

NZDJA NZ Dog Judges Association Inc

A license to learn

by Lavina Diamanti

With the changes to the Judges Regulations adopted last year to help alleviate our shortage of New Zealand judges, we are seeing an unprecedented number of judges taking advantage of this opportunity and sitting exams to add further judging qualifications to their list.

The change in regulations to allow judges to 'bank' exams and sit twice in 2021 is a wonderful opportunity not only for our judges but as support for our clubs. It is great to see some who had previously indicated they were not interested in progressing further, take up this opportunity. Not everyone, however, agrees with these change in regulations and there has been some concern expressed that this fast-track approach could reduce the depth of knowledge of some the judges being promoted under these regulation changes.

Those concerns are understandable and were certainly considered when the changes were being discussed. However, our examination system is such that even at practical exam level, we are unable to test the candidate's full knowledge therefore the onus is always on the judge to continue the learning process.

Our challenge, as judges, when we pass our exams is to accept that this is just the first step in a long journey to fully understanding the breeds in that group. It is, in my opinion, our 'licence to learn'. For only now can we start applying that knowledge and expanding on what we have learned.

It is heartening to know that many All Breeds judges still review the breed standards before every appointment. This is a habit that we should all adopt if we are not already. Another is ensuring breed standards are ringside for your appointment or, better still, have them on your phone or tablet and refer to them if required. We cannot remember everything about every breed: there are 228 different breeds recognised by Dogs New Zealand. That makes the average number of breeds per group 32. That is a lot of breed standards to learn and understand. For most judges, it is the hands-on experience which is the very best way of learning. So, the more we judge, then the more we will learn, provided we are of the mindset that we will never, ever know everything there is to know about judging dogs.

Are we going to make mistakes? Heck, yes! Are we going to change our thoughts on breeds as we learn more? I hope so. The decisions we make today are based on the knowledge that we have today and for me, every time I judge I learn. I learn more from my mistakes than I do from my successes.

This COVID-19 era we are currently in has some distinct advantages for our New Zealand judges. They are getting more opportunities

than ever before to get regular hands-on experience and really cement their breed knowledge. The disadvantage is that we are not being exposed to the variety of breeds and the large numbers in a breed that can be experienced when judging overseas. This will change when the borders re-open but until then, we should all be taking advantage of the current situation to become the very best judges we can be.

Remember:

- You never stop learning. The digital age ensures we have the best access to knowledge that we have ever had. Make sure you use it!
- Review your breed standards before every appointment.
- Don't be afraid to consult your standards whilst judging.
- Continue to attend branch meetings, seminars and online learning opportunities.
- Join online learning groups on Facebook such as Canine Construction and FCI judges and our very own Judges Assn page.
- Share your knowledge by mentoring another judge. We also learn when helping someone else.

A final thought... An All Breeds judge once told me they didn't really start learning until they attained All Breeds status. Only then did they have the opportunity to judge large numbers of dogs with a regularity that really allowed them to understand the breeds. 🐾

National Board

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Important Dates

13-14 March 2021	Christchurch Practical exams
30 April 2021	Closing date for applications for 2nd round of exams

Peer Judges: What you need to know

You may have noticed some show schedules coming up will be listing a 'peer' judge to officiate.

A peer judge is a person who is not currently licenced to judge that breed but has been given approval by Dogs New Zealand to judge at that show.

Due to COVID-19 and the shortage of judges available, especially at Specialist Level, NZ Dog Judges Association, in consultation with Dogs NZ, changed the peer judging from Ribbon Parade level only to include Open and Championship Show level.

This has allowed specialist clubs to draw on that pool of knowledgeable, experienced breeders with peer standing within their breeding community, who may have never wanted to go through the promotion process to be a judge but are otherwise suitably experienced to judge a specialty show.

Specialist clubs can apply to Dogs NZ for a suitably experienced person in their breed to judge a Specialty Open or Championship Show.

Peer judges must have owned, exhibited and bred litters in the breed being judged for a period of not less than 15 years and be a current financial member of Dogs New Zealand.

Clubs will be limited to using one peer judge only each year and applications are to be made to Colleen Begg — members@dogsnz.org.nz.

Full details of the regulation and criteria can be viewed on the NZDJA website www.nzdogjudge.com.



NZ Dog Judges Association Inc

Notice is hereby given that the 2021 NZ Dog Judges 9th Annual General Meeting and Conference

Association Inc AGM and Conference is to be held as follows:

Date: Sunday, 20 June 2021

Venue: Brentwood Hotel, Wellington

Time: AGM commences at 9.00am
Conference commences at 10.30am

Notice is further given that the closing date for notices of motion and discussion papers is 4:00pm sharp on Monday, 10 May 2021, with the Director Secretary of Dogs New Zealand.

Email: secretary@dogsnz.org.nz

Post: NZDJA AGM c/o Dogs New Zealand, Private Bag 50903, Porirua 5240

Debbie Hull

Secretary

New Zealand Dog Judges Association
secretarynzdja@gmail.com



135th Annual Conference of Delegates of the New Zealand Kennel Club (Inc) trading as Dogs New Zealand

Notice is hereby given that the 2021 Annual Conference of Delegates of Dogs New Zealand is to be held as follows:

Date: Saturday, 19 June 2021
Venue: Brentwood Hotel, Wellington
Time: 10:00 am

Further information and dates:

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| 5 February, 2021 | Request for nominations to fill Specialist, Group and Multi-breed club delegate roles. |
| 12 February, 2021 | Request for nominations for four Executive Council roles (two North Island and two South Island).
Remits, recommendations and discussion papers called for. |
| 5 March, 2021 | Nominations close for Specialist, Group and Multi-breed club delegate roles. |
| 9 April, 2021 | Closing date for remits, recommendations, discussion papers and nominations for four Executive Council roles (two North Island and two South Island).
Clubs (All Breed) delegate registrations and bookings for flights and accommodation close-off date. |
| 12 April, 2021 | Voting documents sent to eligible clubs for Executive Council roles (if required). |
| 14 May, 2021 | Voting closes for Executive Council roles (if required). |
| 21 May, 2021 | Yearbook and 2020 Minutes posted to clubs (to include remits, recommendations, and discussion papers) |

Relevant clubs (to include Agility and Obedience clubs) are encouraged to schedule meetings in a timely fashion to discuss voting for Executive Council roles (if required – post 10 April) and the remits, recommendations and discussion papers as lodged and set out in the Yearbook (post 21 May).

Steven Thompson
Director Secretary