

DOGS VICTORIA

HERDING JUDGES TRAINING SCHEME

2026

This Dogs Victoria Herding Judges Training Scheme is based on Dogs Australia Regulations Part 3M – Herding Judges Training & Assessment Program and the Dogs Australia Rules and Regulations for Herding Trials, incorporating amendments effective 1 January 2026.

Preamble

Australian National Kennel Council Ltd trading as Dogs Australia Member Bodies are responsible for the training, testing, assessment and maintenance of Herding Judges licences.

In Victoria, these matters are administered by Dogs Victoria through the Herding Committee.

This scheme sets out the requirements for entry, training, assessment and ongoing expectations for applicants and licensed judges in the Herding discipline.

Important Dates for 2026

Dates for compulsory lectures, workshops, written assessments and practical assessments will be published annually by the Dogs Victoria Herding Committee and advised via Dogs Victoria communications.

Section 1 – How to Become a Judge

1. Applicants must be over 18 years of age and ordinarily have at least five years membership with a Dogs Australia Member Body unless dispensation is granted by Dogs Victoria.
2. Applicants for Test Level judging must:
 - have trained and trialled a dog to Pre-Trial title;
 - have acted as scribe and stock handler at qualifying events;
 - attend relevant lectures and workshops;
 - successfully complete theory and practical assessment.
3. Applicants for Trial Course licences must:
 - be eligible to judge Pre-Trial Test;
 - have judged a minimum of three Pre-Trial Tests;
 - have relevant scribing experience on the chosen course;
 - have trained and trialled a dog to Intermediate level on the chosen course;
 - pass theory and practical assessment.
4. No person may apply for more than one Herding Judges licence within the same calendar year unless otherwise approved by the Dogs Victoria Herding Committee.
5. Applicants must declare that they are physically fit and capable of judging in accordance with Dogs Australia Regulations Part 2.

Section 2 – Dogs Australia National Judges Code of Practice and Conduct

Judges must act professionally, fairly and courteously at all times.

Judges are expected to:

- provide every competitor with equal opportunity;
- be punctual and appropriately attired;
- avoid conflicts of interest;
- report attempts to improperly influence judging;
- honour judging contracts;
- maintain confidentiality and professional conduct.

Judges must present in neat practical attire appropriate to outdoor herding events. Bare feet, thongs, scuffs and unsafe footwear are not acceptable.

Section 3 – Competencies for Judges

Judges must demonstrate:

- knowledge of current Dogs Australia Herding Rules effective 1 January 2026;
- knowledge of Dogs Victoria regulations;
- ability to assess handler and dog as a working team;
- ability to score each exercise accurately and consistently;
- ability to conduct handlers' briefings;
- ability to manage stock handlers, timers and scribes;
- appropriate responses to uncontrolled, aggressive or unfit dogs.

Section 4 – Guidelines for Theory Assessments

Written assessments may be written or oral where approved.

Assessments:

- must be objective and measurable;
- may include multiple choice, short answer and practical scenario questions;
- require a minimum pass mark of 75% in each section;
- remain valid until the next relevant Dogs Australia rule amendment.

Distance assessments may be approved where candidates reside significant distance from Melbourne.

Section 5 – Procedure for Theory Assessment

Assessment papers are completed under supervision.

Applicants:

- must use allocated candidate numbers;
- must not mark papers outside their answers;
- may seek clarification of wording only;
- will be notified of results by Dogs Victoria.

Review requests must be submitted in writing within 14 days of notification.

Section 6 – Procedure for Practical Assessment

Practical assessments are conducted under current Dogs Australia Herding Rules.

The Herding Judges Training Coordinator will arrange:

- venue
- stock
- dogs
- handlers
- assessment paperwork

Assessment panels will consist of at least three licensed judges who are accredited assessors.

Candidates will:

- conduct the handlers' briefing;
- judge and score trial runs independently;
- complete judging sheets accurately;
- demonstrate sound decision-making and application of the rules.

Candidates will not be advised of results on the day. Dogs Victoria will notify all candidates formally after collation of results.

Recognised Herding Titles and Classes

Recognised classes and titles include:

- Instinct Test
- Herding Test
- Pre-Trial Test
- Started A / B / C
- Started Ducks
- Started Masters
- Novice
- Intermediate
- Intermediate Masters
- Advanced

- Herding Champion
- Grand Herding Champion
- Versatile Herding Champion

All references are subject to the current Dogs Australia Herding Rules and Regulations.

Review and Amendments

This scheme will be reviewed periodically following any amendment to Dogs Australia Herding Rules or Regulations, or as determined by the Dogs Victoria Herding Committee.