

The Kennel Club Good Citizen Dog Scheme

Gold Award

Aim

The Kennel Club Good Citizen Dog Scheme Gold Award is the highest level of achievement of the Scheme. It builds upon the skills learnt in the Silver Award and develops more advanced training skills of the dog and handler. The Gold Award is a natural progression of practical dog training skills and introduces new concepts such as relaxed isolation, stop the dog and send the dog to bed exercises, which are important in every day life situations. The Gold Award aims to provide handlers with a greater knowledge and understanding of their canine companion. Dogs that are awarded a Gold Certificate should reach the required standards in all exercises and be a worthy representative of the Scheme's highest standard. Where possible it is preferable that certain exercises are tested at indoor and outdoor locations.

Eligibility

The Scheme is aimed at all dogs whether Kennel Club registered or not, there is no age limit. For the Gold Test, Examiners will only accept dogs that have already been awarded a Silver Award Certificate. Handlers must show that they have means of cleaning up after their dog and that it has proper identification. It is a legal requirement to inscribe the name and the address of the owner on the collar or on a plate or disc attached to it. Engraved tags can be purchased from the Kennel Club website.

Standard Required

The test is non-competitive but Examiners should be satisfied that dogs are worthy of passing. Examiners should observe the spirit of the Scheme, which is to produce happy, contented dogs, which are well behaved and under the control of handlers who fully understand the responsibilities to their dogs, to their neighbours and to the community. A Certificate will be awarded when the required standard has been achieved.

Any uncontrolled, mouthing, barking, growling or other threatening behaviour is not acceptable and further training will be required before the dog can be passed. In order that it be meaningful the testing must be carried out rigorously. Emphasis must be placed upon the ability of the handler to handle, care for and generally be responsible for their dog.

The Test

Dogs may be tested singly or in groups, those passing all parts of the test will receive a Good Citizen Dog Scheme Gold Award Certificate. The Examiner will enter the comment "Passed" or "Not Ready" along side each exercise. In order to receive a Certificate, dogs must receive the comment "Passed" for each exercise during one testing session.

The Club/Organisation arranging the test will be responsible for appointing an Examiner and the standards required are stated in the Scheme's Guidelines and Information Handbook and should be strictly adhered to.

Handouts

Literature to be given out at the beginning of each training course:-

- Description of Exercises
- Canine Code
- Responsibility and Care leaflet

Description of Exercises

Exercise 1 - Road Walk

The object of this exercise is to test the ability of the dog to walk on a lead under control on a public highway beside the handler and for the handler to determine the speed of the walk. This exercise should be carried out at a suitable outdoor location and an occasional tight lead is acceptable. The handler and dog should walk along a pavement, execute a turn, then stop at the kerb where the dog should remain steady and controlled. On command they should proceed, observing the Highway Code. When reaching the other side they should turn and continue walking, making a few changes of pace from normal to slow or fast walking pace. The handler and dog will return across the road to the starting point of the exercise. Distractions should be incorporated such as passing vehicles or bicycles, people, wheelchairs, prams, pushchairs, etc. **Note: The turns are only tests of ability to change direction.**

Exercise 2 - Return to Handler's Side

The object of this exercise is to be able to bring the dog back under close control during a lead free walk. With the dog off lead and not less than 10 paces away, upon instruction, the dog will be called back to the walking handler's side and both should continue together for approximately ten paces. **Note: A dog moving loosely at the handler's side, under control, is quite acceptable and there is no requirement for a halt to complete the exercise.**

Exercise 3 - Walk Free Beside Handler

The object of this exercise is for the dog to be kept close to the handler's side as may be necessary on a walk in the park. This is a test of control whilst walking with a dog off lead beside its handler for approximately 40 paces. Competition heelwork is not the aim, but is acceptable. Therefore, it is only necessary for the dog to be kept loosely beside the handler. Two changes of direction will take place and there will be the distraction of another handler passing with a dog on a lead. Upon instruction the handler will attach the lead to finish to the test. **Note: Changes of direction are right and left turns without formality.**

Exercise 4 - Stay Down in one Place

The object of this exercise is that the dog will stay down on the spot while the handler moves away for two minutes both in and out of sight. This stay will be tested off lead and handlers should place their dogs in the down position. During the test the handler will be asked to move out of sight for approximately half a minute. While in sight handlers will be approximately ten paces away from their dog. **Note: This exercise is a test to see if the dog will stay down in one place without changing position.**

Exercise 5 - Send the Dog to Bed

The object of this exercise is to demonstrate control such as might be required in the home. The handler may provide the dog's bed, blanket, mat, or an article of clothing, etc. The handler should place the dog's bed in a position determined by the Examiner. The handler will stand approximately ten paces from the bed. Upon instruction, the handler will send the dog to bed where the dog will remain until the Examiner is satisfied the dog is settled. **Note: The dog is not being sent to bed in disgrace. Where possible this exercise should be tested indoors. The bed used should be suitable for the dog under test and no inducement e.g. toys or food should be used during this exercise.**

Exercise 6 - Stop the Dog

The object of this exercise is for the handler to stop the dog at a distance in an emergency situation. With the dog off lead and at a distance, not less than approximately ten paces away, the handler will be instructed to stop the dog on the spot in any position. **Note: The dog should be moving and is expected to respond straight away to the stop command, but if moving at speed, will be allowed a reasonable distance to come to a stop.**

Exercise 7 - Relaxed Isolation

The object of this exercise is for the dog to be content when left in isolation. During such times the dog should not become agitated, unduly stressed or defensive. The handler should fasten the dog to an approximate two metre line and then move out of sight for between two - five minutes as directed. Alternatively, the dog may be left in a room on its own, provided undetected observation can take place. Examiners should choose appropriate venues when conducting this exercise. Any number of dogs may be tested at the same time provided they are isolated at different locations. It is acceptable for the dog to move around during isolation, however should the dog whine, howl, bark, or indulge in any disruptive activities it should not pass this exercise. **Note: Dogs should be tested for their relaxed demeanour in isolation without any prior controls being imposed by the handler. This is not a stay exercise but handlers may settle their dogs before leaving. This is a practical test and no inducement e.g. blankets, toys or food should be used during this exercise.**

Exercise 8 - Food Manners

The object of this exercise is for the dog to be fed in an orderly manner. The handler will offer food to the dog either by hand or in a bowl. The dog must wait for permission to eat. After a three - five second pause, the handler will be asked to give the dog a command to eat. **Note: The dog should not eat until given permission, however if attempting to do so, it is acceptable for the handler to restrain the dog by voice alone.**

Exercise 9 - Examination of the Dog

The object of this exercise is to demonstrate that the dog will allow inspection of its body by a stranger as might be undertaken by a veterinary surgeon. The dog on lead will be required to be placed for inspection of its mouth, teeth, throat, eyes, ears, stomach, tail and feet whilst standing, sitting or lying down as required. Other than mild avoidance, the dog should allow inspection without concern. **Note: It is the responsibility of training officials to ensure that only suitable dogs take part in this exercise.**

Exercise 10 - Responsibility and Care

The object of this exercise is to test the knowledge of the handler on specific subjects relating to owning a dog. The Examiner should construct questions based on section two and three of the Responsibility and Care leaflet. Topics covered include - other responsibilities, children, barking, dogs and stationary vehicles, vehicle travel, health, worming, the Country Code, miscellaneous, frightening, out of control, biting and psychology of learning. The questions should not be phrased in an ambiguous manner and where necessary, Examiners should rephrase the same question in an attempt to bring out the correct answer from the handler. At the start of each training course, in addition to the Description, handlers should be given a copy of the Canine Code and Responsibility and Care leaflet. There should be a session during which the importance of these topics in every day life situations are discussed. **Note: Only one numbered item may constitute a question. The handler should be able to give eight out of ten correct answers from section two and three of the Responsibility and Care leaflet.**