



# **DOGS ACT**

## **SCENT WORK JUDGES TRAINING SCHEME**

**This is the Dogs ACT Scent Work Judges Training Scheme (December 2024).  
It is based on the Dogs Australia National minimum standards (amended April 2024)**

## **1. OVERVIEW**

- 1.1. Dogs Australia Member Bodies are responsible for the training, testing, assessment and maintenance of Scent Work Judging licences.
- 1.2. Dogs ACT will assess trainee judges in the following sequential order:
  1. Novice and Advanced Classes
  2. Excellent and Master Classes
  3. Ultimate Class
- 1.3. No more than two Scent Work licences may be applied for in the same year.
- 1.4. Trainees are required to pass a written/oral examination prior to attempting a practical assessment. The written/oral examination is based on Dogs Australia Rules pertaining to the Classes being trained for, as well as Dogs ACT Regulations and general requirements of the "Rules for the Conduct of Scent Work Trials".
- 1.5. If a Dogs Australia Member Body requires a higher standard than the Dogs Australia Minimum Standards, the Dogs Australia Member Body's Regulation/s will take precedence over the ANKC Minimum Standard/s.
- 1.6. Before attending course lectures or undertaking practical training sessions, aspirants for the Novice and Advanced Classes may be required to undertake a preliminary written theory examination covering the Dogs Australia and Dogs ACT Rules and Regulations relating to judging requirements, and the general requirements of the Dogs Australia "Rules for the Conduct of Scent Work Trials".

## **2. APPLICATION**

- 2.1 Application for admission as a Scent Work trainee judge must be made to Dogs ACT on the required application form by the date specified.
- 2.2 All applications for Scent Work Judges Licences must be made to Dogs ACT on the required application form upon successful completion of training. All requirements must be fulfilled prior to the applicant undertaking written/oral examination and practical assessment.
- 2.3 Application forms should include evidence that the relevant training, judging and stewarding requirements have been fulfilled. Dogs ACT has the right to seek verification of any information supplied by the applicant.
- 2.4 The trainee should maintain a logbook to record achievement of training requirements for example, details of relevant training, including search evaluations and supervisor reports signed by the trainers/mentors; attendance at lectures; and written and practical assessment results.

## **3. ELIGIBILITY**

- 3.1 The Applicant must:
  - 3.1.1 Be a member of a Dogs Australia Member Body for a period of not less than three (3) years prior to the application and be a current financial member of Dogs ACT.
  - 3.1.2 Be over eighteen (18) years of age.
  - 3.1.3 Reside in the ACT, unless special permission has been obtained (see S3.4).
- 3.2 Trainees are expected to attend all lectures and practical training sessions as approved by Dogs ACT. Trainees will also be required to educate themselves by studying the "Rules for the Conduct of Scent Work Trials".

3.3 Dogs ACT has provision for trainees who cannot attend a lecture, structured training, or written or practical assessment on the appointed date. Where there is a reason acceptable to the Scent Work Course Coordinator, other arrangements will be made for that trainee.

3.4 To be eligible to apply for a:

3.4.1 NOVICE and ADVANCED CLASSES JUDGING LICENCE

3.4.1.1 The applicant must have personally trained and trialled a dog to a minimum of a Scent Work Advanced (SWA) title.

3.4.1.2 The applicant must have at least three (3) years' experience in scent work training/education/instructing.

3.4.1.3 The applicant must have stewarded at least once in each of the Elements in each of the Novice and Advanced Classes at a minimum of three (3) Scent Work trials in the past three (3) years.

3.4.2 EXCELLENT and MASTER CLASSES JUDGING LICENCE

3.4.2.1 The applicant must have personally trained and trialled a dog in the Scent Work Excellent Class.

3.4.2.2 The applicant must have stewarded at least once in each of the Elements in each of the Excellent and Master Classes at a minimum of three (3) Scent Work trials in the past three (3) years.

3.4.2.3 The applicant must have judged at least three (3) different Elements in each of the Novice and Advanced Classes at a minimum of three (3) Scent Work trials.

3.4.3 ULTIMATE CLASS JUDGING LICENCE

3.4.3.1 The applicant must have personally trained and trialled a dog to a Scent Work Excellent (SWE) title.

3.4.3.2 The applicant must have stewarded at least once in each of the Elements in the Ultimate Class at a minimum of three (3) Scent Work trials in the past three (3) years.

3.4.3.3 The applicant must have judged at least three (3) different Elements in each of the Excellent and Master Classes at a minimum of three (3) Scent Work trials

3.4.3 Licences must be applied for sequentially that is, Novice and Advanced; Excellent and Master; and Ultimate in that order. Each licence will be granted when Program requirements for that licence are completed.

**4. METHOD OF EDUCATION (SELF EDUCATION)**

4.1 Trainees must be conversant with the latest Dogs Australia Member Body Rules and Regulations relevant to Scent Work trialling and the current "Rules for the Conduct of Scent Work Trials".

4.2 Trainees are to attend all lectures and practical training sessions unless otherwise approved by Dogs ACT Scent Work Coordinator.

4.3 The trainee will arrange for a trainer/s (mentor/s) to observe their judging at the relevant Class to assess and provide feedback on their progress and performance. Copies of the

completed Search Evaluation forms, Judges Sheet and Supervisor Reports are to be forwarded to the Scent Work Course Coordinator prior to the date set by Dogs ACT.

## **5. PRACTICAL TRAINING SESSIONS**

- 5.1 Trainers/mentors will be identified by the Scent Work Course Coordinator from the Scent Work Training and Assessment Panel for 2026.
- 5.2 Dogs ACT Scent Work trainers/mentors will (where possible) make themselves available to assist with trainees practical training including:
  - 5.2.1 Supervise the trainee in the required aspects of judging in Scent Work trials.  
NOTE: To maximise the desired educational experience, training should be done over several months. Judging of three-four dogs per search must be documented at any individual training session.
  - 5.2.2 Provide feedback to the trainee and be open to questions from the trainee.
  - 5.2.3 Sign the Mentorship Certification Form after completing details of suggested judging modification and/or reinforcement of the trainee's progress and performance in the practical session.
- 5.3 These forms are to be retained by the trainee and forwarded to the Scent Work Course Coordinator by the specified date. Copies should be retained by the trainee.

## **6. APPLICATION FOR ASSESSMENT**

- 6.1 Applicants may apply for a combination of Novice and Advanced Classes in the same year, and thereafter, the Excellent and Master Classes may be completed no earlier than one year later, and thereafter, the Ultimate Class no earlier than one year later.

They shall provide a minimum of:

### **6.2 Novice and Advanced Classes**

- 6.2.1 Documentation of completion of the theory components of the course.
- 6.2.2 Documentation of at least four (4) Practical Judges Training sessions covering both Classes.
- 6.2.3 Details of three (3) Novice and three (3) Advanced Class stewarding appointments at sanctioned Scent Work trials. This should include Affiliate name, trial date, Class and Elements and number of teams judged.
- 6.2.4 Details of shadowing experienced judges judging at Dogs Australia Scent Work trials, covering a minimum of three different Elements in each of the Novice and Advanced Classes OR in each of the Excellent and Master Classes to gain broad experience. There should be a minimum of ten (10) teams in each Class/Element.

### **6.3 Excellent and Master Classes**

- 6.3.1 Documentation of completion of the theory components of the course.
- 6.3.2 Documentation of at least four (4) Practical Judges Training sessions covering both Classes.

- 6.3.2 Details of three (3) Novice and Advanced Class judging appointments including Affiliate name, date of trial, Class and Elements and number of teams judged.
- 6.3.3 Details of three (3) Excellent and three (3) Master Class stewarding appointments and at sanctioned Scent Work trials. This should include Affiliate name, trial date, Class and Elements and number of teams judged.
- 6.3.4 Details of shadowing experienced judges judging at Dogs Australia Scent Work trials, covering a minimum of three different Elements in each of the Excellent and Master Classes to gain broad experience. There should be a minimum of ten (10) teams in each Class/Element.

#### **6.4 Ultimate Class**

- 6.4.1 Documentation of completion of the theory components of the course.
- 6.4.2 Documentation of at least four (4) Practical Judges Training sessions.
- 6.4.3 Details of three (3) Excellent and Master Class judging appointments including Affiliate name, date of trial, Class and Elements and number of teams judged.
- 6.4.4 Details of three (3) Excellent and three (3) Master Class stewarding appointments and at sanctioned Scent Work trials. This should include Affiliate name, trial date, Class and Elements and number of teams judged.
- 6.4.5 Details of shadowing experienced judges judging at Dogs Australia Scent Work trials, covering a minimum of three Ultimate Classes to gain broad experience. There should be a minimum of ten (10) teams in each Class/Element.

### **7. THEORY EXAMINATION**

- 7.1 The theory examination may be in written or oral format and is to be marked by a minimum of two (2) members of the Scent Work Training and Assessment Panel for 2026. A third marker will be required only where there is a divided decision.
- 7.2 Scent Work theory examination papers shall comprise two sections:
  - 7.2.1 Questions as set by the Dogs Australia Member Body for the relevant Class and relevant Dogs ACT Regulations. (Part A)
  - 7.2.2 Principal features of Scent Work (Part B)
- 7.3 To pass the theory examination a trainee must achieve a minimum of 80%.
- 7.4 A Trainee who has failed a theory examination may make a written request to Dogs ACT, within fourteen (14) days of the advice of the results, for their paper to be reviewed. A different panel of three (3) markers will, without conferring, separately remark the paper.

### **8. PRACTICAL ASSESSMENT**

- 8.1 The Trainee must pass the written or oral examination in order to undertake the Practical Assessment.
- 8.2 The following are the requirements for a pass in the Practical Assessment:
  - 8.2.1 Trainees must judge a minimum of four (4) searches in at least three (3) of the four (4) Elements in the Classes being assessed.
  - 8.2.2 At the assessors discretion, the trainee may be asked to judge additional dogs.

- 8.2.3 At least three assessors from the Scent Work Training and Assessment Panel for 2026 will assess the trainee.
  - 8.2.4 Each assessor will individually make a recommendation as to whether the trainee has passed or failed.
  - 8.2.5 A positive recommendation by the majority of assessors is required to pass the practical assessment.
- 8.3 Assessment sheets will be completed and submitted to Dogs ACT Scent Work Coordinator. The trainee will be notified of their results in writing.

## **9. RE – ASSESSMENT**

- 9.1 Trainees who do not pass the practical assessment may apply for re-assessment. Dogs ACT is not obligated to automatically agree to a re-assessment and each case must be reviewed on its merits.
- 9.2 Where re-examination is approved, it should be conducted no earlier than three months or later than six months following the original assessment. The Training and Assessment Panel must take into account the need for further practical training of the trainee and the availability of suitable handlers/dogs and facilities.

## **10. DRESS CODE**

- 10.1 While trainees need not comply strictly with a Dress Code at all their practical training sessions leading up to their assessment, they should meet generally acceptable standards (that is, neat, sensible clothes, appropriate footwear, no thongs etc) when undertaking practice judging.
- 10.2 The Practical Assessment is a formal occasion and must be treated in the same manner as a sanctioned Scent Work Trial judging appointment. As such, the trainee must display an appropriate form of dress befitting an official at such an event and they will be marked accordingly.

## **11. FITNESS TO JUDGE**

- 11.1 Dogs Australia Regulations Part 2, Point 1.3 states:

- 11.1.1 All Judges Application Forms, both new and renewal, shall contain the following declaration to be signed by the applicant:

- “I declare that I am physically fit and capable of judging in accordance with the Rules and in the normal accepted manner, and if required I am prepared to undergo a medical fitness test and/or vision test at the discretion of the Control. I further accept the Control may refuse to grant any renewal of licence and may cancel or suspend for any period or vary in any way any licence already granted. Or may grant, in part, only an application for renewal of licence”

- 11.2 Should Dogs ACT consider that either an applicant or a licensed judge is unable to meet s11.1.1, Dogs ACT has the right to:

- 11.2.1 Refuse the application

- 11.2.2 Refuse to grant any renewal of the licence to any person and may cancel or suspend for any period or vary in any way any licence already granted, or

- 11.2.3 Direct any judge to undergo a medical “Fitness to Judge” examination by a nominated medical officer, or
- 11.2.4 Grant in part only an application for renewal of the licence.

**12. MAINTENANCE OF SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE**

- 12.1 All judges are expected to actively maintain their knowledge and understanding of the Rules and their interpretations as deemed by the Dogs Australia and Dogs ACT.
- 12.2 In order to maintain their Scent Work Judges licence, judges must, in each calendar year, have:
  - 12.2.1 Judged at least one trial and have attended at least two professional development sessions; in exceptional circumstances, Dogs ACT may approve substitution of two judging appointments or attendance at two professional development sessions for the above.
  - 12.2.2 Paid the relevant annual judge's licence fee.
- 12.3 In the event that a judge fails to fulfil this responsibility or to follow directions issued by Dogs ACT:
  - 12.3.1 Dogs ACT may refuse to grant any renewal of licence or may cancel or suspend for any period or vary in any way, any licence already granted.
  - 12.3.2 Dogs ACT may direct any Judge within its jurisdiction to undergo additional training or counselling by the Scent Work Training and Assessment Panel.

**2026 Scent Work Training and Assessment Panel**

Julie Cutts (Coordinator)
John Sam
Amanda Delaney
Joelene Washington-King
Marion Leaver
Elaine Temby
Sid Schuck
Scent Work experts may be co-opted as required

Mentors must be chosen from the Scent Work Training and Assessment Panel in consultation with both the mentors and the trainee.

For questions or clarification contact the Scent Work Training Coordinator, Julie Cutts (mobile 0438 931 712) or email [jarrah236@gmail.com](mailto:jarrah236@gmail.com)