

Proposal: Mandatory Practical Judging Seminar for HTM Judges

Introduce a requirement that all prospective HTM judges complete the practical judging seminar in addition to the existing mandatory theory seminar before becoming eligible for appointment to the judging list and when judges renew their qualification.

The practical seminar includes provide hands-on experience of assessing routines, applying judging criteria, discussing scoring decisions and understanding how rules are interpreted in real judging situations.

What Is the Problem?

Feedback from the HTM Community Survey identified judging consistency and transparency as one of the most significant concerns within the sport.

- 39.7% of respondents selected reviewing judging consistency and transparency as a priority area for the Council.
- 13.2% identified it as the single most important priority.
- Qualitative feedback repeatedly highlighted concerns around consistency of scoring, interpretation of criteria and transparency of deductions.

Whilst the current theory seminar provides important knowledge of the regulations, it does not necessarily ensure consistent application of those regulations in a practical judging environment. As a result, competitors may perceive variation in scoring approaches between judges, which can undermine confidence in the judging process.

How Would This Help?

A mandatory practical seminar would provide a more consistent foundation for all new judges entering the judging pool.

Benefits could include:

- Greater consistency in the interpretation and application of judging criteria.
- Improved understanding of scoring standards across all levels.
- Increased confidence amongst competitors that judges have been assessed against common standards.
- Better preparation for first judging appointments.

This approach would align judge development with one of the key priorities identified by the community and demonstrate a commitment to continuous improvement.

What do we want to change?

Additionally judges must have attended a Royal Kennel Club Heelwork to Music Regulations and Judging Procedure Seminar and passed the Regulations and Judging Procedure examination **and attended the practical judging seminar**. From 1 January 2016 this will apply to new and existing judges. The initial Regulations and Judging Procedure Seminar, examination **and practical seminar** must be classroom based.

(iv) All Judges must have attended a Regulations and Judging Procedure seminar every five years since passing the Regulations and Judging Procedure exam. From 1 January 2023 all judges must have attended a Regulations and Judging Procedure and **practical judging seminar**, either classroom based or online, and must have passed the examination, every five years since passing the Regulations and Judging Procedure examination.