

# Criteria for IKC Licensed Judges

## (Compulsory from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2026)

### Important Notes Regarding Criteria

- Module 1: Judges & Stewards Education Programme - Seminar and Open Book Assessment
- Module 2: Points of the Dog -Seminar and Assessment on Structure and Anatomy, Movement and Construction.
- Module 3: How to Judge Dog - General Breed Types, Critiques and Grading. Hands on Assessment.
- Module 4: Breed/Group Specific Seminars with Hands on Element - Breed Specific Training.
- Judges should be aware of the rules & regulations of the Irish Kennel Club.
- A judge should not accept any breeds or judge any breeds either national or international level unless they are qualified under IKC rules.
- Judges must **never** sign a blank questionnaire/contract. Questionnaires must **not** be signed until the judge is eligible to judge Breeds/Groups he/she is signing for.
- Group judges are expected to be familiar with the breed standards of all breeds recognised by the Irish Kennel Club within that Group.
- All Irish resident judges must be members of the Irish Kennel Club and hold a valid, current judges license.
- Judges should be dressed smartly in accordance with the duty to be fulfilled
- For all progressions up to best in show qualification the judge must have attended and successfully completed module 1 of the IKC's judges & stewards education programme.
- All other progressing judges must **attend** a module 1 seminar of the IKC judges & stewards education programme.
- Judges should be aware that there are penalties for double booking. See [guide](#) on page 7.
- A judge may not judge the same classes at limited show/match level or the same breed/s, Group/s or variety classes at open show level within a six (6) month period.
- A judge may only judge the same breeds once in a twenty-four (24) month period at championship level. ....
- A judge may only judge the same Group, Stakes Classes, Junior Handling or Best in Show competitions (Best Baby, Best Breeder, Best in Show, Best Irish Native Breed, Best Junior, Best Neutered, Best Puppy, Best Veteran) once in a twelve (12) month period
- A judge may only judge any two (2) of the following three (3) on the day at an All-Breed Championship Show - Breeds/Groups/BIS.



## Lower-Level Shows

### First Time Judges

- Judges must be at least eighteen (18) years of age.
- They must have attended the Irish Kennel Club accredited judges seminar and successfully completed modules 1, 2 & 3 of the IKC's stewarding and judging education training programme.
- They must have two dogs registered in their name or partnership with the IKC for a minimum of six (6) years.
- They must be actively involved in their own breed. i.e. exhibiting, breeding and or serving on a canine club committee etc.
- Judges shall be assessed at lower-level appointments.
  - I. On completion of 3 successful assessments a judge may progress to championship level.
  - II. A judge will be required to repeat module 3 if an assessment is failed.
  - III. A judge must complete a lower-level appointment after successful completion of module 3 - this appointment will be assessed.

Please see note regarding [assessments](#) on page 8.

- A minimum of two (2) years must elapse between the judges first & qualifying lower-level appointment.
- The judge can judge any number of lower-level appointments between their first & qualifying lower-level appointment.
- The judge must judge a minimum of three (3) all breed open shows within this period.
- Judges must judge a minimum of sixty (60) dogs at lower level. The judge must keep a record of the number of dogs judged at lower level & supply a copy of the record to the IKC for official verification.
- Judges must judge their own breed on at least one (1) occasion between their first & qualifying lower-level appointment. If the judge's own breed is a minority breed, they can judge a breed within their breed's FCI section of their Group.
- A judge may not judge the same classes at limited show/match level or the same Breed/s, Group/s or variety classes at open show level within a six-month period.



## Championship Shows

### First Group

#### Rate of Progression: 1 + 3 + 4 + Unlimited Breeds

- For all progressions up to best in show qualification the judge must have attended and successfully completed modules 1 of the IKC's judges & stewarding education programme.

#### First Breed

- Judges must be a qualified steward.
- All judges must judge their own breed on first appointment.
- They must have attended the Irish Kennel Club accredited judges seminar and successfully completed modules 1, 2, 3 and 4.
- They must have two (2) dogs registered in their name or in partnership with the IKC for a minimum of six (6) years.
- They must have judged at lower-level on at least three (3) occasions. At least two (2) of these appointments must be under IKC rules and at least two appointments must be relevant to the judge's Breed/Group.
- Written critiques on all dogs judged are required and must be written at the time of judging and submitted by the scribe on the completion of best of breed. The scribe should be independent and unrelated to the judge. The show secretary shall forward same to the IKC along with the show returns.
- Judges awarding Green Stars on their first occasion shall be assessed. In order to progress further they must pass this assessment. - Please see note regarding [assessments](#) on page 8.

#### First Progression to Other Breeds. (Three Breeds)

- Eighteen (18) months must have elapsed since successful completion of the first championship appointment.
- The judge must have judged a minimum of five (5) exhibits on their first championship appointment. Allowance may be made in numerically small breeds where the judge has received a positive assessment.
- The judge must have judged at lower level on at least four (4) occasions, one of which must be after their first championship appointment.
- The judge must have successfully completed a further Group specific module 4 seminar.
- Judges will be assessed on this appointment. In order to progress further they must pass this assessment. - Please see note regarding [assessments](#) on page 8.

#### Second Progression to Other Breeds. (Four Further Breeds)

- 12 months must have elapsed since their first progression.
- **The judge must continue to steward at least three (3) times before progression. Once at championship level & two (2) other IKC licensed events signed off by the judge & secretary of the show stewarded at.**
- Judges will be assessed on this appointment. In order to progress further they must pass this assessment. - Please see note regarding [assessments](#) on page 8.

#### Completion of First Group. (No Limit to Number of Breeds)

- Twelve (12) months must have elapsed since their last progression.
- **The judge must continue to steward on a minimum of one (1) occasion at championship level before progression, signed off by the judge & secretary of the show stewarded at.**



## Qualification to Judge First Group.

- The judge must have judged a minimum of sixty (60) dogs in that Group at championship level under IKC rules.
- The judge must have judged exhibits in eight (8) breeds within the Group, a minimum of one exhibit must be present in each breed. (This relates to **Group status only** and will not prevent a progressing judge from progressing further within the specified timeframe as set down in the criteria).
- Six (6) months must have elapsed since completion of the eighth breed.
- Group judges are expected to be familiar with the breed standards of all breeds recognised by the Irish Kennel Club within that Group.
- If Group 7 is a judge's first Group, please see [addendum](#) on page 8.  
An exception is made for judges progressing through Group 7 (due to numbers). This will be reviewed on an annual basis.

## Second Group

### Rate of Progression - 1 + 3 + 4 + Unlimited Breeds

- For all progressions up to best in show qualification the judge must have attended and successfully completed module 1 of the IKC's judging and stewarding education programme.

### First Breed

- To move to a new Group, he/she must judge exhibits in a minimum of fourteen (14) breeds.
- Twelve (12) months must have elapsed since the last progressing appointment.
- **The judge must continue to steward at least three (3) times before progression. Once at championship level & two (2) other IKC licensed events signed off by the judge & secretary of the show stewarded at.**
- They must have successfully completed module 4 (an Irish Kennel Club accredited "hands on" seminar) relevant to this Group.
- They must have lower-level experience within this Group on at least two (2) occasions.

### First Progression to Other Breeds. (Three Breeds)

- Twelve (12) months must have elapsed since the last progressing appointment.
- **The judge must continue to steward on a minimum of one (1) occasion at championship level before progression, signed off by the judge & secretary of the show stewarded at.**

### Second Progression to Other Breeds. (Four Further Breeds)

- Twelve (12) months must have elapsed since the last progressing appointment.
- **The judge must continue to steward on a minimum of one (1) occasion at championship level before progression, signed off by the judge & secretary of the show stewarded at.**

### Completion of Second Group. (No Limit to Number of Breeds)

- Twelve (12) months must have elapsed since the last progressing appointment.
- **The judge must continue to steward on a minimum of one (1) occasion at championship level before progression, signed off by the judge & secretary of the show stewarded at.**



### Qualification to Judge the Group.

- The judge must have judged a minimum of sixty (60) dogs in that Group at championship level under IKC rules.
- The judge must have judged exhibits in eight (8) breeds within the Group, a minimum of one (1) exhibit must be present in each breed. (This relates to **Group status only** and will not prevent a progressing judge from progressing further within the specified timeframe as set down in the criteria).
- Six (6) months must have elapsed since completion of the eighth breed.
- If Group 7 is a judge's second group please see [addendum](#) on page 8.  
An exception is made for judges progressing through Group 7 (due to numbers). This will be reviewed on an annual basis.

### Third and Fourth Groups

#### Rate of Progression - 6 + 6 + Unlimited Breeds

All progressing judges must **attend** a module 1 seminar of the IKC judges & stewards education programme.

- Twelve (12) months must have elapsed since the last progressing appointment.
- To move to a new Group, he/she must judge exhibits in a minimum of fourteen (14) breeds.
- The judge must have stewarded at least once a year up to completion of third Group. Thereafter they are encouraged to steward annually.
- They must have attended a module 4 seminar (an Irish Kennel Club accredited seminar) relevant to these Groups.
- The judge must have lower-level experience, relevant to the Group, on at least one occasion.

#### Qualification to Judge Third Group.

- The judge must have judged exhibits in eight (8) breeds within the Group, a minimum of one (1) exhibit must be present in each breed. (This relates to **Group status only** and will not prevent a progressing judge from progressing further within the specified timeframe as set down in the criteria).
- Six (6) months must have elapsed since completion of the eighth breed.

#### Qualification to Judge Fourth Group.

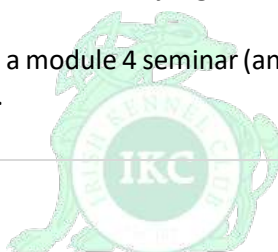
- The judge must have judged exhibits in eight (8) breeds within the Group, a minimum of one (1) exhibit must be present in each breed. (This relates to **Group status only** and will not prevent a progressing judge from progressing further within the specified timeframe as set down in the criteria).
- Six (6) months must have elapsed since completion of the eighth breed.

### Fifth and sixth Groups

#### Rate of Progression - 8+ Unlimited Breeds

All progressing judges must **attend** a module 1 seminar of the IKC judges & stewards education programme.

- Twelve (12) months must have elapsed since the last progressing appointment.
- To move to a new Group, he/she must judge exhibits in a minimum of fourteen (14) Breeds.
- They must have attended a module 4 seminar (an Irish Kennel Club accredited seminar) relevant to these Groups.



- Judges at this level are encouraged to steward regularly.

#### Qualification to Judge Fifth and Sixth Groups.

- The judge must have judged exhibits in eight (8) breeds within the Group, a minimum of one (1) exhibit must be present in each breed. (This relates to **Group status only** and will not prevent a progressing judge from progressing further within the specified timeframe as set down in the criteria).
- Six (6) months must have elapsed since completion of the eighth breed.

### Seventh and Subsequent Groups

#### Rate of Progression - No Limit to Number of Breeds

- All progressing judges must **attend** a Module 1 seminar of the IKC judges & stewards education programme.
- Twelve (12) months must have elapsed since last progressing appointment.
- To move to a new Group, he/she must judge exhibits in a minimum of fourteen (14) breeds.
- They must have attended a module 4 seminar (an Irish Kennel Club accredited seminar) relevant to these Groups.
- Judges at this level are encouraged to steward regularly.

#### Qualification to Judge Seventh and Subsequent Groups.

- The judge must have judged exhibits in eight (8) breeds within the Group, a minimum of one (1) exhibit must be present in each breed. (This relates to **Group status only** and will not prevent a progressing judge from progressing further within the specified timeframe as set down in the criteria).
- Six (6) months must have elapsed since completion of the eighth breed.

#### Unlisted breeds

- An eligible judge is one that has judged eight (8) breeds within that Group.

### Best in Show

To qualify as a BIS judge, he/she must have judged a minimum of twenty-eight (28) breeds, over a minimum of two (2) Groups. The judge must have judged at least two (2) Groups. The judging of best in show does not entitle the judge to award Green Stars to any additional breeds other than those for which he/she was previously qualified.

### Stakes Classes

These may only be judged by a best in show judge or at Group championship shows by an appropriately qualified Group judge.

### Puppy Groups

These may only be judged by a best in show judge or an appropriately qualified Group judge.

### Best Irish Native Breed in Show

A judge for the Best Irish Native Breed in Show shall meet one of the following criteria: All Breeds Judges.

A judge who is Group qualified in any one of the following Groups:

- a) Group 3, b) Group 6, c) Group 7, d) Group 8, e) Group 10.

A judge who is progressing through the native breeds and has judges 50% of same.



## Judging Junior Handling

The qualifications for judging junior handling classes are as follows: -

The proposed judge is a junior handler who has been five (5) years actively involved and is eighteen (18) years or over on the day of the show. He/she may be considered for junior handling classes only.

Or the proposed judge will be a best in show judge

Or the proposed judge will be an international professional handler who has excelled in their field with a wealth of experience and success handling various breeds, as proven by research carried out by the judges committee and junior handler's association of Ireland.

Or the proposed judge is qualified to judge junior handling in their own country.

## Junior Handling Involvement

Credit will be given to those persons who have been actively involved in junior handling, both exhibiting and at club level, for a minimum of five (5) years.

In such cases, providing he/she is over eighteen (18) years of age, he/she may be considered for lower- level judging.

He/she may then be considered for Green Stars providing:

- He/she has had a dog registered in his/her name with the Irish Kennel Club for a minimum of two years and has been actively involved at breed level.
- He/she meets the criteria regarding modules 1 – 4.
- Has judged at lower-level on at least three (3) occasions. At least two (2) of these appointments must be under IKC rules and at least two appointments must be relevant to the judge's Breed/Group.

## Continuity of Judging Career

### • Activity

If a judge has not been actively involved in dogs during the previous five (5) years, he/she may judge those breeds for which they are already qualified but may not progress at any level until a further period of two (2) years active in dogs has elapsed. Activity may be defined as any combination of, exhibiting, judging, stewarding, attending seminars, club involvement.

### • Residency

A judge who has not resided in Ireland for a period of five (5) years or more immediately prior to appointment cannot progress but will still retain judging qualifications achieved.

## Substitute Judges

A substitute judge must be qualified to judge the breed(s) concerned or have judged the appropriate Group on two previous occasions at championship show level.

A judge cannot act as a substitute if he/she has awarded Green Stars to the breeds(s) concerned within twenty-four (24) months and having judged as a substitute judge he/she cannot award Green Stars for the same breed(s) within a further twenty-four months.

Once a substitute judge has commenced judging - i.e., breed, Group, stakes or best in show he/she shall complete judging of said breed, Group, Stakes Or Best in Show.

If a substitution becomes necessary during judging, all awards made by the original judge must stand.

## Double Booking

Any judge who contracts to judge the following more than once in twelve (12) months: -

- the same Group
- stakes classes
- junior handling
- Best In Show Competitions (Best Baby, Best Breeder, Best In Show, Best IrishNative Breed, Best Junior, Best Neutered, Best Puppy, Best Veteran)





Or the same breed/s in a twenty-four (24) month period.

Will,

- On the first occasion receive a formal reprimand in writing from the Irish Kennel Club.
  - On a second occasion receive an automatic fine of fifty euro.
  - On a third or subsequent occasion receive an automatic fine of two hundred euro.
- Any decision may be appealed within fourteen days from date of issue.

### Judging at International Level

A judge may award CAC's to those breeds in which they award Green Stars.

Having judged the relevant Group on one occasion a judge may award CACIB's to those breeds in which they award Green Stars.

Having judged fourteen (14) breeds or more within a Group and having judged the relevant Group on at least one (1) occasion a judge may award CAC's/CACIB's to all breeds within that Group.

### Assessments

Judges commencing their career at lower-level shows will be assessed at lower-level appointments. The assessor will speak with the judge on the morning of the show and explain the assessment procedure. In order to progress to judge to championship level the judge must successfully complete three (3) assessments. A judge will be required to repeat module 3 if an assessment is failed. A judge must complete a lower level appointment after successful completion of module 3. This appointment will be assessed.

Judges awarding Green Stars on their first occasion will be assessed. In order to progress further they must pass this assessment. If they are not successful, they may be required to complete module 1, 2 or 3 again according to the assessors' findings. These judges are also required to pass an assessment at their next lower-level show.

The Green Star & Judges Committee reserves the right to recommend a judge is assessed at any point throughout their progressions.

### Addendum to Criteria for Progressions through Groups

#### Groups 1, 2, 3, 5, 8 and 9

Rate of progression for first time judges is  $1 + 3 + 4 = 8$

To move to a new Group, he/she must judge exhibits in a minimum of fourteen (14) breeds.

#### Group 7

The exception above is Group 7, where twelve breeds, with entries, are required before moving to a new Group.

Qualification to judge first & second Group.

The judge must have judged a minimum of forty-five (45) dogs in that Group at championship level under IKC rules.

#### Group 4

First time judges judging dachshunds may judge any number of varieties.

A qualified Group 4 judge may judge both the breed and the Group on the same day.

#### Groups 6 and 10

For the purposes of progressions only Groups 6 and 10 will be amalgamated. Therefore, the rate of progression for progressing judges will be as with all other Groups, i.e.,  $1 + 3 + 4 = 8$ .

For the purposes of progressions to a new Group, Groups 6 and 10 will count as one Group.

The first Group to be judged, i.e., Group 6 or Group 10, will be determined by the highest number of breeds judged within either section. (e.g., six breeds in Group 6 and two breeds in

Group 10. in this case a judge will judge Group 6 on their first occasion)

Having judged exhibits in fourteen (14) breeds across Groups 6 and 10, a judge may move to a new Group and will be qualified to judge all breeds within Groups 6 and 10.

