The UK Tracking Dog Association

Grassroots Tracking Awards

Rules & Regulations

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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.

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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 RKC registered.

2. Dogs may enter a Tracking Assessment from 5 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 participant.

6. Dogs will need to be pre-registered with the UKTDA for the awards either by the handler or their Instructor/Assessor.

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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.

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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 or www.uktrackingdog.com.

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 Bronze awards when only 1 is required for progression) however, a dog may only enter **ONE** Tracking Assessment per organised Tracking event.

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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.

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Assessor

1. The UK Tracking Dog Association hold a list of approved Assessors for the core levels, and also a list of approved trainers/assessors for the Grassroots levels. Assessors who have been approved for the UKTDA core levels, (Foundation through to Level 4) are eligible to assess the UKTDA Grassroots Tracking Awards.

2. Other applications for consideration as an Assessor for UKTDA Grassroots Tracking Awards 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 / Police & Service Dog Training

c) have successfully achieved the Qualified UK Expert Tracking Dog award with their dog.

d) are Trainers/Instructors/Behaviourists currently teaching Tracking to clients.

e) Trainers/Instructors/Behaviourists wishing to start training tracking to clients are invited to apply and may be required to complete a UKTDA Train-The-Trainer course prior to approval.

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 dog & handler teams 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.

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Overview of Tracking Assessment Levels and Awards

1. **Preliminary Level;** The first Tracking Assessment. No pre-requisites for entry other than preparedness and adherence to the Regulations as outlined in this document.

2. **Level A – Bronze Award;** No pre-requisites for entry other than preparedness and adherence to the Regulations as outlined in this document.

3. **Level B – Silver Award;** To enter this Tracking Assessment the dog must already hold **ONE** Bronze Tracking award.

4. **Level C – Gold Award;** To enter this Tracking Assessment the dog must already hold **ONE** Silver Tracking award.

5**. Level D – Platinum Award**; To enter this Tracking assessment the dog must already hold **TWO** Gold Tracking Awards, under two different assessors.

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Preliminary Level

1. **Length;** Continuous single laid track of 35 metres.

2. **Age;** Unaged. Laid and worked as soon as the tracklayer has placed the article and returned from the finish of the track, back to the start pole.

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;** 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;** There are no turns or corners at this level.

6. **Number of legs;** 1.

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 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.

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Level A – Grassroots Bronze Award

1. **Length;** Continuous single laid track of 70 metres.

2. **Age;** Unaged. Laid and worked as soon as the tracklayer has placed the article and returned from the finish of the track back to the start pole.

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;** 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;** The track must include a single turn, either right or left. Each of the 2 legs to be 35 metres in length. The turn should be 90°.

6. **Number of legs;** 2 (35 metres + 35 metres).

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.

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

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Level B - Grassroots Silver Award

1. **Length;** Continuous single laid track of approximately 150 metres.

2. **Age;** 15 minutes.

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, of a size and material appropriate for the terrain. None should be placed less than 25 metres of a corner or the start of track. Article 1 to be placed on the first or the second leg. The second article will mark the end of the track. The dog must indicate the presence of the article.

5. **Turns / Corners;** 2 turns, right and/or left. Both turns should be 90° angles.

6. **Number of legs;** 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, 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.

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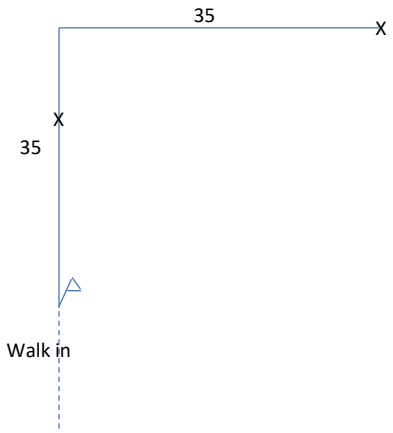
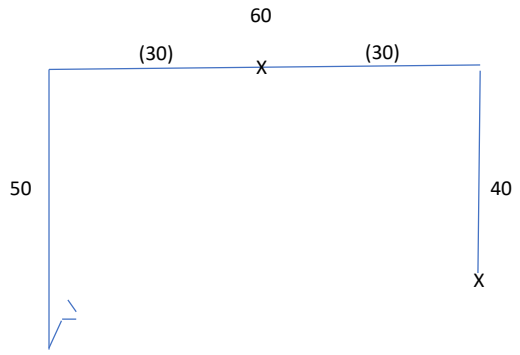
Example Track;

Level A – Bronze Award (Not to scale)



Example Track;

Level B – Silver Award (Not to scale)



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Level C – Grassroots Gold Award

1. **Length;** Continuous single track of between 200 – 250 metres.

2. **Age;** 30 minutes minimum, 45 minutes maximum.

3. **Terrain;** Grassland, heathland, crop or stubble. Where possible, should not have been used for tracking / walked on in the previous 24 hours.

4. **Number of Articles;** 2. Size and material to be appropriate to the terrain. None should be placed within 25 metres of a corner or the start of track. Article 1 to be placed within the first half of the 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. All turns should be 90° angles.

6. **Number of legs;** 4.

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.

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Level D – Grassroots Platinum Award

1. **Length;** Continuous single track of between 300 – 350 metres.

2. **Age;** 45 minutes minimum, 1 hour maximum.

3. **Terrain;** Grassland, heathland, crop or stubble. Where possible, should not have been used for tracking / walked on in the previous 24 hours.

4. **Number of Articles;** 2. Size and material to be appropriate to the terrain. None should be placed within 25 metres of a corner or the start of track. Article 1 to be placed within the first half of the track. The second article will mark the end of the track. The dog must indicate the presence of the article.

5. **Turns / Corners;** Track must include right and left turns. The turns to include at least one 45° angle, and at least one 90° angle.

6. **Number of legs;** 5.

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.

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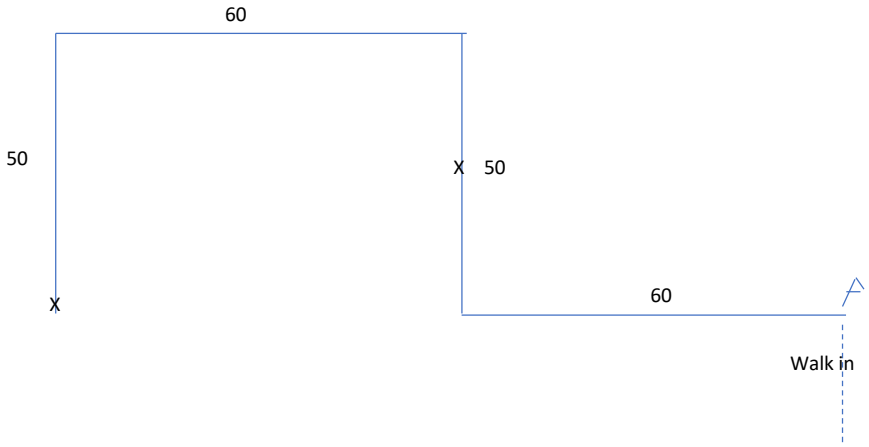
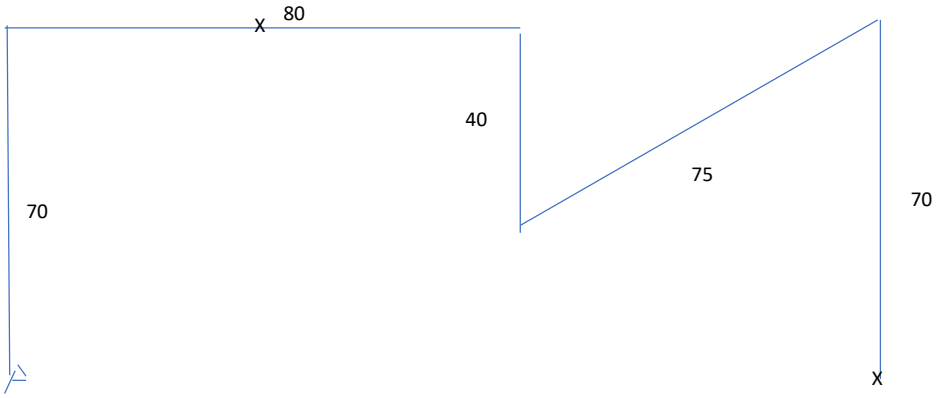
Example Track;

Level C – Gold Award (Not to scale)



Example Track

Level D – Platinum Award (Not to Scale)



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Organising a Grassroots Tracking Assessment

1. Tracking Award Assessments can be organised by a Club, Trainer/instructor, an assessor, an individual or a group of people who train together.

2. A list of Assessors for the Grassroots Tracking Awards and the Core UK Tracking Dog Association levels is available for download from uktrackingdog.co.uk. This is available to download from the 'Files' section of the Facebook page, 'downloads' on the website uktrackingdog.co.uk.

3. The awards can be assessed by any UKTDA assessor including the Trainer/Instructor of the tracking team.

Platinum level requires the dog to have successfully achieved two Gold awards. The first **Gold Award assessment** can be carried out by the same assessor who conducted the Bronze and Silver assessments. The second Gold Award, however, must be assessed by a different assessor.

4. It is the responsibility of the individual handler to print and complete relevant sections of the Assessment form to present to their Assessor prior to their Tracking Assessment. The pre-assessment paperwork can also be made available by the assessment organiser if mutually agreed.

5. The assessment organiser will also need to ensure that they have a track-layer for their Assessment.

6. The Assessor should decide on the course of the track. This should be documented. The track-layer will lay the track, as set by the Assessor. For the Preliminary and Bronze levels, the handler may watch their track being laid. For the Silver, Gold and Platinum levels, the track will be laid out of sight of the handler. They may watch other handlers tracking after they have completed their own track, if permitted by the assessor and the handler taking the assessment.

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.

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8. For monitoring purposes, a copy of the completed Assessment forms (both "Pass" and "Not Ready") should be sent to The UK Tracking Dog Association by the assessment organiser or the handler being assessed.

9. If the Tracking team are successful, this information will be entered onto a database and a Certificate and Medal/Rosette will be awarded to the dog/handler team. An assessment fee of £15 (£10 for the Preliminary Level) 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.

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Pre-registration Procedures for the UKTDA Grassroots Tracking Awards

How Instructors Can Register Tracking Teams

You can register your clients for the **Bronze, Silver, Gold, and Platinum Tracking Dog Awards** in whichever way works best for you:

- **Complete and Submit the pre-registration form on the website, on their behalf** or download a completed form for each dog-and-handler team.
- **Ask your clients to download and fill in their own form** and return it to you for submission.
- **Ask your clients to pre-register directly with UKTDA (see Pre-Registration Procedure below).**

Every registration must include the **appropriate registration fee** for the award level.

- **Preliminary Level:** £10
- **Bronze, Silver, Gold & Platinum:** £15 per level

Please check that all forms are complete before sending them in.

Once registration is received and processed, the **relevant award materials** will be sent directly to you in preparation for the assessments.

Recognising that some dog-and-handler teams may achieve the Preliminary Level with minimal training, instructors may **pre-order Preliminary Level certificates and rosettes** in advance. The details of each successful team can then be submitted retrospectively.

Pre-registration Procedure

To **pre-register a tracking team** for the Award being assessed, please complete submit the pre-registration form, which can be found in the Grassroots section of the website.

Alternatively, all registration forms are available in the 'Files' section of the Facebook group, or in the 'downloads' section, on the website.

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Once you have completed your assessment the form may be uploaded to www.uktrackingdog.co.uk , by choosing 'Grassroots Form Upload' within the Grassroots Tracking Awards Menu.

Your form can also be sent by **email**, **Messenger**, or **post** to:

UKTDA C/o High Reach, Fernbank Road Ross-on-Wye Herefordshire HR9 5RU

If you have not Pre-registered, the **registration fee** must accompany each form:

- **Preliminary Level:** £10
- **Bronze, Silver, Gold & Platinum:** £15 per level

Payment may be made by **bank transfer** to:

Account No: 58240813 **Sort Code:** 60-83-71

Or by **cheque**, made payable to: **The UK Tracking Dog Association**

Once registration is received and processed, the **relevant award materials** will be sent directly to your assessor in preparation for the assessment.

NB: The fees listed above represent the **UKTDA award and registration fees** only. They do **not** include any charges made by your assessor for training courses, classes, or the assessment itself.

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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/vaping 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.

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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.

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