



What it Means to be an APC Breed Mentor

Being a mentor means that the APC feels you are qualified to train judges in the finer aspects of judging the Pomeranian. Your name will be placed on the APC website as an approved mentor and you may be contacted via the website by someone interested in being mentored, or the Judges Education Chair may contact you if there has been a request for ringside mentoring at a show in your area. Most of your activity will center around working with the observers at ringside, but you may also be asked to discuss the breed at other times, or you may get a request to visit your home to see, go over, and discuss your Poms to help them learn. Whatever activities or mechanisms that help the judge learn the Pomeranian are acceptable.

The question arises whether after mentoring someone for more than just a few minutes or hours, you may show to that judge once they are approved to judge Pomeranians. That is up to the judge and the mentor, but there is nothing prohibiting that from occurring. Judges will hopefully talk to more than one mentor when learning, and form their own opinions. If you have done a good job of teaching, the best dog will win, whether or not you are showing it.

Application Process

To become an APC Breed Mentor, fill out the application form on the APC website in the Members Section. The Judges Education Committee will review the application and make the final decision.

APC Breed Mentor Qualifications

APC Approved Mentor minimum qualifications:

1. Maintain a membership in good standing with the American Pomeranian Club, Inc.
2. Either be an AKC Breeder Judge; **OR** an APC Member who has been actively breeding and exhibiting the breed for 12 years.
3. Have bred 5 Pomeranian Champions.
4. Attend an APC conducted Judges or Mentor Seminar every 3 years.
5. Attend an APC conducted Mentor Workshop and adhere to the APC's Mentor Guidelines.
6. Submit a Mentor Qualification Application form to the APC's Judges' Education Committee for review.
7. And/or, in the case of extenuating circumstances, be approved by an advisory committee upon review of extenuating circumstances.
8. Have knowledge of the background, history, and function of the breed.
9. Must be a Pomeranian breed expert whose ethics, integrity, and devotion to the breed is beyond reproach, and who is willing and able to share knowledge and provide guidance through open exchange of information, ideas, and perspectives.
10. Enjoy interacting with others and able to communicate in an understandable, clear and insightful manner.
11. Possess the energy and flexibility of a schedule necessary to accept mentoring requests. Be willing to attend shows for mentoring purposes even when not showing a dog.
12. Demonstrate a commitment to impartiality and the Breed Standard and the APC Code of Ethics, along with the guidelines for approved APC mentors.



Please note that these requirements are compatible with the AKC standards for mentors.

All APC mentors must attend APC Mentor Workshops which deal with the proper completion of AKC forms and reporting requirements, and how to mentor. Some mentor guidelines include never offering a comment contrary to what appears in the Standard; and not offering opinions about people and kennels. The APC JEC would be glad to help all mentors in how to simulate and answer questions, what things to consider and discuss, etc. Existing APC mentors have three years to complete this workshop requirement or he/she will be deleted from the list of APC-approved mentor. New applicants must complete this workshop before being approved as a mentor. All APC mentors must attend an APC sponsored Judges' Education Seminar at least once every three years.

The APC reserves the right to remove a member from the mentor list for cause upon complaint to the Judges' Education Committee. Such cause includes violating any criteria published by the AKC or on the APC website or using their position to promote or disparage individual dogs.

How To Become A Mentor

If you feel you meet the requirements listed above, and wish to join the list of APC-approved mentors, please complete the APC Mentor Application Form, and return it to APC's Judges Education Chairman.

Mentor / Tutor Guidelines

APC Requirements:

1. A Pomeranian Breed Standard, APC Illustrated Standard, Expanded Standard and laminate breed card (when completed) shall be part of every mentoring.
2. Record of each ringside mentoring, tutoring and/or kennel visit shall be sent to JEC with mentor's comments on the mentoring or kennel visit.

Mentors Should:

1. Commit themselves to the values of honesty, integrity, respect and courtesy.
2. Refuse to compromise their commitment and obligation to the sport of purebred dogs by injecting personal advantage or consideration into their mentoring role.
3. Spurn any opportunity to take personal advantage of their position as a Mentor, including promoting of one's own kennel or dogs.
4. Focus on the merits of the dogs being considered, as related to the breed standard, rather than criticizing and fault finding.
5. Refrain from criticizing or commenting on the quality of judging being observed in the ring, and remember that the focus should always be on the dogs, not on the judging.
6. Refuse to embarrass the sport, the AKC, APC or themselves while taking part in mentoring.
7. Dress and present themselves appropriately.

Excellent Mentors:

1. Listen more than they talk and remember this is a position as an educator which means engaging in dialogue as well as obtaining an understanding of the background, level of understanding, personality and learning style of the individual that is being mentored.
2. Do not "teach" movement to judges. They illustrate (point out) correct movement for our breed.



3. Know that there is no perfect dog, but every dog has something correct about it. Find what is correct about each exhibit and share that.
4. Ask questions. What did you think was nice about that dog? What part of that dog was correct to the breed standard? How would you place this class and why?
5. Know that judges being mentored may have much more experience and knowledge with a variety of breeds than most mentors. Ask these judges what they need from you.
6. Do not try to impress judges with their knowledge...they share their knowledge in an easily understandable and engaging manner.
7. Understand that judges can only use the breed standard when judging. Sharing "breeder" preferences or any information that is not contained in the breed standard is not appropriate when mentoring.
8. Understand that ringside mentoring is only to discuss dogs in the ring at this time. Outside materials (videos/photos/International experiences) are not to be used during ringside mentoring. These can be used at another mentoring session, but not during ringside mentoring.
9. Know that sometimes the best mentoring is silence for a period of time. An overbearing, authoritative approach is not conducive to a good learning environment.

APC Expectations:

1. Be aware of AKC requirements for Mentoring/Tutoring.
2. Understand the different roles of Ongoing Mentor, Ringside Mentor, Tutor. If you are not willing and able to attend specialties without an entry (to become a Ringside Mentor), or are not willing and able to take the time to mentor/tutor, please do not apply.
3. APC Approved Mentors are representatives of APC, and as such conduct yourself always to keep APC in a good light.
4. Learn How to Answer Questions in the context of these Mentor Guidelines
5. Prepare yourself - Gather as much knowledge and experience as you can. Practice good sportsmanship. Be gracious. Show integrity in all actions and deeds. Be the sort of person someone would seek as a mentor.
6. Wait until approached - Realize that a person must want education in order to be educated. Don't offer mentoring unless someone has shown interest in being mentored.
7. Try always to be positive in your comments - Remember that we should be judging the whole dog; not "fault" judging. Therefore, try to comment on the entire dog. If the dog is lacking in some way, try to point it out by comparing to another exhibit, whenever possible. Try not to point out a bad quality, but rather mention what you would like to see in the exhibit.
8. Be clear with scope and goals - When someone is looking for a mentor, make sure you understand what the individual is seeking. Ask probing questions until you are certain you understand the goals and scope. It is only by knowing what the individual wants that you can decide if you wish to help and how. And, remember that unmet expectations can mean the death of a mentor relationship.
9. Spend the time - Mentoring can be a time-consuming activity. Friendship, trust, and respect need to grow, and this takes time. Additionally, you need to spend time together at shows, at meetings, at home, etc. Also, realize that acquiring knowledge is like building a house - you can't build the first floor without having completed the foundation. There is a natural progression that can't be cut short.
10. Be discreet - Trust is based on some level of confidentiality. Don't violate that trust.
11. Be kind, fair, and honest - Although it is hard to be all of these at once, a mentor must. Your mentée is trying to learn from you, so there is no room for hidden agendas. Also, sometimes an honest opinion may not be an expected one. Try to present potentially painful opinions as kindly as possible, and be able to explain your opinions.



12. Learn from everyone - Don't forget that no one knows everything. Keep learning from all, and you will continue to serve as a great mentor.
13. Remember that by signing a Mentoring/Tutoring and/or Ringside Observation Form, you are affirming to the AKC that the mentée is worthy of having the tutoring/mentoring experience "count." If you do not think the individual participated in good faith or understands the Breed, you should not sign the form. Be kind and honest when discussing your decision not to sign the form. (And, in such cases, please notify APC's JEC of the situation.) It is a good practice to take a picture of the completed and signed form for your records.

Starting the Conversation

Create your comments containing the things you feel are critical convey to your mentée. Frame the history and purpose of the Breed to help illustrate the essence of the Breed, and use your vision to introduce the Breed and your mentoring/tutoring relationship to your mentée.

How to Answer Questions

Although we often say that the job of a Ringside Mentor is NOT to offer his or her opinion, it is not a completely true statement. Dog showing is the essence of offering opinions. What we mean when we discourage the offering of personal opinions is the following:

- ⦿ Refrain from offering opinions about individuals, personalities, kennels, specific dogs, win records, etc.
- ⦿ Never offer a comment that is contrary to what appears in the Standard
- ⦿ Always preface your comments with the applicable statement from the Standard
- ⦿ Be thoughtful in all your comments and how you phrase them; remember there is never only one right answer, but there are incorrect responses.

However, we know that not all questions can be answered by quoting the Standard, and you may be asked to offer your opinion. So, here are some guidelines to help you answer questions:

- ⦿ Cite the appropriate section of the Standard
- ⦿ Allow for distortion due to angle of vision (e.g., unless you are at ninety degrees to the dog, there will be a distortion in measurements)
- ⦿ Allow that you cannot get your hands on the dog in question (e.g., you cannot really tell where the dog's chest falls due to coat)
- ⦿ Apply the Standard section to the dog, itself, drawing conclusions based on the Standard
- ⦿ Try to phrase your comments in a positive way (e.g., instead of saying that a dog has too little leg, say that it could use more leg, etc.)

In some cases, your mentées might be somewhat reticent to ask questions. So, here are some ideas to help prompt for discussion:

- ⦿ Ask if there is a dog in the group that catches the eye of the mentée and why?
- ⦿ Ask if the individual has any unanswered questions about the Breed.
- ⦿ Pick a section of the Standard that you find particularly important, and discuss how the dogs you see meet that section.
- ⦿ If there is a particularly outstanding example in the ring, bring it to the mentée's attention and discuss why.
- ⦿ Conversely, although one doesn't like to dwell on faults, if there is a glaring problem with a dog, mention it.
- ⦿ If there is a particularly good comparison you can make between two dogs, do so (e.g., comparing



shoulder layback, etc.)

- ☉ Use the opportunity to discuss some of the subtleties of our Breed and Standard (e.g., coat texture, etc.)

An example of a good point for discussion is: What do you think about the proportion of this dog? The discussion could follow: The Standard states that "...

- ☉ When asked what you would do with the dogs in the ring, answer by asking how the mentée would place the class, and why. If correct Standard explanations are given, that is great. If key points have been missed, point them out. Mentées do not need to agree with your choices, but they should make their choices based on the Standard.

Things to Consider

In preparing to become an APC Ringside Mentor, here are some items to consider, and possibly to discuss with other mentors:

- ☉ What to do with an overwhelming mentée
- ☉ What to do with a reticent mentée
- ☉ What to do with a mentée only interested in showing his/her knowledge
- ☉ What to do when you and a mentée disagree
- ☉ How to answer those who want the 3 most important things about a Pomeranian
- ☉ How to answer those who want to know what the biggest problems are in the breed