

USDAA Policies & Procedures

Statement of Policy on Qualification & Advancement of Judges

Effective: Immediately; last updated February 1, 2005

An inherent part of developing and maintaining a quality judging corps is the proper training and testing of judges and to maintain and enhance their knowledge through continuing education. This Statement summarizes and provides guidance for implementation of these programs.

Training

To be a judge, USDAA regulations specify that a person must have “satisfactory attendance, participation and completion of an approved USDAA judging clinic & examination, demonstrating sufficient knowledge, self-confidence, creativity and understanding of course design principles, physical mobility and effectiveness while judging.”

In fulfilling these standards, USDAA has developed curriculum for a three-day judging clinic followed by one day of examination, which are offered periodically at places to be announced. The clinic offers two and one-half days of lecture and discussion of rules and regulations and an interactive course design workshop to teach and reinforce USDAA principles. The final half-day is devoted to practical aspects of judging, including course building and judging of dogs in an actual match situation. Completion of the clinic shall meet the prerequisite for examination.

Testing

To meet the testing requirements of the regulations, USDAA has developed a five-part test – a three-part written test, a practical examination on course building and a judging examination in a match setting. Each of the parts must be passed according to the following standards and level of qualification:

Level	Required Test Results	Judging Experience Requirement
Masters	80% in each section & 85% overall	Same as below, plus minimum one year actual judging experience at a lower level*
Advanced	75% in each section & 80% overall	Sufficient experience to be able to competently fulfill the duties of the judge
Starters	75% in each section & 75% overall	Sufficient experience to be able to competently fulfill the duties of the judge

*This experience requirement may be waived provided strong evidence has been submitted and approved demonstrating the requisite experience qualifications have been met (e.g., experience judging with other organizations, while having extensive experience in USDAA event administration and competition, and having achieved 90% or better on the practical examination and written test.) The Board of Directors shall consider the submitted information, along with recommendations of the clinic instructors in arriving at a final determination.

Apprenticeship

Regulations require that a person must “have sufficient experience to competently perform the judge’s responsibility” as set forth in the regulations. A major component of the regulations is the interpretation and application of the rules to circumstances that may occur in performance, the skills for which cannot

be satisfactorily evaluated in a clinical setting. As such, all persons completing the examination successfully may be placed on the Approved Judges List and shall concurrently therewith be placed in an apprentice program to assure that a person can demonstrate over time that they have the requisite skills in applying their knowledge to practical situations in a variety of classes as defined in the regulations.

The apprentice program sets forth the following general standards in working with one or more Supervisor Judges. The program provides the opportunity for new judges to officiate under the supervision of an established, qualified, judge. Further, the policies and procedures defined within this program are intended to be adaptable to individual needs and provide the educational support of the apprentice judge when and to the extent needed. See “Policy Statement on Supervising Judges” for more details.

General Standards

The apprentice program includes specific requirements relative to the length of apprenticeship and offers three different levels of supervision designed to meet the needs of the apprentice.

Level	# of Assignments	
	Minimum	Normal
Starters	1	2-3
Advanced	1	3-4
Masters	4	5-6

The length of time under supervision is contingent upon overall assessment of the Supervisor’s reports, one or more of which may recommend that a judge be released from the supervisory requirement. The above minimums contemplate that the judge has a full slate of different types of classes scheduled for an assignment under which they are being supervised and evaluated. Assignments involving only a partial slate of classes may carry some or no weight in meeting the above requirements. Each judge shall be considered on a case by case basis.

As an apprentice progresses in their knowledge and experience, they should require less supervision than required initially. The type of supervision ranges from observing all aspects of the judge’s assignment, including judging of dogs to being available on site for consultation, should the need arise.

The following three levels of supervision have been defined:

- Full – observe and consult in all aspects of an apprentice’s performance as a judge, including judging of dogs in all classes at the appropriate level(s)
- Partial – observe and consult in specific aspects of an apprentice’s engagement, such as the course build and/or establishing standard course time. In some cases the supervisor may only be needed to observe a specific type of class, such as snooker or gamblers. The identification of the specific elements to be observed shall be established by the USDAA office through review of past supervisor reports and consultations with supervisors.
- Limited –available for consultation at the event on an as needed basis, but should also perform random or systematic spot checks on different aspects of the apprentice’s assignment. Being classified in this level of supervision is indicative of someone near-ready for release in terms of meeting the minimum requirements.

There is no specific formula for progression from level to level; therefore, it is possible that an apprentice fulfill their supervision requirements all at one level, two levels or all three, as cases warrant.

Continuing Education

In order that the judging corps remains current in their understanding of the regulations and abreast of developing trends and issues, the USDAA Board of Directors has established a continuing education requirement for judges. A judge must return to a clinic periodically as follows:

Level	Attendance Requirement
Masters Judges Apprentice Masters Judges Apprentice Advanced Judges Apprentice Starters Judges	Once in the past five years
Advanced Judges Starters Judges	Once in the past three years

The continuing education clinical requirement may be fulfilled through one of three means:

- First two days of the four-day clinic and examination,
- Two-day continuing education clinic, or
- Completion of requirements for a continuing education examination; the USDAA Board of Directors on occasion may establish that a continuing education examination be issued when rule changes have been substantive, or trends have been discovered that might indicate that certain rules are being misapplied. An incident of this nature would be either rule changes adopted by the Board.

In any case, all ‘means’ may not be readily available at all times or in all locations, and it is up to the individual judge to stay in compliance. Therefore, judges are encouraged to attend a clinic anytime one may be in their area, regardless of whether they are current. Judges are advised that clinics are not systematically scheduled and one may not be available when it is needed to stay in compliance.

The period (five-year or three-year) shall be measured from the month following the last date that a clinic was attended.

Failure to comply with the standards may result in one of the following sanctions:

- placement of a judge back under supervision until requirements have been met
- temporary suspension until requirements have been met
- removal from the Approved Judges List, with testing required for readmission to the Approved Judges List

Further, no course design fees shall be paid to a judge who is not in compliance with their continuing education requirement beginning in 2006.

All judges may be afforded a one-year grace period provided they can show significant reason why they have been unable to attend a clinic immediate prior 18 month period.

Questions about this policy statement may be directed to the USDAA office.

Related Policies: Statement on the Role of Supervising Judges, Statement on Engaging Judges