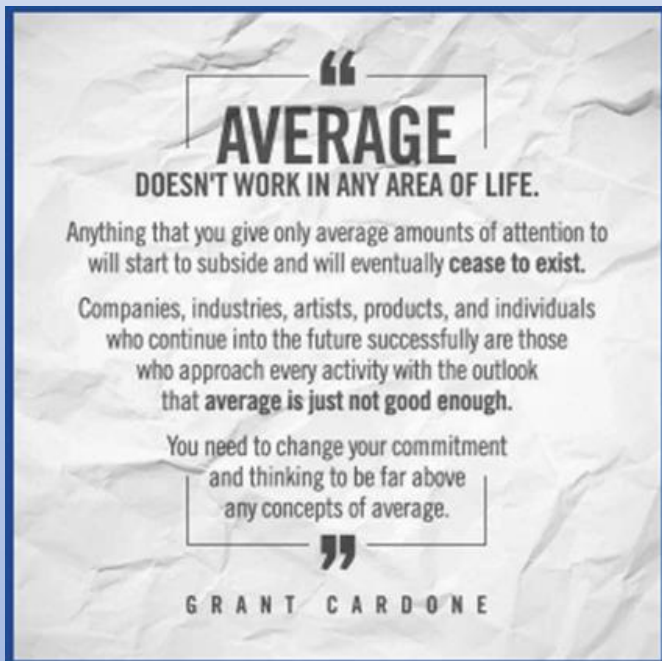


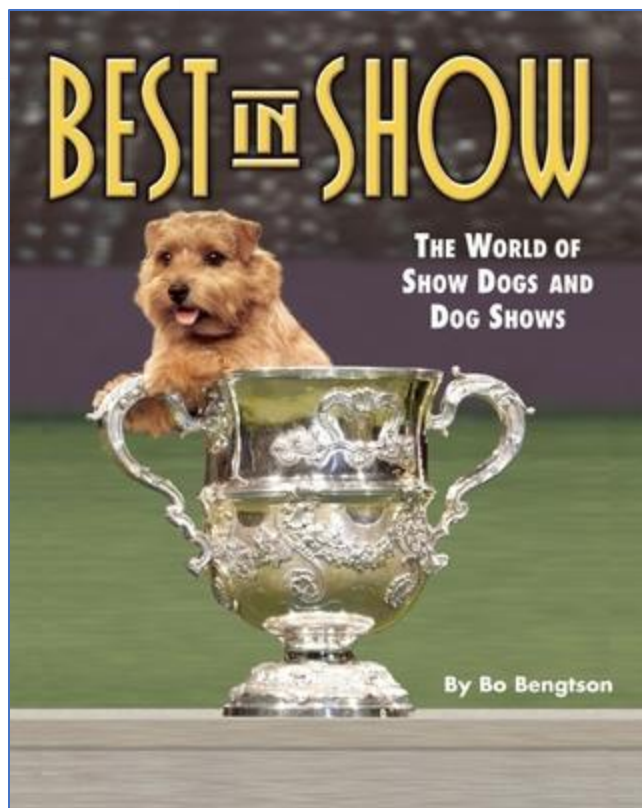
Examiners Expectations Practical Exams

May 2022

Karen McIntyre



"Afterall – if you are just average – you are as close to the worst as you are to the best!"



When we breed dogs, we take onboard a commitment not just to ourselves, or to our Clubs - but to the future of pedigree dogs here in New Zealand, and often internationally, as our breeding may make its way around this world – even after we have shuffled off it!

In a similar way - when we commence judging we take onboard a commitment not just to ourselves, or our branch or the members of the Judges Association, **but also to the future of pedigree dogs around the world.**

While the chicken vs egg debate continues unresolved in relation to just which party has the greatest influence - Surely Judges only judge what breeders breed -and breeders only breed what judges want? Right?

Whatever the outcome of the debate - we need to be clear that when we undertake the journey to judge – **we also undertake the responsibility to demonstrate a commitment to those breeds we are licensed to judge.**



We can only claim to have done this successfully when we strive to attain knowledge that is almost equal to that of breeders.



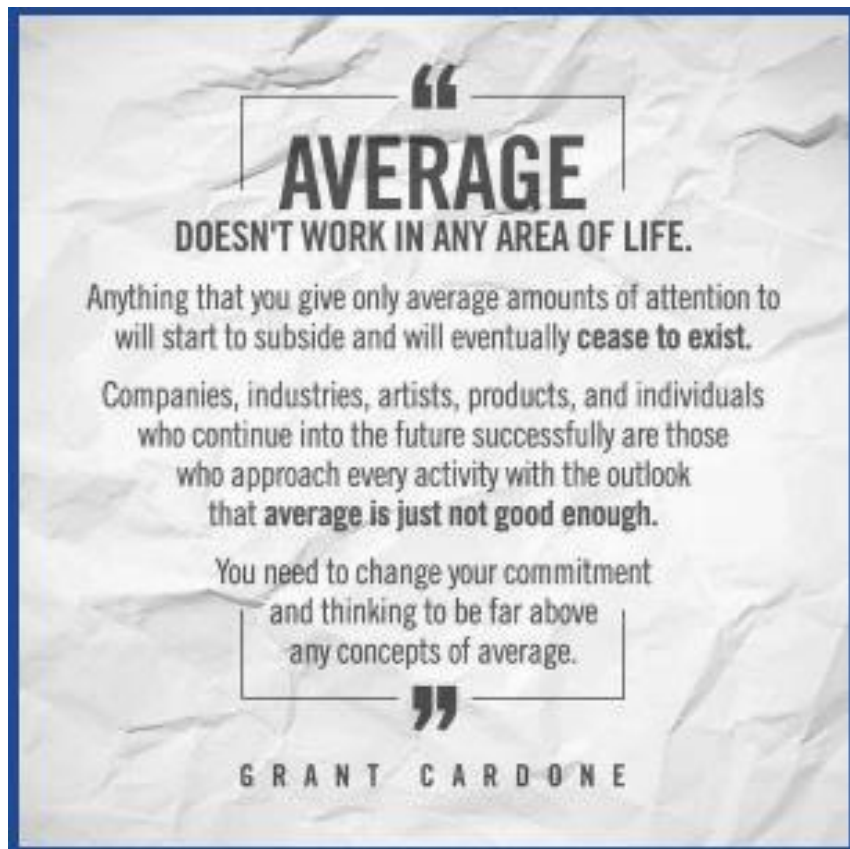
So, while we have our new L Plates on – and BTW we should understand that we wear these plates for the rest of our judging career - we still have the potential to damage many things

- the breed,
- our individual reputations as judges, and
- the reputation of all New Zealand judges.

And you can Chicken-and-egg that one as well 😊

Therefore, it follows that it will **always** be imperative that the NZDJA maintain a robust learning system and an **even more robust examination system**, to ensure our judges maintain a high level of qualification and can represent New Zealand much higher level than “just an average judge”. We are looking for competency.

Afterall – if you are just average – you are as close to the worst as you are to the best!



When I started my judging journey, we were only ever examined on what was in the Breed Standard. There was horror if an examiner asked a question to which the answer was not in the standard!!!! Examiners were trying to **trick** the candidates!

The focus was on making sure candidates could

- Correctly identify the breed points on the breed in front of them
- Having been identified - that they **were actually correct.**

The examiners also learned to accept that often the candidate missed the right dog (or the dog they would have placed higher) but had an explanation for why they placed them in that particular order – after all – we all have different priorities right?

This method is largely the same – but now need to know the WHY's of the breed. And that makes perfect sense to me.

I will share part of my journey with you.... I was perfectly comfortable with Working Dogs and my second group, Utility. They were like my home groups – many of the Utility breeds had previously been in the Working Group prior to the development of the Utility Group. But my third group was Toys, and they were taking a bit of learning. I had passed the theory and practical well enough and had started judging – but I was not comfortable with some of the breeds, and yet I was frantically studying for my next group!!! Before I was comfortable with the previous one.

Breed origin was not a requirement back then, (I love how experienced that makes me feel, but not how old!!) but I resolved that when I sat that next group (Hounds), I was going to learn MORE about the breeds than just the Breed

Standards so I could understand the “**whys**” – that is plural why with a question mark – not an acronym for Weimaraner.



Why was the breed developed?

Why it must be built to a different specification to other breeds?

Why it is essential for the breed to have these features to do its job – to ensure Form followed Function!

I certainly felt more confident when I sat the practical exam and that flowed through to today when I am judging the group. (Although some Hound exhibitors may argue that point!) So **YES**, I don't just think this is an essential learning tool, **I KNOW IT IS**. Ultimately – it makes us better judges.

At all times while judging and especially while learning, we must act with great care and consideration. It is essential we learn from the breeders/ the experts - the list of each breeds

- “Must have’s”,
- “Can live with’s”, and
- “Can live without” or “Optional extras”!

I promise you – this is a life-long quest for information, and I still learn something new each time I read the Breed Standards before an assignment, or before examining candidates.

We will talk about these “must haves” soon, along with how they affect performance at the Practical Examination – but my first point is this – you need to have an acceptance that every time you judge at a show, at whatever level, **YOU ARE HAVING AN AFFECT ON THE FUTURE OF THE BREED!**

Do we have agreement on that or is there any discussion?

So, the next part of the exercise is to take your presentation and I want you to write down six things about your breed. The first two come from your breed standard.

What we are looking for is what in the breed standard is **ESSENTIAL** - that in **your opinion**, a judge **must** look for. It can be as simple as hind dew claws on the Briard – or as complex as the correct angle of part x to part y and the length from the extremities. This is up to you – the two points are what you consider your **“Hard Breed Essentials”**, if you don’t find them, then the dog is not true to the standard and should not be bred or shown. Without exception - you expect every judge to check for these points.

The next two points I want you to list are your Breed Essentials that **ARE NOT IN THE BREED STANDARD**. They might be considered by some breeders to be “Desirable” but to others they are **“Unwritten Hard Breed Essentials”** – What are they? You may have picked them up from experienced breeders, or you have read about these essentials in a book – doesn’t matter how - but you have learned them from somewhere and they have also become your **“Hard Breed Essentials”**. Again, you would expect any judge worth their salt to be checking for these.

I can give an excellent example here. The New Zealand Breed Standard for the Newfoundland was changed in May 2017, until then, the Standard had no requirement for the feet to be webbed.

In fact, you will find that this missing detail is still current in the ANKC Breed Standard. Here is the description for feet in the current ANKC Breed Standard!

5/16/22, 11:21 AM	Newfoundland
Hindquarters:	Should be very strong. The legs should have great freedom of action; slightly feathered. Slackness of loins and cow-hocks are a defect. Dew-claws are objectionable and should be removed.
Feet:	Should be large and well shaped. Splayed or turned out feet are objectionable.

And yet the ANKC extension of the breed standard clearly illustrates that webbing should be present

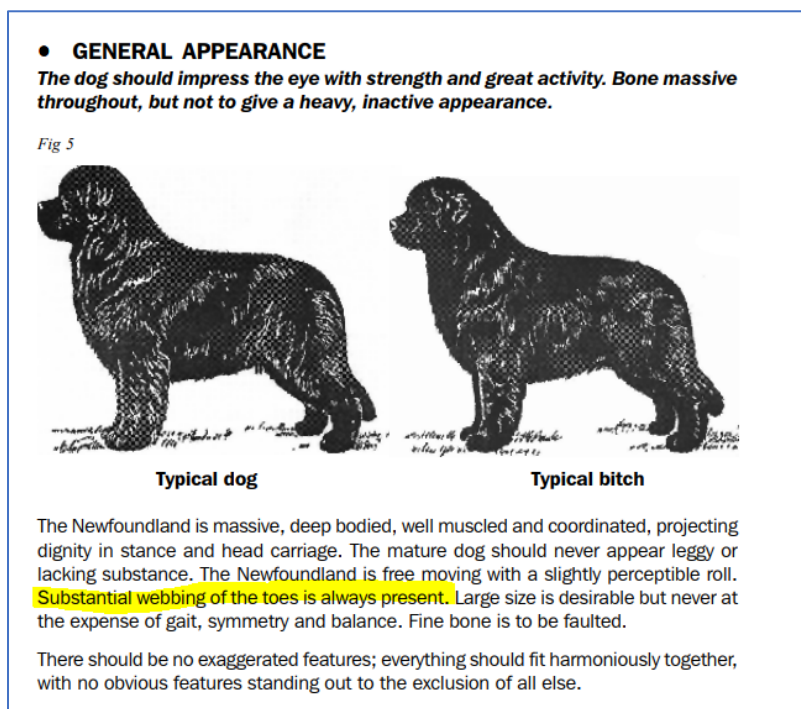


Figure 1 ANKC Newfoundland Extended Breed Standard

And the last two are things that you consider “optional”. So, they are in the breed standard – or in an extended breed standard, but they are not your “Hard Essentials” – they are the things you “can live without”.

OK, so I am going to get you to read out some of these essentials and list them on the board – let’s see if we have any things in common – who will start me off.

Hard Essential – Unwritten Hard Essential – Optional

So, there are a few things we can consider.

1. Not everything you consider an Essential – is what other breeders consider an Essential!

They prefer it but perhaps have other priorities in the breed. Maybe their current priority is to correct a poor front, or breed larger feet, and so on. Therefore, we see different “**styles**” within a breed. Not to be confused with type! There is only ever one **TYPE** – and that is the **correct type**!

2. Not everything in the Breed Standard – is a Breed Essential!

This is common sense. We know every dog has four feet, yet some standards will make no mention feet at all.

As we saw in the Newfie example, we also know that for some breeds, the dog will struggle to complete his tasks if he does not have a specific feature to his foot/ feet – which leads us to.

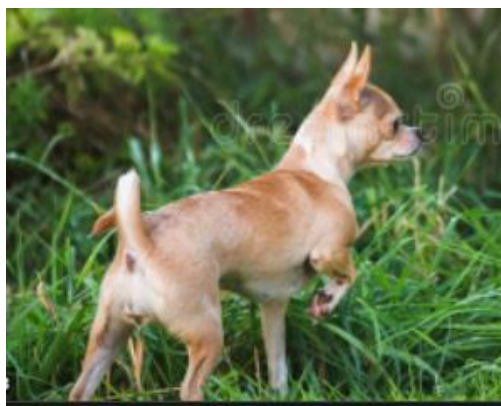
3. Not every Breed Essential – is in the breed standard!

This we all know from experience and from what we have shared today! It has long been said that the breed standard is not written for the novice – it is written for the experienced person. **THIS MISSING PARTS ARE THE INFORMATION WE NEED TO HUNT OUT!**

I have talked about Hard Breed Essentials, you can call these what you wish, priorities, must haves, etc. I have a question - In reality, are these not just points of difference from what is just your average dog?

Consider this - Most “Average Dogs” can be trained to complete the same task as a pedigree dog, as can most pedigree breeds. Let’s take a Pointer for example. A Chihuahua could certainly be trained to do the job couldn’t it? Sure, it wouldn’t be as good at the job, for a multitude of reasons - but it could do it – right?

In much the same idiom as “all dogs have the same number of bones” – if they have the will to be a pointing dog – what stops that Chihuahua, from being a Pointer? Not much..... but what prevents it from being a better pointing dog – than a Pointer?



Nothing and Everything at the same time! If they could do it – it would not be efficiently or with the same level of competency! They will only ever be *average at best*, and most likely well below average at performing the task compared to the breed that was developed to do the job! And remember **“If you are just average – you are as close to the worst as you are to the best.”** And just like with judges – average does not cut the mustard!

This **WHY** we need to know the points of difference between the breeds. It is **WHY WE MUST know the essentials the Pointer MUST have** to be the very best at his job? What sets him apart from other dogs and specifically, from other pointing dogs? Does the breed standard alone tell you this?

Is there any discussion on this?

It should be clear by now why it is imperative that you dig a lot deeper than just the breed standard, to truly appreciate what the breed essentials of each breed are, and why the dogs must have them. By the time you get to sitting your practical examination – you have moved a lot of earth to uncover these breed essentials by experience, talking to breeders, watching judging, reading books, searching the internet.


If I have ever suggested to you at either a show, mock exam, or at an actual examination - that you need to talk to some breeders or owners – then I am giving you the benefit of the doubt that you will do this. I would certainly be disappointed to find you have not! I certainly would be hesitant to give you the benefit of the doubt in the future 😊! The suggestion has been made because I can see you need more practice or understanding in the application of your knowledge – and the understanding of breed essentials. This is the best way to gain it!

These breed essentials give the dog what he needs to perform his task. Having called them breed essentials all morning I am now going to give them the correct term – **HALLMARK!**

*“If something is the hallmark of or has/bears all the hallmarks of something, **it has all the essential features associated with that thing**. If somebody leaves/stamps their hallmark on something, they have a unique and lasting effect on it.”*

hallmark noun

 Save Word

hall·mark | \ ˈhɒl-,märk 

Definition of *hallmark* (Entry 1 of 2)

1 a : an official mark stamped on gold and silver articles in England to attest their purity

b : a mark or device placed or stamped on an article of trade to indicate origin, purity, or genuineness
*// a **hallmark** from the Ming dynasty*

2 : a distinguishing characteristic, trait, or feature
*// the dramatic flourishes which are the **hallmark** of the trial lawyer*
 — Marion K. Sanders

Merriam-Webster definition (Screenshot)

Merriam-Webster's 1b **definition of hallmark** is “a mark or device placed or stamped on an article of trade to indicate origin, purity, or genuineness.”

There is something extremely important about hallmarks, if a dog possess the required hallmarks – then he has the best opportunity to perform the tasks he was bred to do. The correct form – will allow him the correct function!

His form will give him the required function. Form follows function.

What does the term form follows function mean?

Sullivan's famous axiom, “form follows function,” became the touchstone for many architects. This means that the purpose of a building should be the starting point for its design. Wright extended the teachings of his mentor by changing the phrase to “form and function are one.”

The reason examiners ask you what the dog was bred for is to check your understanding of form and function. Form follows function – just keep repeating this.... form follows function.....

We have already decided that hallmarks are not always found in the standard, the other discovery is this.... **Just sending a dog around the ring and having a hands-on examination – doesn't mean he can perform the task he was bred to do!**

What do I mean by this? – here is an example.

One of the hallmarks of the Border Collie is his *“ability to move with great stealth”* – what is essential for this to happen? You have no way to confirm he actually does this in the exhibition ring – but you can work out what he **MUST HAVE** to enable him to do this in his job!!!!!!

Form follows function – he won't reach, drive or be capable of great stealth if his angulation is not correct, if his temperament is not correct.

If he possesses these hallmarks AND everything is in balance.... Then **form WILL follow function!**



Border Collie's normal balanced gait



Border Collie 'moving with stealth'

Because auditing and investigation is part of the management system in my job – I can summarise for you the way we complete this when we use a very simple method – it is called the Five W's (Why's) and an H (How). It is a problem-solving method that explores the underlying cause-and-effect of particular problems. If we applied this to the learning and examination process it look something like this



Who is involved? – NZDJA, Examiners, Candidates, Exhibitors/ Breeders

What is involved? – learning and testing of knowledge of form and function of breeds

Why is it involved? – to ensure our judges are competent and understand that they also play a part in the protection of the future of our pedigree breeds.

When is it involved?– every time we judge, every time we discuss pedigree dogs with any other person or organisation, in any walk of life.

Where is it involved?– at shows, at lectures, in meetings, any place where

pedigree dogs are discussed.

How is it involved?– **by testing competence through the theory and practical examination system, to ensure the level of understanding of candidates fulfil the 5W requirements.**

From a legal point of view, a competent person is one who has the skills, knowledge, aptitude, training, and experience to complete the task at hand. Sounds a bit like form follows function again. It is an above average level of competency I am looking to find in each candidate.

Judges around the world need to grasp this and accept the huge responsibility that being deemed competent, has placed upon their shoulders. We have been part of a system that in the last 100 years has permitted breed exaggerations to enter the show ring and be rewarded and thus compounded. Therefore, we have an obligation to ensure we have a major part to play in reversing such exaggerations. Sure, we were not judging when it all started, but we are here now, and we can and must play a part in reversing the trend – and quickly.

Otherwise, we will see the end of dog shows in our time!

This leads to the next part of the talk and the actual topic I have been tasked to deliver **“EXAMINERS EXPECTATIONS FOR PRACTICAL EXAMS”**.

Initially I was concerned that having not long joined the examiners panel, I was not even qualified to deliver this topic? But the reality is that examining has been the most intense learning period of my judging career. It is a tough job and I have made mistakes and been too soft at times and too hard at others..... but as I have learned even more on this journey, I am prepared to accept that I can, and will, be learning forever! Being given the opportunity to describe just what I am looking for – has given me even more insight into just how important the role of the judge is, AND the examiner.

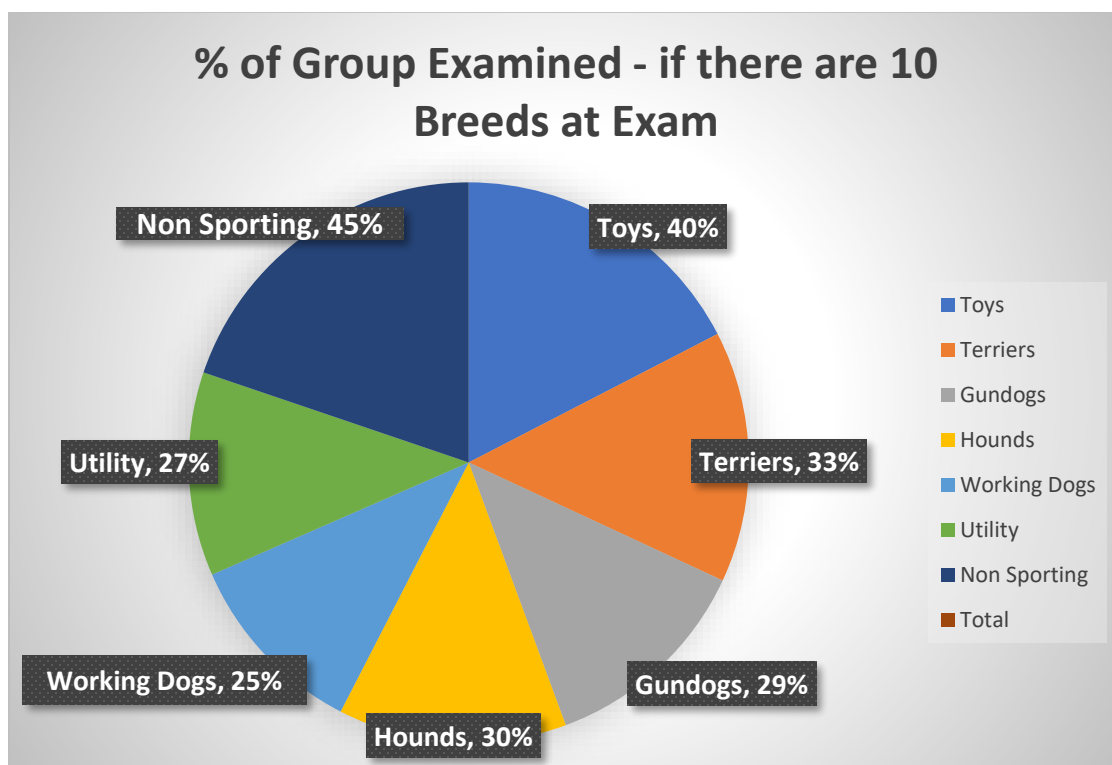
Just like auditing – when we examine candidates, we are simply taking a snapshot of your performance in time. What that snapshot must tell me – is that you do have the ability to fulfil all the requirements we have discussed above, in less than the 90 minutes it will take for you to be examined. It sure is a pressure situation for both parties. **In the final analysis, I need to be assured that you have the future of our breeds in your capable hands.**

I will correctly credit David Fifield with this statement when providing information to potential examiners many years ago. During his presentation he said ***“When you fail someone, you are only failing them for a year. When you pass them, you are giving them a license for life.”*** From the short experience I have had, I have already re-examined two candidates who accepted this and when they returned for the re-sit, they were certainly far better candidates, and I was happy to pass them.

When you sit an examination, it is likely that you will only be tested on 9 or 10 breeds. When you consider that this is

- less than 50% of the breeds within the smallest group (Non-Sporting), or
- ONLY 25% of the total breeds for largest (Working Dogs)

Then you must understand why I need to be confident that you will go out and apply the same diligence to learning about the **MAJORITY** of the breeds in the group, which you have **NOT BEEN TESTED ON!**



Already having such a short period of time to decide your level of competence, the decision is often further compounded by the fact that entries at Practical Exams are neither plentiful (by number of exhibits), nor guaranteed to be of high quality.

Therefore, in my opinion, when you fail a breed in the exam process that you knew would be present and have had time to study and prepare for – then my conclusion can only be that you will likely fail the balance of the breeds as well. I need to hear you express with confidence **WHAT** you know about the breed **HOW** that applies in the dogs you judged, and **WHY** you made your decisions.

Just as a breed has hallmarks – individual judges do as well. As an examiner, the hallmarks I am searching for are those that tell me you are ready to undertake the responsibility of “**protecting the hallmarks of our pedigree breeds**”.

And that, ladies, and gentlemen – is what I am looking for as an examiner.

Remember – just like the perfect dog – the perfect judge has never been born! So, when I give you that tick of approval – it is simply a tick that says I am confident that you can continue your journey of learning! I certainly learn something new each time I review the Breed Standard, Extended Breed Standard and get ready to examine you!

I am honoured and humbled to have been asked to complete this task. It is both the most frightening and exciting job I have undertaken for NZDJA and certainly I still consider I have my L Plates on for this as well!

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Enough of the whys and wherefores. Let's have a look at the actual Practical Examiner's Assessment Sheet and have a talk about what happens on the day.

<u>PRACTICAL EXAMINER'S ASSESSMENT SHEET:</u>			
<u>DATE:</u>		<u>CANDIDATE:</u>	
<u>EXAMINER:</u>		<u>SIGNED:</u>	<u>GROUP:</u>
<u>Personal Grooming: Yes/No.</u>	<u>Suitable Dress Yes/No.</u>		MARKS
<u>Suitable Shoes: Yes/No</u>			
<u>RINGCRAFT:</u>			
Setting up Ring			
Communication with Steward			
Position of Table & Exhibits			
Clarity of Directions			
Efficiency of Judge's Movements			
Speed of Judging			
Minimum Pass Mark 5, if less Circle			/10
<u>COMMENTS:</u>			

This is the top part of the Assessment Sheet and is fairly self-explanatory. These are all things you should have mastered by now on your journey up through the Ribbon Parade and Open Show system. Personal grooming means you are clean and tidy. Hair restrained and not falling in the dogs' face, clothing is clean and tidy. Suitable dress is not jeans – even \$500 jeans! Never track shoes or leisure suits – they are strictly for leisure! Ladies – skirts should be straight and not flapping at the dogs, and of suitable length that we do not get a peep show! You must be able to bend down comfortably!!!! Shoes are important – you have to stand all day. Your entire outfit has to be comfortable enough to stand for the entire day!

Ringcraft should be second nature by this point (**but often is far from such!!!**).

The most important section you MUST have mastered is
Speed of Judging (= TIME).

You will be checked against a stopwatch, and you will fail this section if you can not manage 40 dogs per hour.

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The next part of the sheet is also self-explanatory, are there any questions about this part? Manner & Attitude. Speaks for itself.

<u>MANNER/ATTITUDE:</u>									
Appropriate Demeanor									
Friendly									
Helpful									
Considerate									
Minimum Pass Mark 5, if less Circle									/10
COMMENTS:									

The bottom part of the sheet is the essential part. In this section you can fail a single breed - and the entire section can be failed – so let's have a chat about the whys and wherefores of this. Can we start with any questions?

<u>PHYSICAL EXAMINATION:</u>									
Approach to Exhibits									
Appropriate Tabling/Ramping									
Breed Specific Examination									
Confident Handling									
Consistency of Movement									
Clarity of Placements									
Minimum Pass Mark 20, if less Circle									/30
COMMENTS:									
<u>APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE:</u>									
Knowledge of Breed Standards									
Application of Breed Knowledge									
Breed Origins/Function									
Use of Terminology									
Assessment of Movement									
Justification of Placings									
Verbal Critique									
Written Critique - Spec only.									
Minimum Pass Mark 30, if less Circle									/50
COMMENTS:									
Total Minimum Pass Mark is 70% .									/100
A MINIMUM PASS MARK MUST BE ACHIEVED IN ALL CATEGORIES AS WELL AS ACHIEVING 70% OVERALL									Pass: Yes / No

My comments about this section are that this is where you make or break both my opinion of your ability – and the outcome of the exam.

You need to show me that you understand what form the dog has/ has not got and how you will reward that dog.

As an example - I don't just want to know that the Jack Russell Terrier has a flexible body I need to know why it must have one, how you check for it, and what to do if you don't find that degree of flexibility. BTW - The answer to this is **not in the breed standard!**

soundness of this breed.

GENERAL APPEARANCE: A strong, active, lithe working Terrier of great character with flexible body of medium length. His smart movement matches his keen expression. Tail docking is optional and the coat may be smooth, rough or broken.

CHARACTERISTICS: A lively, alert and active Terrier with a keen intelligent expression.

Body: Chest deep rather than wide, with good clearance and the brisket located at the height mid-way between the ground and the withers. The body should be proportioned marginally longer than tall, measuring slightly longer from the withers to the root of the tail than from the withers to the ground. Back level. Ribs should be well sprung from the spine, flattening on the sides so that the girth behind the elbows can

be spanned by two hands - about 40 cm to 43 cm. The loins should be short, strong and deeply muscled.

"...with flexible body". Three words in the standard.....but how important are these three words?


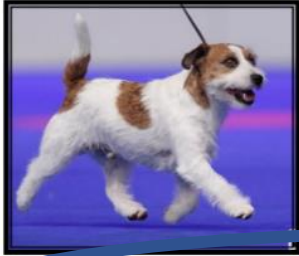
These three words are not even present in the description of his body!!!!

So, what is required in his **form**

to allow him to **function** as he was bred to do?

Here is a screenshot from the website of the JRT Club in the UK. Here the **WHY** he has to be flexible!

may be smooth, broken or rough.
Scars not to be penalised

Characteristics
Lively, alert and active. A good hunting terrier, sturdily built, that could go easily to ground

Temperament
Bold, fearless, friendly and confident.

The word strong in this context indicates in a muscular, fit hard condition. He should be supple and flexible so he is able to turn on himself when working underground. He should not be heavy chested, the ribs should be capable of being spanned by average sized mans hands. The dog should not have coarse bulging muscles as these are not leave. In motion he should cover the ground with ease no high or short stepping he should move effortlessly with plenty of reach and drive. What ever the coat it should be harsh thick and weatherproof He is a lively active terrier with a keen intelligent expression

Breed Lecture in the UK

<https://www.jackrussellterrierclub.co.uk/451728978>

A single sentence in the breed standard, with three words that could be easily overlooked – **but is a hallmark of the breed.**

While it may be an interesting fact you read somewhere that a JRT performed as an entertainer in a Moscow Circus in 1903 – when you deliver that as part of your description of Breed Origin, that just tells me you have read something, somewhere about the breed – I can't even confirm if that is true. It certainly does not indicate to me that you actually **"understand"** the breed and to be fair, I don't really care about the superfluous material, I am more likely to switch off.

Breed Origin/ Function is the essential part of the examination!

It is where I test that you understand the how and why of **form follows function** – check for it, talk about it, your actions show me how you examine for it. Show me how you prioritise one thing over another, tell me the third dog in the line up has the best head, but you cannot forgive the poorly constructed and weak hindquarters. I need to understand what you know and will ask the why's until I can form a positive opinion on your ability – or until I realise you have not yet attained that level of competency required. Until I can understand your decision-making process – I will not be able to consider you competent.

So yes, while the internet is an excellent search tool and there are copious amounts of information, such as the Moscow Circus performance in 1903, I only need to be worried about a very few things.

What job was he bred to do?

What attributes he **MUST** have to do that job?

Does the dog in front of you have those attributes?

Even preparing this presentation has made me stop and think about expectations. As a judge you are balancing the expectations of so many parties. As an examiner it is no different, but there is far more at stake and that is why I am looking for better than average.

If it sounds hard, and you think I sound pretty hard arse about this process, I make no apology. Due to my involvement with the various committees in the dog world such as Canine Health & Welfare and the JBO Sub-Committee and even right back to my days with the New Zealand Council of Docked Breeds - I know that now, more than ever before, we need to be helping the future of our pedigree breeds. So yes, I am looking for someone who is prepared to take on

that responsibility and demonstrate they are willing to improve that outlook for our breeds. I am searching for people I consider **competent!**

If after all this, you are still sitting here thinking that you are just a small cog in a great wheel and can't make a difference.... then you will only ever be average at best – as close to the worst as you are to the best - and that is not good enough!

There is a popular saying doing the rounds of Facebook – don't bring the standard down to the dog, bring the dog up to the standard.

I am suggesting to you that I believe the same of candidates – ***don't bring the training and examination system down to the level of candidates – bring the candidates up to the level required.***

Thank you for your time today and the opportunity to express where I believe the priorities of the Practical Examination Process should be.

FORM FOLLOWS FUNCTION

Karen McIntyre
May 2022