/ Monitor/ Enforce: L1 to L6. Agree plan and timescale for periodic review. Build a list of auditors (“observers”) to include selection criteria and process. Training and documentation. Recording and collation of findings and actions to be taken.
- RKC auditors (“observers”): trained to agreed procedures and COBP.
- Group judges and Best in Show judges to observe and report on quality of Best of Breed exhibits coming before them. System of reporting and collation of information to be agreed and actions to be taken.
- Limit number of L2 breeds in other groups, subject to a judge developing their experience in their own breed and group first. Initial focus to gain experience with a judge’s first breed and group before expanding into other areas. BAD

could be attended and MCE passed in other breeds and banked for future judging career development.

- Feedback to all judges at all levels of the JEP, especially for mentoring and Breed Specific Assessment at L4 where a judge is considered not yet ready to progress. All feedback to be documented, and action points to be taken by the judge to advance.

## 6. Mentors & Mentoring

- Train mentors to new COBP.
- Plan for system of audit and observation of mentors. Confirm compliance or improvement actions to be taken and timescales to rectify.
- Document reports, actions and collation of findings for future planning and action.

## 7. Auditors (“Observers”)

- Build a list of RKC auditors (“observers”).
- Agree process/areas to be covered: judging, BEC’s, mentors, the system itself or a combination of them. Determine whether checks to be performed by breed or via a batched approach.
- Auditors to be rotated across groups and breeds.
- Train auditors on their role and responsibilities.
- Review and monitor auditor performance.
- Document reports, actions and collation of findings for future planning and action.

## 8. Breed Clubs & Councils

- BECs to help educate breed clubs and councils on their roles and responsibilities under the JEP.
- BAD plan, frequency and quality to be monitored through use of auditors.
- Review involvement with and support of the JEP, e.g. with Breed Specific Assessments etc.

- Consideration to be given to removing show licenses and/or CC allocations for breed clubs who are objectively assessed as failing with their JEP support and obligations.
- Confirm what is required for annual returns to RKC from and what actions will be taken when and by whom.

#### 9. Talent Scouting (New & Current Judges) & Rewards

- RKC Office, auditors and breed clubs and councils recommend and support the encouragement and enablement of noticeable talent in all aspects of pedigree dogs and dog shows: judging, breeding, handling, and club and show organisation and management.
- Consideration of how this process is best delivered and managed, e.g. self-application or endorsement etc. and what does support, encouragement and enablement look like in practice? This could take various forms.
- Nominations to judge breed/group/BIS at Crufts and All Breeds General Championship shows as reward for consistent quality judging and support of the JEP and pedigree dogs and dog shows.
- Maintain Policy Judge eligibility route. Widen scope of judging rewards for group judges who are not yet eligible for the Policy Judge route.
- RKC Office and Judges Committee to consider periodic “breed” attention initiatives where a focused and flexible approach can be taken to help address certain specific judge supply issues.

#### 10. System Promotion / Corrective Actions

- Planned audit of all levels, parts and roles of the JEP system.
- Observations on judges and their judging at all levels and types of show.
- Best of Breed Judging Quality Assurance process for L5/Group and L6/Best in Show judges.
- Flexible range of options for corrective actions, reprimands and sanctions.

## **SECTION 2: IMPLEMENTATION AND RESOURCES**

- Build a plan for all areas of the system to be audited.
- Sourcing and selection of auditors.
- Build guidelines and training for auditors.
- Develop approach for new and existing talent, especially to focus on retaining and utilising existing judge talent.
- Review BADs and obtain candidate feedback regarding quality of online v. in-person methods.
- Obtain candidate feedback on mentoring and address any points of concern.
- Ensure reasonable access requirements are addressed and satisfied for judges in training.
- Roles and responsibilities for the RKC governance structure between the Board and its various management committees responsible directly and indirectly for matters related to the JEP are to be clarified and made as simple and as transparent as possible.
- The RKC judges and judging team and the work of the JEP to be more closely aligned with the RKC health & wellbeing team and their pedigree dog initiatives.
- RKC Office to be appropriately resourced and supported to help deliver the JEP in its recommended future state, including its oversight, audit and enforcement.

## APPENDIX G Policy Judges

A Policy Judge is a L5 judge with extensive group judging experience. A policy judge will be able to qualify for L4 (CC) status in the remaining breeds within the group through a reduced set of requirements.

### REQUIREMENTS

- To have **awarded CCs to 75% or more of eligible\* breeds** in group; and
- To have **judged the group at a general or group championship show**; and
- Attended and passed the **Eye For A Dog** assessment

\*In calculating the 75% only breeds in the group for which CCs are available will be taken into account; and breeds with automatic variety approval will count as one breed.

Hound Group	22 breeds with CCs	16 breeds with CCs required
Gundog Group	30 breeds with CCs	22 breeds with CCs required
Terrier Group	25 breeds with CCs	18 breeds with CCs required
Utility Group	20 breeds with CCs	15 breeds with CCs required
Working Group	17 breeds with CCs	12 breeds with CCs required
Pastoral Group	21 breeds with CCs	15 breeds with CCs required
Toy Group	20 breeds with CCs	15 breeds with CCs required

- To have achieved **50% or more of the JEP required hands-on judging numbers** for the breed **and the reduced judging appointments measure** (see page 24); and
- To have attended a **BAD** and passed **MCE** for the breed; or
- Provide evidence of an **A3 Hands-on Breed Judging Assessment\*** pass for the breed completed prior to 31 December 2025 in accordance with the legacy Kennel Club Code of Best Practice for the Running of a Breed Seminar & Judging Competence Assessment; or
- **A Judge's Development Programme (JDP)\*** credit in the breed

\*This option shall only be available until 31 December 2029.

#### COMMENTARY

Experienced group judges have been rewarded under the traditional questionnaire and the JEP route for CC status in a breed through a reduced set of requirements via the Policy Judge arrangement.

There is merit in continuing with the arrangement.

The requirements for achieving the status of Policy Judge to be made clearer and simpler.

Flexibility in recognising A3 hands-on assessment pass or JDP credit in a breed to mirror those in accordance with the recommendations under L4, subject to time limit of 31 December 2029.

The Policy judge approach shall assist with maintaining a pipeline of breed judges at CC level.

## **APPENDIX H Overseas Judges**

There are a variety of different scenarios currently set out on the RKC website for overseas judges under the JEP. Some of these scenarios are covered in the prevailing F Regulations and others are not.

The approach for overseas judges must be simplified and made clearer.

An overseas judge must be familiar with UK dog show rules, regulations and the expectations of stakeholders, e.g. exhibitors, show organisers and the RKC. This must be evidenced and not simply taken on trust or left to show organisers to undertake by way of a briefing.

**All overseas judges judging at a RKC licensed show for the first-time or not having done so in the previous 5 years must:**

- Attend **NEW Requirements of a Dog Show Judge** training, including seminar hosted by a Kennel Club Accredited Trainer and pass the associated exam; and
- Complete **NEW Critique Writing** seminar and pass the associated online assessment.

Show organisers must ensure the overseas judge they are inviting to adjudicate at their show is made aware of the latest RKC expectations and requirements concerning:

- health & wellbeing and rewarding dogs with appropriate body shapes and without exaggerations; and
- for Breed Watch category 2 and 3 breeds their specific points of concern.

## **SPECIFIC SCENARIOS**

### **A. L4/AWARDING CCs IN A BREED (JUDGE NON-UK RESIDENT)**

#### **(1) FCI/RKC RECIPROCAL AGREEMENT**

The Review Panel accepts the practical limitations for altering the substance of the current arrangement in place. An overseas judge resident in a FCI country who has awarded CACIBs in a breed in 3 or more different countries over a period of 5 or more years is able to [apply](#) under this route to award CCs in the breed in the UK, if nominated by a show organiser. In achieving L4 for the breed they will also be eligible to judge as per the details set out in Appendix A.

#### **(2) JD14 QUESTIONNAIRE**

For overseas judges looking to award CCs in a breed who cannot avail of the FCI/RKC Reciprocal the [JD14 Questionnaire](#) route may continue to be used, if nominated by a show organiser. Where the judge judges the breed at championship level in their home country, they must satisfy 50% of the main JEP hands-on judging numbers as set out in Appendix A.

#### **(3) JEP**

An overseas judge may, with the agreement of their home country kennel club, choose to follow in full the RKC's JEP to award CCs in a breed.

### **B. NON-CC JUDGING (JUDGE NON-UK RESIDENT)**

#### **(1) JUDGE JUDGES BREED AT CHAMPIONSHIP LEVEL IN HOME COUNTRY**

The judge shall be regarded as L2 for the breed and will be eligible to judge:

- unlimited classes for the respective breed at Limited, Open and Championship shows without CCs; and
- any variety/stakes classes, groups and best in show at Limited shows; and
- the group and any variety/stakes classes within that group for the given breed at Open shows.

#### **(2) JUDGE DOES NOT JUDGE BREED AT CHAMPIONSHIP LEVEL IN HOME COUNTRY**

The judge will, with the agreement of their home country kennel club, need to follow in full the RKC's JEP.

### **C. OVERSEAS JUDGE NOW UK RESIDENT**

#### **(1) JUDGE JUDGES BREED AT CHAMPIONSHIP LEVEL IN PREVIOUS HOME COUNTRY**

The judge shall be regarded as L2 for the breed.

The judge shall be regarded as L3 for the breed if they have:

- attended BAD & passed MCE in the breed; and
- successfully completed x1 mentoring session (Student Judge or Judging Appointment mentoring session); and
- completed x2 stewarding days.

In both cases, the judge shall be eligible to judge:

- unlimited classes for the respective breed at Limited, Open and Championship shows without CCs; and
- any variety/stakes classes, groups and best in show at Limited shows; and
- the group and any variety/stakes classes within that group for the breed at Open shows.

The judge may then progress to L4 in the breed by passing a Breed Specific Assessment (BSA).

#### **(2) JUDGE DOES NOT JUDGE BREED AT CHAMPIONSHIP LEVEL IN PREVIOUS HOME COUNTRY**

The judge will, with the agreement of their home country kennel club, need to follow in full the RKC's JEP.

### **D. UK JUDGES JUDGING OVERSEAS**

The Review Panel received feedback concerning UK judges judging overseas who have had limited opportunities to judge certain breeds in the UK which are either not recognised or have no or limited exhibits in the UK. Efforts to be made to consider ways to collaborate with overseas kennel clubs to better enable UK resident judges to develop their judge training and education in such breeds that will then be recognised by overseas kennel clubs.

### **E. JUDGES RESIDENT IN NORTERN IRELAND**

Consideration to be given to clarify, simplify and make more certain for all parties the expectations and requirements concerning judges who are resident in Northern Ireland.

## **APPENDIX I Licensing & Miscellaneous Matters**

### **LICENSING**

The Review Panel is unanimous in its recommendation for the introduction of a RKC licensing system for judges at the earliest opportunity.

This thorny and emotive issue must be resolved.

The JEP involves a variety of volunteer roles.

In its future state, as recommended by the Review Panel, it also involves a range of judge learning, education and oversight requirements that must be improved, delivered and maintained.

This will need to be financed. Judges and judging as part of the system of RKC dog shows must be financially stable and sustainable.

Licensing of judges has a significant practical role in helping to achieve this. It is no longer reasonable, sensible or feasible for the UK and the RKC to be an outlier in this space.

The framework for annual dog show judge licensing must be:

- Simple
- Clear
- Certain
- Tiered
- Reliable
- Deliverable

An annual judge licencing structure will help to address and solve many of the current points of concern received by the Review Panel as feedback from correspondents.

Specifically:

- Helping to ensure Find A Judge is kept up to date with only active judges displayed.
- Enabling a set of reasonable terms and conditions to be applied such as requiring a judge's contact details to be kept up to date and displayed on Find A Judge.
- To deliver better and more consistent safeguarding measures by including the highest legally permissible Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check to be

performed on a periodic basis (e.g. every 3 years) as a condition for being a RKC licensed judge.

- To provide the means for improvements to the framework for delivering a more robust education and training experience for judges, e.g. development of the Accredited Trainer network and significant revisions to the curriculum and methods of delivery for the Conformation & Movement, Points of a Dog, and Requirements of a Dog Show Judge courses and seminars.
- To provide the finances to boost and better engage with, support and train, the key volunteer roles within the JEP such as Breed Education Coordinators and Mentors.
- To provide an improved mechanism for the enforcement and adherence to regulations and codes of practice. Including the principle that a judge with objectively identified development needs and actions may have their judging licence temporarily removed and/or their judging level(s) reduced allowing them time to rectify matters.

## THE PROPOSAL

The Review Panel has stopped short of bringing forward a recommendation setting out the monetary specifics for an annual fee model of judge licensing.

Taking into account its guiding principles as set out, a system of licensing built around the JEP L1 to L7 structure is advisable.

The starting point for L1 will need to be modest and not create a barrier to entry for those wanting to embark on their RKC dog show judging career.

The Review Panel considers an annual judge licensing fee of approximately £20 for L1 rising to approximately £100 for L6 to be a useful guide.

## **FIND A JUDGE**

Find A Judge is a key tool of the JEP and is vital now breed club and council judging lists have no formal regulatory basis when it comes to eligibility to judge at RKC dog shows.

The Review Panel received significant feedback from correspondents regarding their use of the tool; and is recommending:

### **SHORT-TERM IMPROVEMENTS**

- Data cleanse to remove inactive judges. Annual Judge licensing will help to keep the data up to date.
- All judges to have contact details displayed. Annual Judge licensing will help to keep the data up to date,
- A judge's first breed or breeds to be displayed, i.e. their breed specialism.
- A judge biography/explanation of their judging and pedigree dog experience and interests to be included.

### **MEDIUM-TERM IMPROVEMENTS**

- Investigate ability for a judge's non-CC level judging experience to be displayed.
- Investigate whether a judge's judging compliance history (e.g. warnings and/or fines) can or should be displayed.
- Investigate whether a judge's training and education achievements and when they were achieved can or should be displayed, e.g. BAD attendance, MCE pass, BSA pass, and Eye For A Dog Assessment pass.
- Investigate whether Find A Judge can be modified for show organisers to become a judge booking and reservation system.

## **CRITIQUES**

Judge critiques are a staple feature of the UK's dog show culture.

The Review Panel received multiple different suggestions concerning the current and future state of critiques from no change to stopping them altogether to only having them provided verbally in real-time in the ring.

Critiques represent part of the expected value derived from exhibitors and their entry fees and the wider community who follow the UK dog show scene.

The Review Panel is recommending:

- Original written critiques for exhibits placed 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> in all scheduled classes at RKC dogs shows continues to be a regulation requirement.
- Show organiser contract terms and conditions may continue to require more than what is provided for by way of the Regulations, e.g. breed club shows may require critiques for 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> in classes.
- Critiques to be published within 6 weeks of the date of the judging appointment.
- Regulation requirement for publication shall be by the judge uploading their critique to the RKC Judge Critiques website.
- Judges are to be encouraged to provide their critiques to Our Dogs, show organisers and breed club(s) and councils etc.
- L1 Critique Writing course to be updated.
- Spot checks to be performed on the quality of critiques being produced.
- Judges repeatedly failing to produce critiques on time and/or to the required and expected quality standard, and who have been previously warned and/or fined, to be subject to reprimand by way of judging suspension.
- Longer-term solution to investigate better use of technology to enable real-time or close to real-time production of critiques at general and group championship shows.

## **COMPLAINTS**

The Review Panel is recommending improvements are made to the process by which judge performance, conduct and conflict of interest complaints are managed with the aim of helping to improve judging competence and behaviour by:

- Making the process simpler and clearer.
- Improving transparency around which matters the RKC will and will not deal with.
- Handling complaints that require investigation in a timelier manner.
- Ensuring consistency in outcomes.
- Resolving more clearly which matters can be dealt with by the RKC Office v. management committees such as Judges Committee and Disciplinary Committee.
- Considering how other complaints, often linked complaints, concerning exhibitors, handlers, stewards, and show organisers etc. can be handled in a more integrated, holistic and joined-up manner.

## **JUDGING INTERVALS**

Based on feedback received, the Review Panel is recommending the Regulations are updated to amend the minimum judging intervals as follows:

- 24 months between breed judging appointments at championship shows\*
- 12 months between group judging appointments at general and group championship shows\*
- 12 months between best in show judging appointments at general and group championship shows\*

*\*Subject to assessment and actions to resolve any specific short-term judge supply issues, to be effective no later than 1 January 2030 and ideally from 1 January 2029 with latest round of CC allocations.*

## **YRKC & JHA**

The Young Royal Kennel Club (YRKC) and Junior Handling Association (JHA) are each responsible for organising a range of classes and competitions at or alongside RKC dog shows involving judges and judging.

The Review Panel is recommending the following improvements:

- Judges of YRKC & JHA classes and competitions must be RKC licenced judges at JEP L1 or above.
- To deliver better and more consistent safeguarding measures, judges of YRKC & JHA classes and competitions shall be subject to the highest legally permissible Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check to be performed on a periodic best practice basis. This is likely to be a higher-level check compared to that performed as part of the recommendation being made for judge licensing.
- The YRKC & JHA are encouraged to collaborate on producing, maintaining and making available an agreed list of judges for their classes and competitions, including stipulating any specific requirements they consider to be necessary for judges to satisfy, e.g. a history of involvement with and support of the YRKC and/or JHA and their activities.

## Appendix J Health & Wellbeing

Judges and judging and health and wellbeing when working together hand-in-glove play an integral part in helping pedigree dogs and dog shows have a positive future.

The education and training of judges on general canine health and wellbeing plus breed specific health and wellbeing must be at the core of the JEP.

The favourable work achieved to date, especially for some breeds, is to be applauded. The focus on *“fit for function”* has helped to focus attention and shift attitudes and behaviours across pedigree dogs and dog shows. More work remains to be done. This cannot be seen as a static topic or task. Constant modest progress is to be encouraged and rewarded.

The refreshed emphasis on *“appropriate body shapes without exaggerations”* is to be embraced and embedded across the various JEP methods for training and educating judges.

Judges must be clear on their RKC duty to reserve top honours for those exhibits representing the best combination of breed type accordingly to the RKC breed standard; AND first and foremost being sound, fit and healthy dogs.

The Review Panel is recommending:

- All aspects and all parties involved in the JEP to be focused on working to improve the health and wellbeing of pedigree dogs to help secure an improved future for them and dog shows.
- General canine health and wellbeing to be focused at L1 and achieved through a revised curriculum for Conformation & Movement, Points Of A Dog and Requirements Of A Dog Show Judge.
- New mandatory elements to cover health and wellbeing at L2 for breed specific training and education covered by Breed Appreciation Days (BADs) and Multiple-choice Exams (MCE).
- New mandatory elements to cover health and wellbeing for breed specific training and education through mentoring sessions at L2, L3, L5 and L6.

- Periodic review of, and revisions to, the existing Breed Watch and Health Monitoring Form processes to ensure they are being complied with and delivering the desired outcome of improved pedigree dog health and wellbeing.
- Assessment of how Breed Watch and Health Monitoring Form data is best utilised and shared to deliver the desired outcome of improved pedigree dog health and wellbeing.
- Develop a variety of measures to monitor whether judges are satisfying their RKC judging duty to reserve top honours for those exhibits representing the best combination of breed type accordingly to the RKC breed standard; and first and foremost being sound, fit and healthy dogs. See Appendix F.