



Background

In February 2026 the OLC conducted a survey to better understand judging participation, challenges, and potential solutions. The results from 371 obedience community members highlighted that the sport is in the middle of a judging crisis with the number of people retiring far outstripping the number of new judges qualifying. Consequently, steps need to be taken to encourage more eligible competitors to judge.

One of the barriers to judging was identified as competitors missing an opportunity to compete, particularly if they don't attend many shows in a year. When asked what would encourage competitors to take on more judging appointments, although 50% stated that they felt they did their fair share, of the remaining half, 100 people (54.3%) selected the option 'being able to work my dog on the same day that I am judging'.

In response, this proposal seeks to allow both judges and stewards to compete in one class on the same day as they are officiating at a show.

This proposal also aligns with a recent request from the Royal Young Kennel Club to develop a proposal to allow judges of their classes to compete on the same day.

Summary of the Consultation

As this is a significant change to the G regulations, the OLC recommends that this proposal is initially implemented as an immediate suspension to the current regulations to enable data to be gathered over the remaining 2026 season to assess the uptake, effectiveness and practicality of the proposal. This will then be reviewed for the January 2027 OLC meeting.

The OLC is consulting with the obedience community on the following proposal:

We recommend an immediate suspension of both the first element of rule G33d which states that *'Judges at Competitive Obedience shows must not enter for competition a dog which is recorded in their sole ownership, or handle a dog, at the show at which they are judging'* and the final phrase in G30g *'Caller and scribe stewards used by judges at the show must not work a dog on the same day, with the exception that a caller and scribe stewards may compete in one class, other than the class in which they are officiating, provided that the class in which they are officiating has 25 entries or less'*.

Instead allow judges, caller stewards and scribe stewards other than those officiating in Championship C classes to work a dog in one class, with the exception of a Championship C class and the class in which they are officiating.

This is provided a number of criteria are met:

- The class they are officiating in always takes priority over the opportunity to compete, so for instance, they may have to forfeit their chance to complete the scent discrimination if the timings do not align with the class they are officiating in.



- Each person only competes in one class, and they enter that class in the normal way before the closing date of show entries. They will be exempt from any running order. Shows may want to consider offering judges and stewards free entries.
- The judge and steward(s) **all go to compete with their dogs at the same time** so there is only one stoppage for ring work. In deciding on the time to compete, they will need to consider the number of competitors in the classes they are competing in, for example if a steward is competing in Pre-Beginners that class may have a low entry number so they will need to break earlier to work their dogs than for a larger class.
- Before judging commences the judge and stewards all advise their competing class judge what time they will present themselves to work.
- Before judging commences the judge advises competitors what time they will be leaving the ring and what time judging will recommence and **they adhere to those times**. Any notification must always be visible to all competitors from when they book in.
- If the class they are officiating in includes scent discrimination, the judge and steward(s) must compete before or after all competitors have worked the scent exercise. They cannot break off during scent to work their dogs because, especially for C scent, they may return smelling of treats.

Action Required

The OLC would like to receive the views of the community. Please submit your view using **ONE** of the following options.

Please follow this link to a form that can be completed to share your views on this proposal.
<https://forms.gle/BBbYHpvNgQxXpABX9>

Or

Please attend a meeting with the OLC reps at one of the shows they are holding meetings. These can be found listed on the OLC Facebook page.

Or

Please contact one of the OLC members directly to give your thoughts.

Your feedback option must be completed by **19^h April 2026**