



# Requirements and Information for OAAS Certified and Apprentice Judges

## PURPOSE

The OAAS Judging Program is an OAAS member service and the program's purpose is to provide consistent and properly trained and qualified judges for our member agricultural societies in all districts. As such, over the past few years we have been working very hard to standardize the Judges' requirements and the judging school criteria and program in each district across the province. Therefore, for a Certified or Apprentice Judge to be included on our OAAS Judges' List on our website, they must meet the criteria listed below. Districts will be required to follow our guidelines for organizing judging schools to receive funding for those schools and for the schools to be recognized.

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## A) APPRENTICE JUDGE

### 1) Apprentice Judge Qualifications:

Apprentice Judges are persons who have attended at least one OAAS Judging School in the Category in which they are interested in becoming a Certified Judge but have not yet completed 3 apprenticeships as per requirements below and/or has not submitted a properly completed “**OAAS Apprentice Judge F14.11**” form to the OAAS office.

- Must support, endorse and follow the OAAS Judging Standards Handbooks.
- Must sign and abide by the “**OAAS Judges and Instructors Code of Conduct and Code of Ethics**”.
- Need desire, interest, good common sense, be fair but flexible and maintain a high standard of workmanship.
- Experience as an exhibitor is encouraged but not necessary.
- A person may be an Apprentice Judge in some categories and a Certified Judge in others.

To move from the “**Apprentice Judge**” to the “**Certified Judge**” list on the OAAS website for a specific Category, a person must successfully complete the 4 requirements listed below under point “**2) Certified Judge Requirements – becoming a Certified Judge:**” .

## B) CERTIFIED JUDGE

### 1) Certified Judge Qualifications

Certified Judges are persons who are appointed to make decisions at a competition. One who has the knowledge and training to make decisions according to the OAAS Judging Standards Handbooks.

- Must support, endorse and follow the “**OAAS Judging Standards Handbook**”.
- Must sign and abide by the “**OAAS Judges and Instructors Code of Conduct and Code of Ethics**”.

**NOTE:** this document only needs to be signed once during a judge’s tenure.

**NEW:** New apprentice judges must sign the “**Code of Conduct**” document and submit it online via the AssistExpo module or to the OAAS at least 2 weeks prior to their first apprenticeship.

Current certified or apprentice judges that have not already signed/submitted the “**Code of Conduct**” form must have sign it and submit it online or to the OAAS prior to January 1, 2026.

- Should have experience or knowledge of a Category before becoming a judge
- Need desire, interest, good common sense, be fair but flexible and maintain a high standard of workmanship.
- Experience as an exhibitor is encouraged but not necessary.
- Must attend a judging school at least once every 3 years for each Category to maintain their certification in that Category.

## 2) **Certified Judge Requirements – becoming a Certified Judge:**

To become an OAAS Certified Judge, a person must meet the following requirements and submit a completed “**OAAS Apprentice Judge F14.11**” form to the OAAS office:

- a) **ATTEND JUDGING SCHOOL** - Must have successfully completed at least 1 (one) OAAS Judging School **in EACH Category** that they wish to become certified **PRIOR** to apprenticing for that Category i.e. Quilts or Baking or Vegetables or etc.

**NOTE:** For list of Judging School Categories - see “**Appendix G - Judging Program Competition Categories**”.

### **IMPORTANT UPDATE:**

To successfully complete a judging school, the attendee must do the following:

- i. Arrive on time. Attendee must be present for the instructional portion of the classes.
- ii. Be present and actively participate for the entire class.
- iii. Cell phone, tablet and other electronic devices use limited to taking notes or photos related to the class.

**IMPORTANT:** A District Judging Contact/ Judging School Convenor or Instructor should not give an attendee credit for the judging school unless they are satisfied that the attendee successfully completed the judging school.

**NOTE:** the District Judging Contact/Judging School Convenor should provide the rationale for the decision not to give the attendee credit for the judging school to assist the attendee to determine what they need to work on.

- b) **APPRENTICE AT THREE FAIRS - After** completing the corresponding judging school, the person must apprentice **in EACH Category** with at least 3 (three) different OAAS Certified Judges at no less than 3 (three) different fairs with hands on experience, helping to make decisions on winners. Never apprentice at your home fair.

**NOTE:** District 15 - due to distance between fairs and a judge’s home, a Judge may have apprenticed at the same fair twice with 2 (two) different judges – total of 3 apprenticeships.

### ➤ **Must attend judging school prior to apprenticing.**

**FYI -** The requirement to attend a judging school **prior** to apprenticing is to ensure that the apprentice is already familiar with the OAAS Judging Standards, and has some experience judging the Category. Agricultural societies have engaged judges to judge the entries in their competitions and the OAAS greatly appreciates that societies have agreed to allow apprentices to accompany these judges. We cannot jeopardize this goodwill by taking a judge’s focus from the job they were engaged to do when an apprentice does not have the basic training/knowledge that is provided at a judging school.

**NOTE:** The only exception that may be made for apprenticing prior to attending the judging school is if the following 3 criteria have been met: 1) person is already an OAAS Certified Judge, 2) the person has reviewed the OAAS Judging Standards for that Category and 3) the OAAS office has approved the online request for an exception.

The “**OAAS Apprenticeship Exemption F14.13**” form must be submitted a minimum of 2 weeks prior to the date of the apprenticeship – no allowances for late forms. A maximum of 1 apprenticeship prior to attending the Judging School for that Category would be allowed. The form is located on the OAAS website on the following page

<https://ontarioagsocieties.com/judging-requirements-and-information/>

➤ **Availability of OAAS Certified Judges**

**NOTE:** If there are no OAAS Certified Judges available for specific Categories e.g. field crops, maple syrup, honey, then the apprentice can apprentice with a qualified non-OAAS judge providing the OAAS office has approved the online request for an exception.

**NEW:** The “**OAAS Apprenticeship Exemption F14.13**” form must be submitted a minimum of 2 weeks prior to the date of the apprenticeship – no allowances for late forms. A maximum of 1 apprenticeship with a qualified non-OAAS Certified Judge per Category would be allowed. The form is located on the OAAS website on the following page

<https://ontarioagsocieties.com/judging-requirements-and-information/>

**NEW: Guidelines/suggestions - obtaining Apprenticeships**

- Apprentices should endeavour to network with certified judges at judging schools to let them know you are interested in apprenticing and the Categories you are interested in.
- It is the apprentice’s responsibility to contact judges to set up apprenticeships. Judges may contact apprentices.
- Apprentices **SHALL NOT** contact agricultural societies to set up an apprenticeship as it is up to each judge if they wish to accept apprentices and/or who they apprentice with.
- An apprentice may contact agricultural societies to ask for the judges’ names for specific categories so the **apprentice can contact the judge regarding apprenticing.**
- If a judge is planning on working with an apprentice judge, the judge should confirm and/or ask permission of the agricultural society prior to the fair.

**NEW:** A judge should only accept one apprentice per Category at a given fair.

**NEW:** A judge should have a minimum experience of judging at two fairs as a certified judge in a Category prior to accepting an apprentice for that Category.

**IMPORTANT UPDATES:**

To successfully complete each fair apprenticeship, the apprentice must do the following:

- Be present and involved for the entire time that they are actively engaged with the judge while they are judging that Category
- Follow the same expectations that a judge must follow when judging those Categories, including but not limited to:
  - Arrive on time and remain until the entire judging process for all the classes for the Category/Categories are completed.
  - Prepare and carry a fully stocked Judges’ Kit – the Kit contents list is in the “OAAS Judging Standards” Handbook and on the OAAS website on the OAAS website on the following page <https://ontarioagsocieties.com/judging-requirements-and-information/>
  - Must know or be willing to become familiar with the techniques used to produce the articles to be judged.

- Follow the expectations/requirements for attire, cell phone or electronic device usage, smoking, vaping, eating, etc. in the “**Judging Etiquette and Responsibilities of Judge at the Fair**” section in Homecraft Judging Standards Handbook or on the OAAS website on the following page <https://ontarioagsocieties.com/judging-requirements-and-information/> .
- Have the judge sign the “**OAAS Apprentice Judge**” form upon successful completion of the apprenticeship

**NOTE:** an apprentice judge may apprentice with the same judge for more than one Category on the same day with the expectation that the apprentice fulfills all the requirements of each apprenticeship.

**IMPORTANT:** A Judge should not sign the “OAAS Apprentice Judge F14.11” form unless they are satisfied that the person successfully met all the requirements and successfully completed the apprenticeship.

If an Apprentice did not meet all the requirements, the Judge shall:

- **NEW** - Enter their reasons for non-completion in the “**Certified Judge’s Signature/Comments**” field.
- provide the rationale to the apprentice judge to assist the apprentice judge to determine what they need to work on.

**c) OAAS APPRENTICE JUDGE FORM** – The apprentice must complete one “**OAAS Apprentice Judge F14.11**” form for EACH Category and submit to the OAAS by either:

- 1) email – oaas@oaasfairs.com
- 2) mail – OAAS, 1911 Foxboro-Stirling Rd, Stirling ON K0K 3E0

**DO NOT enter multiple Categories on a form.**

**NOTE:** If a scanned copy or photo of the form is submitted, it must be clear and legible!

**IMPORTANT:** Do not submit the form unless at least 1 judging school and at least 3 apprenticeships for the specific Category are listed on the form.

**EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY:** the “**OAAS Apprentice Judge F14.11**” form is to be sent to the OAAS, and not the district.

The OAAS reserves the right to accept or refuse any applications based on the applicant’s completeness of the submitted “**OAAS Apprentice Judge F14.11**” form, and/or their demonstrated judging ability and knowledge of the Categories and the OAAS Judging Program. The OAAS may consult the Judging Program Committee, the judges the applicant has apprenticed with and the district judging contact in making their decision.

**d) ADDITIONAL INFORMATION - UPDATED**

- Apprentice judges should endeavour to complete their apprenticeship within 4 years of applying to become an apprentice judge for a specific Category.
- Only apprenticeships completed within 4 years of the related judging school can be counted towards the apprenticeship.

**REMINDER:** If the apprentice judge has not completed their apprenticeship within 3 years, they are still required to attend a judging school at least once within every 3 years to maintain their apprentice judge status.

### **3) Certified Judge Requirements – remaining a Certified Judge:**

To remain a Certified Judge, a person must meet the following requirements:

#### **a) ATTEND JUDGING SCHOOL**

Must attend an OAAS Judging School at least once every 3 (three) years in EACH Category they are certified to maintain their expertise, keep in touch and be familiar with changes in the judging process and learn about new techniques and classes.

#### **b) FAIR JUDGING ASSIGNMENT RECORDS:**

**NOTE:** If a certified judge would like to track their yearly Fair Judging Assignments, the OAAS provides 2 tools for them to do so.

**UPDATED:** Tracking this information is **OPTIONAL** but may be used by the OAAS to determine/assess a person's eligibility if they wish to become an Instructor.

- Judges may input the information on the **AssistExpo Judges' Profile** module under the "**Judging Assignments Record**" page. **OR**
- Judges may input their information on the "**OAAS Certified Judges Fair Assignments F14.14**" form and keep this form for their records. **DO NOT** submit this form to the OAAS.

## **C) PROCESS FOR REMOVAL OR REINSTATEMENT OF JUDGES**

### **1) Process for removal or reinstatement of Certified Judges on OAAS**

#### **Judges List:**

#### **a) REMOVAL:**

If a Certified Judge has not attended an OAAS Judging School on a specific Category **within the last 3 (three) years**, the AssistExpo program will automatically remove those Judges from the OAAS Judges List on the website for that Category. Judges not listed on the OAAS website will be considered "**Inactive**" and their name and information will remain in the AssistExpo database for a minimum of 10 years unless the OAAS receives a request from the judge or the district to remove the judge.

Example: if a person attended a judging school for Quilts in 2023 then they must attend a judging school by December 31, 2026 to maintain their certification for Quilts. On January 1, 2027, the judge's name would not show up on the Certified Judges' List on the OAAS website for that specific category.

**EXCEPTIONS:** view the continued modifications for Judging Schools taken prior to 2023 in the table below.

**b) REINSTATEMENT:**

**NOTE:** Judges may be “**Certified**” in some categories and “**Inactive**” in others depending upon when they last attended an OAAS Judging School.

Judges moved to “**Inactive**” status may recertify by successfully completing 1 OAAS Judging School **for those specific categories** if they have attended an OAAS Judging School for that Category **in the past 4 years**.

If it has been **over 4 years and under 10 years**, they must attend 1 OAAS Judging School and apprentice at a minimum of 1 fair.

If it has been **over 10 years** and they must redo the entire process.

**c) APPEAL PROCESS**

Judges that have been removed from the OAAS Judges’ lists for not attending Judging Schools as per **a) REMOVAL:** may appeal their removal by submitting proof of attendance at a Judging School or extenuating circumstances to the OAAS at [oaas@oaasfairs.com](mailto:oaas@oaasfairs.com) .

**2) Process for removal or reinstatement of Apprentice Judges on OAAS Apprentice Judges list:**

**a) REMOVAL:**

If an Apprentice Judge has not attended an OAAS Judging School on a specific Category **within the last 3 (three) years**, the AssistExpo program will automatically remove those judges from the Apprentice Judges List on the website **for that Category**.

Example: if a person attended a judging school for Quilts in 2023 then they must attend a Judging School by December 31, 2026 to maintain their apprentice status for Quilts. On January 1, 2027, the judge’s name would not show up on the Apprentice Judges’ List on the OAAS website for that specific Category e.g. Quilts.

**FYI:** Apprentice judges may be removed from some categories and remain in others depending upon when they last attended an OAAS Judging School for those Categories.

**b) REINSTATEMENT**

Apprentice Judges removed from the Apprentice Judges list must successfully complete 1 OAAS Judging School for those specific categories to be added to the Apprentice Judges’ List.

**NOTE:** If an Apprentice Judge had completed 1 or 2 apprenticeships but was removed from the list because they did not attend a judging school then they maintain any apprenticeships completed within the past 4 years.

**c) APPEAL PROCESS**

Apprentice judges that have been removed from the OAAS Apprentice Judges’ lists for not attending judging schools as per **a) REMOVAL:** may appeal their removal by submitting proof of attendance at a judging school or extenuating circumstances to the OAAS

| <b>OAAS JUDGING RECERTIFICATION DEADLINES</b>                     |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <b>Year last attended Judging School</b>                          | <b>Recertification deadline</b><br><i>Revised April 2024</i> | <b>1) Certified Judges - To remain certified<br/>2) Apprentice Judges- to maintain their name on the Apprentice Judges List</b> |
| 2015 or earlier   | Not applicable   | must start process to become a judge from the start by attending judging school and apprenticing                                |
| 2016  | <b>August 1, 2024</b>  | must attend judging school in each category no later than this date to maintain certification                                   |
| 2017  | <b>August 1, 2024</b>  | must attend judging school in each category no later than this date to maintain certification                                   |
| 2018  | <b>August 1, 2025</b>  | must attend judging school in each category no later than this date to maintain certification                                   |
| 2019  | <b>August 1, 2026</b>  | must attend judging school in each category no later than this date to maintain certification                                   |
| <b>Continued overlap/extension due to the Pandemic</b>            |  |   |
| 2020  | <b>August 1, 2026</b>  | must attend judging school in each category no later than this date to maintain certification                                   |
| 2021  | <b>August 1, 2026</b>  | must attend judging school in each category no later than this date to maintain certification                                   |
| 2022  | <b>August 1, 2026</b>  | must attend judging school in each category no later than this date to maintain certification                                   |
| <b>Return to the 3-year requirement to maintain certification</b> |  |   |
| 2023  | <b>December 31, 2026</b>                                     | must attend judging school in each category no later than this date to maintain certification                                   |
| 2024  | <b>December 31, 2027</b>                                     | must attend judging school in each category no later than this date to maintain certification                                   |
| 2025  | <b>December 31, 2028</b>                                     | must attend judging school in each category no later than this date to maintain certification                                   |

### **3) Removal for Code of Conduct/Ethics Violation**

If it has been reported that a Certified or Apprentice Judge **has not abided by or has violated the “OAAS Judges and Instructors Code of Conduct and Code of Ethics”**, the Judge will be contacted to present their explanation of the events. The OAAS Executive Director will review each case, in consultation with the Judging Program Committee and the District Judging Contact. The Executive Director will notify the judge of their decision/removal by registered letter.

#### **a) APPEAL PROCESS**

Apprentice or Certified Judges that have been removed from the OAAS Judges’ lists for Code of Conduct/Ethics violation may appeal their removal or disciplinary action by submitting a letter appealing the decision to the OAAS Executive Director within 30 days of receiving notification.