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The Guild Taxidermists
Progressing Taxidermy into the 21st Century

Competition and Credit Judging Rules

2023 Edition

The Guild of Taxidermists Competition and Credit Judging Rules 2023 Edition

Introduction

The whole conference is centred around education and the sharing of knowledge of Taxidermy, to enhance your experience and abilities in your pursuit of all things Taxidermy, it is about taxidermy, about the Guild, about you and your aspirations.

Each generation needs to be prepared to develop their skills and take the reins, keep things on an even keel ensuring a professional, a mutually supportive, friendly, open and future oriented organisation.

A very important element in this is the members, you, bringing your work to the conference to discuss critiques or maybe, be pampered for your genius, to share and gather information, make or reacquaint with friends, most of all you should feel encouraged and inspired and strive to reach your full potential if that is your ambition. This document has been prepared to offer a clear understanding of how assessments operate and to contribute to the smooth and efficient timetabling of conference activities. It is an open invitation to all to contribute to the Guild and to the future of Taxidermy in all its diversity and professionalism, it is your Guild.

- Ethos and Conduct at Conference and Seminars
- Registration of Entries for Judging, Competition and Exhibition
- Presenting Specimens on arrival at the Conference Centre
- The Judging of Work its Strategy and Process
- Your Portfolio
- Listing of Competitions and Judging Criteria
- Guild Definition of Taxidermy
- Notes

Ethos and Conduct

Entering work for assessment for Standard or Higher Credits or competitions should be done with a true spirit of sharing, learning and sportsmanship, competing with others and with yourself.

If you do not achieve what you aimed for, take advantage of the Judges feedback in person and from the detail presented on the assessment sheets and how this relates to self-assessment. **THE JUDGE'S DECISION IS FINAL.**

All members are responsible for their conduct and behaviour and must treat other members or anyone the Guild engages with the appropriate dignity and respect. Bullying harassment or discrimination of any sort will not be tolerated.

Should you feel you would be unable to cope or agree with this ethos, then you should not attend or enter your work for judging.

Registration of Entries

All entries must be pre-registered no later than 25 days prior to the conference.

This does not mean your specimen must be completed at this time you still have the time until the day of the conference.

All specimens are accepted at the discretion of the registrar.

Registration is available to fully paid- up members of the Guild of Taxidermists, any other entry is at the discretion of the committee. Registration must be completed online using the official Guild Registration form, if you do not have internet access please contact the Registrar or have a friend complete this task for you. Refer to the website for details.

The Registration Form Must be Completed in Full.

All work that is entered must be created solely by the named entrant, without any assistance or supervision, unless you are entering the new "Supervised Work" category. A specimen prepared and/or constructed by yourself only, but under supervision is not considered to be solely your own work and work produced this way is generally of a higher standard that could be achieved working on your own. Such work cannot be entered for credit judging or other competitions. The Registration sheet has spaces for writing the relevant information pertaining to your specimen and yes/no tick boxes.

The Registration sheet has spaces for writing the relevant information pertaining to your specimen and yes/no tick boxes.

The sheet must be completed in full, if an element is not applicable to your specimen write 'N/A' (not applicable) don't just leave it blank.

Indicate the category you are entering specimen/s in, Credit, Higher Credit, Display Only, Professional Amateur or Novice.

Once a member has achieved specialist status in any category, further entries of work in that category can only be entered for Higher Credit assessment.

Indicate in which classification you are entering your specimen, Birds, Mammals, Fish/ Reptile, Game Head, Osteology, Other.

Entrants must confirm on the registration sheet that they have read and accept the competition rules by ticking the appropriate box. Without this entries will not be accepted.

Indicate where appropriate, whether a commercial manikin is used, with or without alteration, or whether the manikin is all your own work.

Indicate where, if any artificial elements are used, such as bill or wattles, or freeze drying has been performed in any part of your process.

For the Higher Credits all artificial elements must be reproduced by the named entrant. Indicate at what stage your work commenced on the specimen, from a fresh or frozen complete animal, or from a frozen, dried, tanned or salted skin. From a study skin or it is a completely remounted specimen.

Indicate whether or not your specimens have been submitted on a previous occasion, re-submitted specimens must have been altered to be entered and accompanied with documented evidence.

Entries will be identified as Created by; a Professional, Amateur or Novice taxidermist, a professional is a person having a credit in any one of the disciplines, e.g. birds, but will remain as amateur in mammals, fish, heads etc if they have no credits in these disciplines.

Amateur is classified as anyone who has practiced taxidermy for more than 5 years but has no credits in the discipline in which they have entered a specimen, i.e. bird, mammal, fish, heads etc.

Novice is classified as anyone who has practiced taxidermy for less than 5 years and who has no credits in discipline in which they have entered a specimen, i.e. bird, mammal, fish, heads etc.

If an Amateur or Novice holds/gains a credit in a discipline, they will be entered as a Professional for entries in that discipline at all further conferences and seminars. Anyone, at their discretion, can compete in a higher class than the rules dictate, e.g. someone with no credits can decide to compete in the professional class.

If you think you have a large number of specimens that may occupy a large space you must confirm the practicalities of this with the registrar prior to registering your work.

Presenting Specimens at the Conference

By entering, all entrants agree their work is entered entirely at the entrants own risk and indemnify the Guild of Taxidermists against any risk whatsoever from their work. The work must not present any hazard from its construction or materials used.

Entrants must be in possession of an article 10 (or CITES documents) for any Annex A specimens entered and accept all liabilities concerning current legislation. Your A10 number will be required for registration, unless the specimen is a commission.

Specimens must be presented at the conference centre on the Friday by 21.00hrs. Or Saturday morning by 09.00am for day delegates.

Judging commences on the arrival of the first specimens.

On arrival specimens must be placed in the lecture room where they will receive their registration numbers, be photographed and then taken through to the exhibition rooms. Please follow all directions to ensure a smooth flow of this process. Judging starts on the Friday with the arrival of specimens. The specimen room will open for viewing at an appointed time on the Friday evening.

You are encouraged to bring any other taxidermy or related work, re-creations, crustacean, woodcarving, sculpture, etc for exhibition at the Conference to share with other members.

A registration sheet is still required to identify the work.

Your work will be photographed; the images may be published by the Guild or photographer, who retain copyright of the images they take.

Judging of Works

Judging commences on the Friday. All entries should be anonymous and have no identifying marks.

For Standard Credit and Higher Credit categories, specimens are judged using Judging Forms, in this context the specimens are not compared with each other but are assessed for their own individual merit.

The Judging process itself follows a structured assessment of the specimen, using scored Judging Forms, where each specimen is scored out of a possible 100 points. The specimens in attaining the required number of points will be awarded a standard or higher credit. Last year specimens gaining 61 or more points were awarded a standard credit and those with 91 or above a higher credit was awarded.

To keep the skill level of gaining credits consistent, we reserve the right to alter the scores required when necessary. For example, if a new independent judge was appointed and their scoring was not consistent with previous years.

Judges are appointed by the committee and will be of Specialist or Accredited Standard, however visiting judges may be used that are deemed to have appropriate skill in judging by the committee.

Whilst judging, the Judges may be accompanied by members who wish to become Judges in the future, you must put your name forward if you wish to be considered for this, there are limited spaces available. Independent judges will be used if possible. Each whole category will be judged by at least one named judge, with a maximum of three.

A Judge will be allowed to enter work for Credits and competitions, but if they are judging in the same category, they must declare an interest to the other Judges. They must then leave the judging area until their work has been judged.

In the Competitions Judges will determine the outcome for; Best Bird, Mammal. Game Head, Fish, Cased Specimen, Groundwork and Breakthrough Best of Show. Those members who enter specimens at the Conference will be eligible to vote for Peoples' Choice, Best of Show and the Themed Competition.

A Judge or delegate cannot vote for their own work. A Judge must declare an interest if their work is put forward by other Judges for the competitions and must leave the judging area while a vote is taken.

A specimen must be fully dried and finished to be judged. A specimen that is deemed offensive or disreputable toward Taxidermy will be removed from display. A specimen may not be judged if it is overly concealed by casework, habitat, or head under wing, for example.

For those not able to attend the conference, but wishing to submit work for judging, this will be considered on a case-by-case basis. There may also be restraints on the number of specimens entered.

Each specimen will receive a Judging Form critiquing their work for areas for improvement and for areas of a satisfactory standard; and above. Please do not underestimate the importance of this document, together with your portfolio this will provide you with an ongoing record of your personal achievements with the Guild, providing support in your personal practice or professionally.

Higher Credit entries without a portfolio of reference or proof of using your own manikin will not be judged.

In the Standard Credit category, work in which a member's own manikin is used and is accurately sculpted will also demonstrate greater skill than a commercially produced manikin, on this element.

A specimen that is used as a media included within a fine art work will be judged for Standard and Higher credits, for the standard of the taxidermy as per the Guilds definition of taxidermy, in that the specimens mounted taken from their context are of taxidermy in its true sense. This does not include anthropomorphic or decorated animal artefacts which cannot be judged.

Judging of recreations et al. will be done by specialists whose work is closest in type to the entered specimen/s.

New Category for Judging “Verbal Feedback”

The purpose of this category is to free up the independent judge’s time to concentrate on credit judging, thus reducing the likelihood of restricting the number of specimens entered per person for credit judging.

The verbal feedback will be given by Guild members available with the most qualifications present on the day.

This will be introduced for Novice category only, as we consider that there is generally more information to give beginners and can be more useful and practical than lots of written notes.

To give novices the chance to gain a credit, when registering specimens for verbal feedback you will be asked if you would like your work judged for a credit if the judges think it is of good enough standard.

Remember that if you gain a credit you will be classed as professional in that category, for example birds, at the next conference.

For the Novice competitions, the placings will be decided on the judge’s opinions without any scoring . Anything judged for credits will also be included

Identification of Works During Assessment

The identity of the makers of individual works will only be released after judging has taken place. Any identifying marks must be covered. Members are expected to enter into the spirit of this practice when deciding on the peoples’ choice.

Portfolio

When working toward building your knowledge of the generic appearance of a species or toward Credit or Higher Credit awards, it is normal practice to gather together a portfolio to assist with the creation of your work, this is a normal and essential part of the creative process, particularly when working towards gathering knowledge of the generic appearance of individual species.

In its most basic form, the portfolio would contain the reference used when mounting your specimen, measurement sheets or copies and images of the body form you used or sculpted.

When having your work judged for a Higher Credits, it is compulsory to provide a portfolio of reference for each of your entries. This should contain sufficient material for the Judges to determine the accuracy of your mount particularly if your specimen has an unusual characteristic that is illustrated in the mount. You also need to show the manikin used for the mount was of your own making. Refer to the Portfolio document for more details.

If you are entering work for judging for Standard Credits, members are encouraged to present a portfolio for each specimen submitted, with at least the reference images used and of the manikin for each specimen.

Only one of the three higher credit specimens required in each category to become a Master may be on a commercial or altered commercial form.

You may also wish to include details that illustrate the variety and/or amount of work you may have gone to in creating your groundwork or casework, or anything that informs the Judges or members of your skills and how you have used those skills.

The quality of your portfolio can be a key element in improving and maintaining the quality of your taxidermy. The content of your portfolio over the basic content described is your decision.

Members are encouraged to take advantage of the one-to-one critique on offer from the Judges during the conference.

Competitions

By default, all works are entered into the competitions unless you have crossed the exemption boxes on your registration sheet.

The exhibits are judged against the criteria detailed under the competition headings to see which fulfils the criteria to fullest extent.

Judging Forms are not completed for the competitions. At the discretion of the committee there may be on occasion multiple placements if work is considered of an equitable standard.

Where there are three placements, first second third in each competition, ribbons are awarded for each place. However, only one place can be awarded to each person in each category. For example, one person cannot win a first and second place in the Birds Novice category.

Birds Professional	1 st	2 nd	3 rd
Birds Amateur	1 st	2 nd	3 rd
Birds Novice	1 st	2 nd	3 rd

Best Amateur Exhibit - JHT Supplies trophy	1 st		
Best Novice Exhibit - Bari Logan Trophy	1 st		

Mammals Professional	1 st	2 nd	3 rd
Mammals Amateur	1 st	2 nd	3 rd
Mammals Novice	1 st	2 nd	3 rd

Fish/Reptile Professional	1 st	2 nd	3 rd
Fish/Reptile Amateur	1 st	2 nd	3 rd
Fish/Reptile Novice	1 st	2 nd	3 rd

Game Head Professional	1 st	2 nd	3 rd
Game Head Amateur	1 st	2 nd	3 rd
Game Head Novice	1 st	2 nd	3 rd

Osteology Professional	1 st		
Osteology Amateur	1 st		
Osteology Novice	1 st		

Competitions in Relation to Standard and Higher Credit Status

Any specimen that is regarded highly when assessed for Standard or Higher Credit does not automatically go on to win in any competition; all elements of the work are taken into consideration.

The level of understanding of all of the creative processes which includes planning, technical difficulty, composition, time scale of production, originality, creativity, choice of species and pose, are all considered.

Wagstaffe Trophy for the Best Cased Mount

This is simply for the best cased specimen; the case may be commercial or your own work. The groundwork could be entirely modelled by its maker or many ready made elements may be used. Any work which exhibits greater skills of the maker, may score more highly, this includes any work on the production of the case or the groundwork.

Norfolk Trophy for the best groundwork

The complexity of groundwork can match any taxidermy specimen in its opportunity for research and technical production. The work may be cased or uncased, contain preserved or artificial elements of foliage, water, ice, rock-work, snow, riverbed, woodland floor or man-made environment, the choice is endless.

The work will be judged on its, composition, overall aesthetic appeal, technical difficulty, time-scale of production. The Judges will be looking at how accurately the work represents a particular environment, how elements relate to each other, the accuracy of detail, its complexity, its theme, does it tell a story and originality.

A portfolio would support any work entered, which is entirely down to individual choice. All work must be created by the named entrant any ready made items purchased or found must be identified.

Themed Competition

For each conference a theme is chosen, from which, members must create piece/s of work that includes their taxidermy work that relate to that theme. This is a test of creativity, originality, innovation or just to be sparkingly brilliant.

Members Judging Competition

Time allowing, members are invited to assess a specimen/s, especially prepared for the conference, utilising the Guild Assessment sheet and to determine an outcome for each. The assessment matching the official result wins. A practical exercise in critiquing a specimen/s as to why or why not Credit status should be awarded.

People's Choice

Members who have entered specimens for judging or display are invited to choose their favourite piece of work from this year's conference exhibits.

Consider how you would make your choice. Examine each and consider what you think should come top of your list, consider the scale of the work, type, technical difficulty, cased or uncased, complexity, the overall aesthetics of the work, is it all created by the same person.

There is a lot to consider and the choice is yours.

When undertaking this task, it is important to understand the impact the size of a specimen can have on your judgement, or its rarity, the 'WOW' factor. Just because it's Big or Unusual does not mean it is automatically worthy of admiration. The first step to take in this is to look past the size and species and look at the craftsmanship and all those details which make something a good piece of taxidermy in all its facets.

Breakthrough Judges Choice, Best of Show

The winning specimen is to be chosen from the winners from all categories and is a personal choice of each Judge, there is no conferring and is decided by secret ballot.

Supervised Work

We recognise that doing work under supervision is a great way to improve the standard of your work and the Guild thinks that this should be encouraged.

With this in mind we are holding a new competition, "Supervised Work". So you can now enter that special piece of work done on a course, or under individual / group instruction.

This competition is open to Novices only

Trophy Engraving Policy

Previous trophy winners must return their trophy to the guild committee on the next annual conference date. If the previous winner will not be attending the conference, trophies must be returned prior to the annual conference date by shipping to a committee member.

New winners have the responsibility of having the trophy engraved with their name and the year it was awarded. The cost of this will be reimbursed by the committee on request with a receipt. Issues such as lack of engraving space and any damage to or loss of trophies must be reported to the committee.

Guild's Definition of Taxidermy

The sculptural representation of animal/s with the object of creating the illusion of life of the species concerned, utilising preserved parts of the original animal and or elements reproduced in part or in full.

The crucial element is the work must represent a moment or narrative of the animal's appearance, behaviours or function.

For the purposes of assessment anthropomorphic specimens will not be judged for Credit or Higher Credit status.

Notes

Any ideas or suggestions are welcomed from all members to ensure complete openness, transparency and fairness, of judging and competition.

The provision of this document is aimed at providing total clarity and openness in how these elements of Guild's activity function, in order to avoid ambiguity and areas of potential disagreement. It is essential to continue providing your feedback, of thoughts, comments or aspirations for the Guild.

The Guild of Taxidermists exists by cause of, and for its members, it is non-commercial and entirely voluntarily run for the advancement of Taxidermy.

Taking part by volunteering is what keeps us alive; there is a huge amount of potential and opportunity for you to contribute to the ongoing success of the Guild and for your own professional or personal achievement.

Contributions put in writing toward future publications of this document are welcomed.

If you'd like to learn more about the credit system, please go to our website:

<https://www.taxidermy.org.uk/Credit-System/>



www.taxidermy.org.uk