

Tracking Assessment Regulations 2023

The UK Tracking Dog Association



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Purpose

The purpose of the Tracking Assessment is for the dog and handler to;

1. demonstrate their ability to work happily as a team.
2. have an enjoyable and positive experience which encourages them to continue developing their skills.

and for the dog to;

1. follow a track left by a human.
2. locate a small number of articles left on the track.

Eligibility of Dogs for Tracking Assessments

1. Tracking Assessments are open to **all** dogs including mixed breeds. There is **no** requirement for dogs to be registered.
2. Dogs may enter a Tracking Assessment from 6 months of age (by the date of the Test). There is no upper age limit.
3. No dog suffering from any communicable disease may be entered into a Tracking Assessment. This restriction will also apply to any dog that has been exposed to, or is recovering from, a communicable disease within the 14 days preceding the Tracking Assessment.
4. No dog that is sutured or bandaged or lame may be entered into a Tracking Assessment.
5. Bitches in season will be allowed to enter a Tracking Assessment. If it is a group Tracking Assessment event, the last track of the day should be allocated to this entrant.

Equipment

1. No dog should be brought to a Tracking Assessment wearing any of the following;

- Electronic / "Shock" collar
- Choke / Check collar
- Pinch / Prong collar.

Any handler using this type of equipment with their dog will not be permitted to continue with the Assessment.

2. Dogs should be microchipped and carry identification compliant with current UK law. Correctly fitted Half-check collars will be permitted.

3. When tracking, dogs should wear a body harness with tracking line attached to the back. The dog **must not** be tracked with the line attached to the collar and / or running under its body / through / between its legs.

4. While tracking, the handler may carry a bottle of water for their dog. The water can be offered to the dog as soon as the Tracking Assessment is completed.

5. While tracking, the handler may carry food treats and / or a toy for their dog. The food or toy may be used to reward their dog after an article find and/or when the track is completed. These rewards must not be used to in any way "lure" the dog along the track. If, in the Assessor's opinion, they have been used in this way then the Tracking Team will be deemed "Not Ready".

6. Whilst tracking, the dog must remain attached to its line at all times including whilst it is being offered water and / or rewards.

Handler

1. Handlers **must** be Members of The UK Tracking Dog Association before the date of the Assessment. Those people wishing to be considered for Membership can apply via The UK Tracking Dog Association Facebook group, via email contact to uktrackingdog@yahoo.co.uk or by completing the Membership application on the website www.uktrackingdog.co.uk.

2. Handlers under 16 years of age must be accompanied by an adult to enter a Tracking Assessment.

3. No harsh handling will be permitted at any Tracking Assessment event. Harsh handling will include such behaviours as hitting, "scruffing" and "Alpha-rolling" the dog. Please note, this list is by no means exhaustive.

Any handler found to be in breach of this regulation will face immediate disqualification from the Tracking Assessment and their Membership of the Association will be reviewed.

4. The handler does not have to be the owner of the dog they are tracking. This must be indicated on the Tracking Assessment entry form and permission granted by the owner.

5. A dog can be entered into any Tracking Assessment as many times as the Member wishes, (eg; a Dog may hold 3 Novice Tracking Dog awards when only 1 is required for progression) however, a dog may only enter **ONE** Tracking Assessment per organised Tracking event.

6. If successful, it is the **dog** that is awarded the Tracking Assessment title rather than the handler or owner.

7. It is the handler's responsibility to keep their dog under proper control at all times when attending a Tracking Assessment. No dog should be off-lead where there is the possibility that it can cause nuisance to other tracking teams or other attendees at the event. Please refer to note below.

8. Handler's / Owner's enter dogs into Tracking Assessments at their own risk. There is an expectation that, at a minimum, they will have third party insurance cover for their dog. By signing the Assessment form you are agreeing to abide by the Terms and Conditions of entry and the rules of the UK Tracking Dog Association contained within this document.

NB; This Association wishes to make all Tracking Assessment events as safe as possible in order that handlers have the confidence to bring their dogs to an event.

Assessor

1. The UK Tracking Dog Association will hold a list of approved Assessors.
2. Applications for consideration as an Assessor for Tracking Assessments will be drawn from those that;
 - a) are currently accepted, and acting, as Judges in other tracking related dog sports eg; Working Trials / IGP
 - b) have expertise in other tracking related fields eg; Behaviour work / Search work / Service Dog Training
 - c) have successfully achieved the Qualified UK Tracking Dog award with their dog.
 - d) Assessors should start by assessing the lowest levels (Foundation or Level 1) before progressing to assess Level 2 and work up the scale. Further details are available from the administration team.
3. The UK Tracking Dog Association reserves the right to decline applications for Assessor roles.
4. Assessors must not conduct a Tracking Assessment for a family or household member, a dog that they own, part-own or a dog that they have personally regularly handled/trained. However, they can assess handlers that they instruct.
5. It is the responsibility of the Assessor to familiarise themselves with the Tracking Assessment Regulations in order to ensure that the "spirit" in which the Regulations were developed is evident in the Assessment process.

Overview of Tracking Assessment Levels and Awards

1. **Foundation Level - Foundation Tracking Dog;** The first Tracking Assessment. No pre-requisites for entry other than preparedness and adherence to the Regulations as outlined in this document.
2. **Level One - Novice Tracking Dog;** No pre-requisites for entry other than preparedness and adherence to the Regulations as outlined in this document.
3. **Level Two - Intermediate Tracking Dog;** To enter this Tracking Assessment the dog must already hold **ONE** Novice Tracking Dog award.
4. **Level Three - Expert Tracking Dog;** To enter this Tracking Assessment the dog must already hold **TWO** Intermediate Tracking Dog awards.

After successful completion of **THREE** "Expert Tracking Dog" Assessments the dog will be awarded the title of

"Qualified UKTDA Expert Tracking Dog"

4. **Level Four - Mixed Terrain Tracking Dog;** To enter this Tracking Assessment the dog must already hold **THREE** Expert Tracking Dog awards (Qualified UK Tracking Dog).
5. **Level Four - Wilderness Pursuit Tracking Dog;** To enter this Tracking Assessment the dog must already hold **THREE** Expert Tracking Dog Awards (Qualified UK Tracking Dog).

NB; Handler's may enter their dogs for the Mixed Terrain and Wilderness Pursuit Tracking Dog Assessments in any order. The only requirement is that, in both cases, the dog must have achieved the "Qualified UK Tracking Dog" award before entry.

Foundation Level – Foundation Tracking Dog

1. **Length;** Continuous single laid track of 100 – 150m.
2. **Age;** 10 minutes minimum, 20 minutes maximum.
3. **Terrain;** Grassland, heathland or crop. Should not have been used for tracking / walked on in the previous 24 hours.
4. **Number of Articles;** 1. The article should large enough for the dog to play with or the dogs favourite toy can be used. The article to be placed at the end of the track. The dog must indicate the presence of the article.
5. **Turns / Corners;** Can turn right and/or left. Each turn should be 90°.
6. **Number of legs;** 2-3.
7. **Pole;** One to indicate the start of the track. Another pole (or other type of marker) may be used to indicate the direction that the track-layer walked in towards the start pole.
8. **Time;** No time limit. This will be left to the discretion of the Assessor.

To qualify, the article must be located by the dog and each leg of the track must be accurately negotiated without undue interference / guidance by the handler.

Level One - Novice Tracking Dog

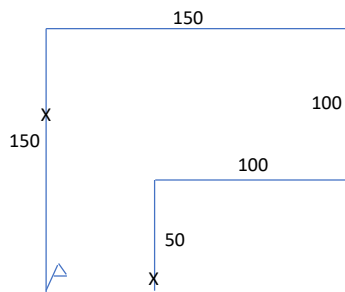
1. **Length;** Continuous single laid track of approximately 500m.
2. **Age;** 30 minutes minimum, 1 hour maximum.
3. **Terrain;** Grassland, heathland or crop. Where possible, should not have been used for tracking / walked on in the previous 24 hours.
4. **Number of Articles;** 2. Approximately 10 cm square and of a size & material suitable for the terrain. None should be placed within 30 m of a corner or the start of track. The second article will mark the end of the track. The dog must indicate the presence of the article.
5. **Turns / Corners;** At least 1 both right and left. Each turn should be 90°.
6. **Number of legs;** 5 - 7.
7. **Pole;** One to indicate the start of the track. Another pole (or other type of marker) may be used to indicate the direction that the track-layer walked in towards the start pole.
8. **Time;** No time limit. This will be left to the discretion of the Assessor.

To qualify, at least one of the two articles must be located by the dog and each leg of the track must be accurately negotiated without undue interference / guidance by the handler.

There is no requirement for the dog to adopt any particular tracking style.

Example Track;

Level 1 (Not to scale)



Level Two - Intermediate Tracking Dog

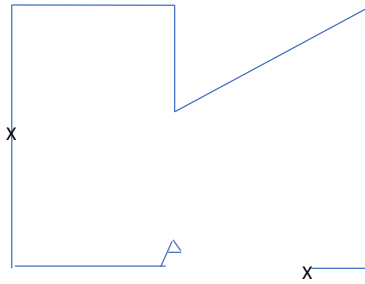
1. **Length;** Continuous single laid track of approximately 700m.
2. **Age;** 2 hours minimum, 2.5 hours maximum.
3. **Terrain;** Grassland, heathland or crop. Should not have been used for tracking / walked on in the previous 24 hours.
4. **Number of Articles;** 2. Approximately 5-7 cm square of a size and material appropriate for the terrain. None should be placed within 30m of a corner or the start of track. The second article will mark the end of the track. The dog must indicate the presence of the article.
5. **Turns / Corners;** At least 1 both right and left. Turns should include 45° and 90° angles.
6. **Number of legs;** 7 - 9.
7. **Pole;** One to indicate the start of the track. Another pole (or other type of marker) may be used to indicate the direction that the track-layer walked in towards the start pole.
8. **Time;** No time limit. This will be left to the discretion of the Assessor.

To qualify, at least one of the two articles must be located by the dog and each leg of the track must be accurately negotiated without undue interference / guidance by the handler.

There is no requirement for the dog to adopt any particular tracking style.

Example Track;

Level 2 (Not to scale)



Level Three - Expert Tracking Dog

1. **Length;** Continuous single track of between 800m - 1000m.
2. **Age;** 3 hours minimum, 4 hours maximum.
3. **Terrain;** Grassland, heathland, crop or stubble. Should not have been used for tracking / walked on in the previous 24 hours.
4. **Number of Articles;** 3. Size and material to be appropriate to the terrain. None should be placed within 30m of a corner or the start of track. The third article will mark the end of the track. The dog must indicate the presence of the article.
5. **Turns / Corners;** At least 1 both right and left. Turns should include 45° and 90° angles.
6. **Number of legs;** 10 - 20.
7. **Pole;** One to indicate the start of the track. Another pole (or other type of marker) may be used to indicate the direction that the track-layer walked in towards the start pole.
8. Level 3 has four different challenges/variations of track, these are as follows:-
 - 8.1 **Standard track** - this is a Level 3 track with no cross-tracks or any of the below variations.
 - 8.2 **Cross Track;** One cross track laid by a **different tracklayer**, 2 hours after the original track was laid. The cross track should be at least 30m away from any article or corner and at least 50m away from the start of the track. The cross track should not be followed by the Tracking Team.
 - 8.3 **Crossover Track;** This is a track that crosses over itself and is laid by the **same tracklayer** e.g. by laying a letter 'P' within the track (see example pattern). No more than one Crossover, to be laid, per track. Although the dog may cast or check the crossover, it should not change direction when it continues along the track.
 - 8.4 **Dead-leg Track;** The tracklayer walks down the leg, backs up 5-10 paces, then makes a 90° turn, either left or right. Only one dead-leg to be laid per track. The dog/handler team will need to work out where to pick up the turn. It is ac-

ceptable for the dog to take the correct turn, it does not have to take the dead-leg (see example track).

All track variations are to incorporate paragraphs 1-7 above. To gain a Level 3 the dog must successfully complete one of the tests outlined in 8.1 – 8.4.

To a gain the title of UKTDA Expert Tracking Dog the dog must complete at least 3 of the tracks outlined in 8.1 – 8.4. The Standard track (8.1) can only be used **once** in this qualification, the other variations (8.2 – 8.4) can be used once or twice.

The handler and assessor will make prior agreement as to which of the variations is to be used in the test and the track-type must be indicated on the Assessment Form. In all circumstances, the handler must know which of these tests he is attempting with his dog.

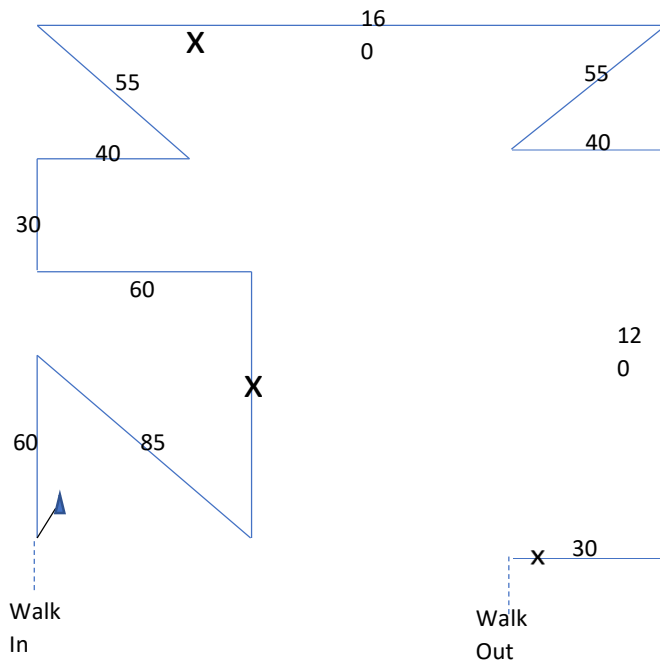
9. **Time;** No time limit. This will be left to the discretion of the Assessor.

To qualify, two out of three articles must be located by the dog and each leg of the track must be accurately negotiated without undue interference / guidance by the handler.

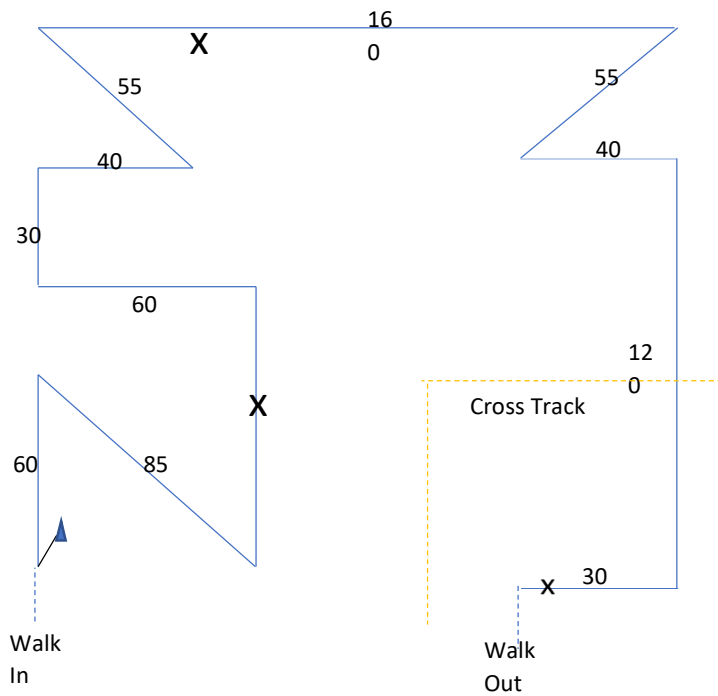
There is no requirement for the dog to adopt any particular tracking style.

Example Tracks - Level 3;

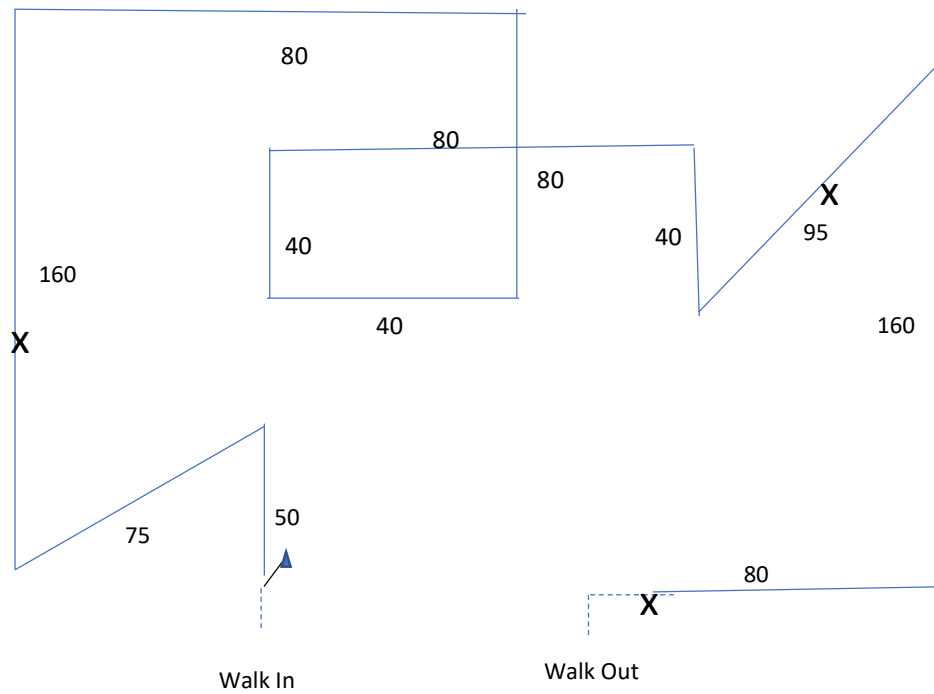
8.1 Standard Track



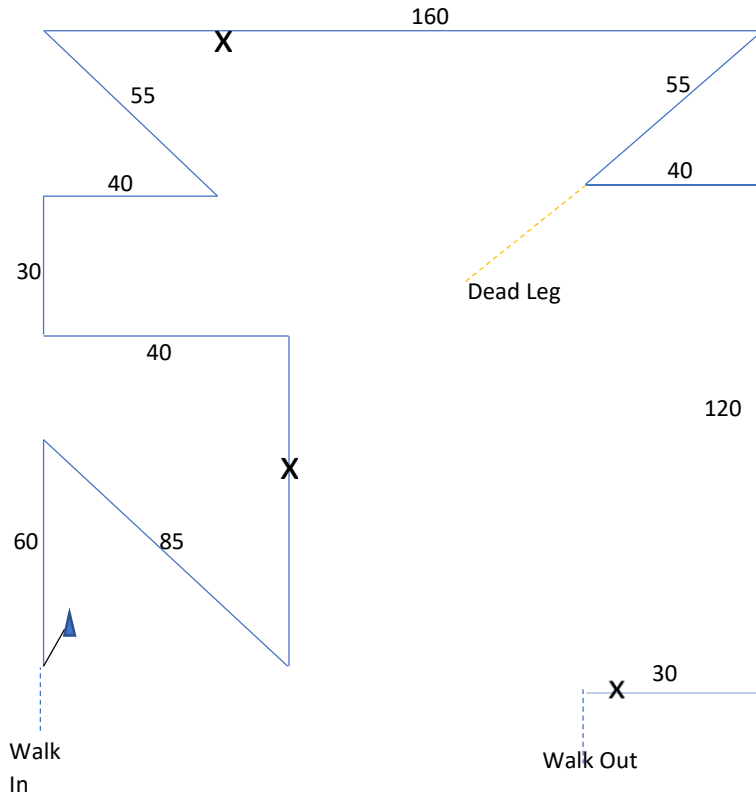
8.2 Level 3 Cross Track (Not to scale)



8.3 Level 3 Crossover Track (Not to scale)



8.4 Level 3 Dead Leg Track (Not to scale)



Level Four - Mixed Terrain Tracking Dog

1. **Length;** Continuous single laid track of between 500m - 700m.
2. **Age;** 1 hour minimum, 3 hours maximum.
3. **Terrain;** This level is intended to test the ability of the dog to track over multiple and changing surfaces. Part of the track should be laid on non-vegetative surfaces. This can include tarmac, concrete, gravel, sand or ploughed land with no growth. One of the turns in the track should be made on a non-vegetative surface. Urban areas can be used for this level i.e. Business or Leisure Parks. This land may well have been used by other people for recreational purposes and so it will require the dog to pick out the track-layers track from tracks left by other people.
4. **Number of Articles;** 3. Size and material to be suitable for the terrain, but should not stand out. None should be placed within 30m of a corner or the start of track. The third article will mark the end of the track. The dog must indicate the presence of the article.
5. **Turns / Corners;** At least 1 both right and left. Turns can include 45° and 90° angles.
6. **Number of legs;** 5 - 8.
7. **Pole;** One to indicate the start of the track. Another pole (or other type of marker) may be used to indicate the direction that the track-layer walked towards the start pole.
8. **Time;** No time limit. This will be left to the discretion of the Assessor.

To qualify, two out of three articles must be located by the dog and each leg of the track must be accurately negotiated without undue interference / guidance by the handler.

There is no requirement for the dog to adopt any particular tracking style.

Level Four - Wilderness Pursuit Tracking Dog

1. This Tracking Assessment will require a track-layer to single lay a continuous track and then hide or leave items of clothing to found by the tracking dog team.
2. The track-layer should indicate the start of their track with a pole. Another pole (or other type of marker) may be used to indicate the direction that the track-layer walked towards the start pole.
3. The track-layer then has 20 minutes to walk steadily across the terrain in **any direction of their choosing**. Two articles of clothing eg; glove, sock, key-ring, wallet, should be placed, at intervals, along this track.
4. After twenty minutes of steady walking, the track-layer should find a suitable place to hide and await location or hide items of clothing to be located by the tracking dog team.
5. Thirty minutes after the track-layer has set off from the pole, the handler will take their dog to the start pole. The tracking team will then follow the laid track until they locate the hidden track-layer/clothing.
6. The route can be discussed between the judge and the tracklayer prior to being walked. Successful location of the two articles left along the track will also act as evidence that the dog has followed the route taken by the track-layer. The dog must indicate the presence of the articles.
7. The track will be laid in a "Wilderness" type environment. This may include fields, paths, woodland, small streams etc. This land may well have been used by other people for recreational purposes and so it will require the dog to pick out the track-layers track from tracks left by other people.
8. To ensure the safety of the track-layer, a time-limit of 45minutes (from the tracking dog team leaving the start pole) will be set for the tracking dog team to locate a hidden track-layer.

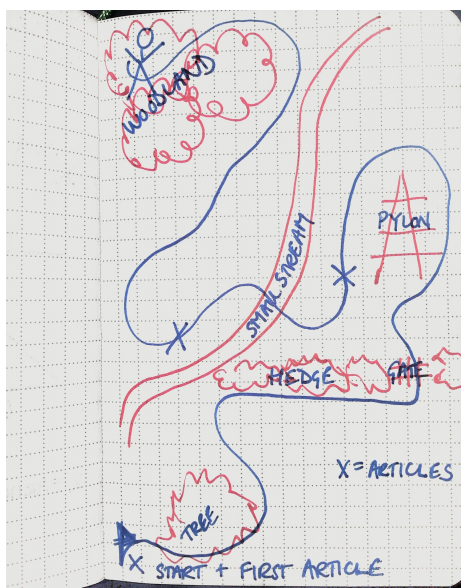
9. To qualify, the two articles left on the track and the hidden track-layer/clothing must be located within the given time (45 minutes) without undue interference / guidance by the handler.

There is no requirement for the dog to adopt any particular tracking style.

Safety Considerations

1. The track-layer must be adequately prepared for staying hidden for a period of time. Dependent on the terrain, time of year and weather conditions, the track-layer should carry water, food, spare clothing, whistle and mobile phone.
2. For safety reasons the track-layer **must not** go through any field containing live-stock.
3. As in all tracking tests, permission for use of land should have been granted by the landowner.

Example Track (Not to scale)



Organising a Tracking Assessment

1. A Tracking Assessment can be organised by an individual or, for example, where availability of suitable land allows, a small group of people.

Please note, where a small group of people are organising a Tracking Assessment, each individual tracking team is being assessed against a set of criteria.

2. The individual or group should approach an Assessor to arrange the Assessment. A list of Assessors will be kept by the UK Tracking Dog Association.

Please note, the individual or group may need to recompense the Assessor for their time / travel. This must be negotiated on an individual basis.

3. A variety of Assessors must be used by the Tracking Team as they undertake the Assessments required to achieve "Qualified UK Tracking Dog" status, ie; The same Assessor can assess a team 'once at each level from Foundation to Level 2 and twice at Level 3 providing they assess two variations i.e. 1 x Standard Level 3 and 1 x Level 3 with a Cross Track. They cannot assess two of the same track variations.

4. It is the responsibility of the individual handler to print and complete relevant sections of the Assessment to present to their Assessor prior to their Tracking Assessment.

5. The individual or group will also need to ensure that they have a track-layer for their Assessment. This should be discussed with their Assessor. A list of track-layers will be kept by the UK Tracking Dog Association.

Please note, the individual or group may need to recompense the track-layer for their time / travel. This must be negotiated on an individual basis.

6. The Assessor should decide on the course of the track. This should be documented. The track-layer will lay the track as decided by the Assessor. No handler should watch the track being laid or watch other handlers tracking until they have completed their own track unless each track is different.

7. After the track, the Assessor should complete the Assessment form and return this to the handler. It is an expectation that the Assessor will discuss their feedback with the handler.

8. For monitoring purposes, original copies of **all** completed Assessment forms (both "Pass" and "Not Ready") should be returned to The UK Tracking Dog Association by the handler being assessed.

9. If the Tracking team are successful, this information will be entered on-to a database and a Certificate and Rosette will be awarded to the dog/handler team. An assessment fee of £10 will be charged by UKTDA which will contribute towards costs of awards, postage & packaging, websites & other IT.

10. Only those handlers that return their completed Assessment forms with the required fee will have their results entered on the database. No Award will be granted by The UK Tracking Dog Association, or progression to further Levels permitted, until this process is completed.

The UKTDA Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct has been developed to set out for all those taking part in UKTDA assessments and Social Media discussions.

- As with all sports, the UKTDA expects all participants to conduct themselves in a responsible manner
- Conduct - participants have a duty both to their dogs and to others to make assessments/events friendly and welcoming, and are expected to be co-operative and above all create a safe environment.
- Sportsmanship - participants should conduct themselves at all times in an appropriate fashion and should display good manners and respect towards other participants (organised group assessments), assessors, tracklayers and landowners.
- The decision of the assessor on the outcome of test is final.
- Smoking is not permitted whilst a dog is under test.
- Any verbal communication must be conducted in a polite and professional manner.
- Abusive or aggressive behaviour will not be tolerated under any circumstances, including by use of Social Media.
- The UKTDA expects courtesy and co-operation to be shown towards all involved with an assessment. Whilst pressures and tensions can occasionally arise which is understood, any aggression or abuse towards those who are simply undertaking their jobs for the benefit and interest of the participant and his/her dog, cannot be tolerated.
- No-one should be subject to intimidation or made to feel alarmed or distressed or put in fear of reprisal. Harassment is a criminal offence. Harassment may be defined as causing alarm, distress and anxiety and fear of physical violence or other threat, offensive statements, verbal abuse and threats. Any incident of this nature will be investigated and their UKTDA membership will be reviewed, which in some cases may result in termination of their membership.

Complaints / Concerns / Disputes

1. In the first instance, these should be addressed directly to the Assessor at any Tracking Assessment event.
2. If the complainant does not feel that their concerns have been adequately addressed or simply wishes to discuss them further then they should contact The UK Tracking Dog Association directly.
3. In all cases, The UK Tracking Dog Association's decision is final.