

JUDGES

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APPOINTMENT OF JUDGES

Annually, regional vice presidents (RVPs) or designee (e.g., regional judges training chair) recommend members from their region to be AIS judges for the following year. These recommendations are sent to the AIS chair of judges for presentation to the AIS Board of Directors. The board has the sole authority to approve the appointment of judges and when opposing facts are presented, the board may choose to nullify an appointment.

Those persons recommended as judges must have held continuous membership in the AIS for the past three years and must have completed all other requirements. Appointments are made for one year, beginning on January 1 after the AIS fall board meeting. Reappointment for each succeeding year is based on satisfactory performance and continuous membership in AIS.

ACCREDITATION OF JUDGES

Approved by the AIS Board of Directors, May 25, 2022

The judges training program is one of the most vital parts of the American Iris Society. Members who serve as judges have duties and responsibilities to fulfill. Accomplishing those duties and responsibilities, requires a judge to study, visit gardens and grow a representative collection of iris.

The accredited judge is the backbone of the American Iris Society (AIS) judging program and is responsible for the selection of award winners. It is the judges' votes that determine which iris receive awards and thus are recommended to the public. Serving as a judge is a privilege and the duties should be fulfilled with dedication. Because they represent the American Iris Society, judges should conduct themselves in a manner which will bring credit to the organization.

Because the judge is, in many ways, the most important official of the AIS, guidelines have been established for the training and selection of judges. The regulations are a minimum standard and the conscientious judge will usually exceed the requirements



Regions

Regions should seek the most qualified members to become judges. Recruitment should be based on finding those with knowledge of iris and a willingness and ability to serve the AIS. No person should be appointed as a judge unless qualified. The RVP or designee has the responsibility to see that guidelines are followed in the training of these judges.

The AIS chair of judges will send each RVP or designee a packet of information each year. The packet is to be used in making the recommendations for judges for the coming year and is to be returned to the AIS chair of judges by a date set by the AIS chair of judges, usually in the fall. It is imperative that the RVP or designee return this information in a timely manner in order to avoid any delay in approval of judges for that region.

REGIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

The regional responsibility ultimately resides with the regional vice president (RVP) but may be delegated to the designee by the RVP if the region has a judges training chair.

Each region is responsible for carrying out its judges training program. It is necessary that each region maintain records of the work of each judge and prospective judge. Some regions do not have a large membership, availability of instructors, financial resources or a geographical area that affords development of a truly comprehensive training program. Therefore, the AIS requirements for judges training are the minimum requirements that each region can meet. It is expected, however, that some regions will require more than the minimum and some regions do have far more extensive requirements. All training sessions must be approved in advance and copies of all training rosters should be sent to and retained by the RVP or designee.

Each region should establish training guidelines which are in agreement with those of the AIS. In regions where approved requirements for the judges training program are more demanding than those of the AIS, the AIS will recognize the additional requirements and will support them. Each region is required to send an activity report to each judge annually. Emeritus judges are not required to return these reports, but all other judges must complete the report and return it to the proper regional official. These reports enable the regional vice presidents or designee to keep accurate records so they will know when a candidate or apprentice has completed the requirements for advancement to the next level and will know the training status and performance of their accredited judges.

GUIDELINES FOR APPROVAL AND REPORTING OF JUDGES TRAINING

1. Judges training sessions are to be approved in advance by the RVP or by the designee when so authorized by the RVP.
2. An approved judges training class is defined as a structured in-classroom or in-garden instruction for two or more participants and presented by a fully accredited AIS judge. A written test of at least ten questions for each hour of training credit shall be administered, discussed, and filed with the RVP or designee.
3. Fully accredited judges may judge an accredited show. They also may conduct for-credit judges training courses. A retired judge may not conduct a for-credit judges training course. The retired judge may serve as a show judge on a panel with at least one fully accredited judge at an accredited show.
4. A report of the training session is to be forwarded to the approving RVP or designee within two weeks following the session. The report should state the region, sponsoring group, date, subject, instructor, hours of credit and include a list of attendees showing their name as given on AIS membership records, type of judge and the judge's region.
5. A written test containing a minimum of twenty questions on areas to be covered in a two-hour or longer session must be prepared by or under the supervision of the instructor and completed by the attendees at the conclusion of the session. Sessions of less than two hours may have fewer questions with a minimum of ten questions for a one-hour session. A blank copy of the test is to accompany the report sent to the RVP or designee. Completed judges training tests should be kept by the RVP or designee for a minimum of three years.

THE CANDIDATE FOR JUDGESHIP

Any AIS member may study to become a judge. After three years of continuous AIS membership and ten hours of judges training, the candidate may apply to become an apprentice. Continuous membership is maintained by paying dues on time. If dues are not received within the grace period, the three-year

membership requirement must begin anew. The membership of the candidate must be in the person's name. Credit cannot be given for membership carried in the name of a garden, commercial enterprise, or another person's name.

Members who join the judges training program should contact the RVP of their region or the designee to learn the region's policies. Training sessions consist primarily of lectures, practice judging in the garden and simulated show judging.

With the permission of the current regional vice-president (RVP) or designee it is permissible for an individual or group to take a training session remotely without an instructor present, in the form of an electronic presentation (e.g., PowerPoint, video program) and/or via an electronic chat room (e.g., Skype, Zoom). A candidate for judgeship must complete a written examination on the material covered in the training session, which may be of the open book type if the instructor wishes. The candidate must receive a passing grade on the exam to get full credit for the session. To ensure an accurate record of their training sessions, candidates should verify that their attendance and test scores have been forwarded to their RVP or designee.

A minimum of two sessions of structured classroom training for a total of ten hours is required, with a passing score on the written examinations for each session. The training courses must be conducted by an approved instructor from the AIS in order for the candidate to receive credit. For sessions attended outside the home region, candidates should verify that the RVP or designee has been notified of the training received, subject matter, hours of attendance, location of school and instructor's name. The ten hours of required training must have been completed within the three-year period immediately preceding recommendation for appointment as an apprentice judge.

Anyone interested in becoming an AIS judge must have a copy of the latest edition of the AIS Handbook for Judges and Show Officials. Judges and potential judges should study this book to keep themselves informed of their duties and responsibilities. Other publications of AIS might be beneficial, but the Handbook for Judges and Show Officials is to be used as the guideline for judging and should never be out of the working judge's reach.

A candidate for judgeship must arrange for five accredited judges each to write a recommendation to the RVP or designee supporting the candidate's advancement to the apprentice status. Forms might be provided by the region for this purpose. If none are available a letter of recommendation is satisfactory.

The judges training year of record is August 1 through July 31 of the following year, e.g., August 1, 2018, through July 31, 2019. For persons who are moving to a higher judge level (candidate to apprentice, apprentice to garden/exhibition, and garden/exhibition to master) and who will have completed the requirements by July 31, any more judges training completed during the remainder of the calendar year will be counted towards the requirements of the level to which they are being moved, pending AIS Board approval of their move to the higher level.

THE APPRENTICE JUDGE



After successfully completing all the required training, a candidate will be recommended for appointment as apprentice judge. By this time the candidate should have learned the duties and responsibilities of serving as a judge; should have grown and studied enough iris to be familiar with different classifications, varieties/cultivars and their characteristics; and should know the qualities of a good iris well enough to make a conscientious evaluation. The apprentice judge has three years in which to complete the requirements for becoming a garden/exhibition judge.

Each apprentice judge is required to judge seedlings or named varieties in bloom in the garden on two separate occasions under the tutorage of two different fully accredited AIS judges. Each tutoring session must be for a minimum of two hours. This tutoring must be more than just a stroll through the garden. The time should be spent in truly evaluating iris plants: the plant vigor, the stalk, branching, substance, durability, bud count, form, etc.

The AIS chair of awards will send each apprentice judge a copy of the official AIS Ballot which will be marked “Void.” The apprentice should use it as a study guide during visits to gardens for garden training. This ballot is not to be returned to AIS.

Each apprentice judge is required to receive exhibition training at two different accredited shows under the tutorship of different fully accredited AIS judges on each occasion. The apprentice is only a student and cannot participate in the selection of “Best Specimen of Show” or help to break ties when the other judges disagree on the ribbon to be awarded. The apprentice judge is to listen to the evaluations being made by the judges of the show and learn from their deliberations. Apprentices should be given the opportunity to evaluate one or more specimens. Apprentices have no vote, and the ribbons are awarded by the accredited judges. Only one apprentice is to be assigned to each panel of judges. Under no circumstances is the apprentice to serve as a clerk while receiving this training. If more than one apprentice needs training, the panel of judges may be divided so there is still only one apprentice per panel. Apprentices may also receive this training under simulated show conditions if the training cannot be received at a regular exhibition. Training at a simulated show may only be given if the apprentice has no other means of obtaining proper training and it must be approved in advance by the RVP or designee.

The tutor of garden training or exhibition must never be a family member of the apprentice judge. The apprentice judge should ask the tutor to report to the RVP concerning the apprentice’s judging performance. Forms for this purpose are usually provided by the region. The apprentice judge should provide the supervising judge with a stamped envelope, properly addressed to the regional authority, to ensure the report is sent to the correct person.

All apprentice judges must also attend a training session on AIS awards and balloting and pass a written examination on this training session. This session is to be at least two hours in length and shall be taught by an approved instructor.

A training session on awards and balloting may be counted towards apprenticeship credit if taken within the three years immediately prior to appointment as an apprentice judge and provided the ten hours of training requirements have been completed.

After completing twenty hours of training (ten hours as a candidate and ten hours as an apprentice judge), the apprentice judge is eligible for appointment as an accredited garden/exhibition judge. Apprentices who do not complete requirements within the three-year period must wait a full year before again being eligible to seek appointment as an apprentice. No credit is given for hours completed in the three years. (See a summary of requirements to be completed as an apprentice judge at the end of this chapter.)

FULLY ACCREDITED JUDGES

A fully accredited AIS judge is any currently approved judge in the following categories: garden/exhibition (G/E), master (M), emeritus (E), and overseas (OS).

Eligibility for this important position is based not only on the completion of the apprentice requirements, but continuous AIS membership as well. To remain accredited, the judge must maintain AIS membership, vote the official AIS Ballot, attend training sessions, and complete the annual regional activity report. Additional requirements established by the region must also be met.

Garden/exhibition judges:

During each three-year period, garden/exhibition judges must complete or conduct judges training and/or conduct tutoring sessions that total five hours. Of those five hours, the G/E judges must attend at least one judges training session. Two hours of the training sessions and tutoring must be in-garden training. To receive credit for any training session, the garden/exhibition judge must take and pass a written examination for that session.

Failure to vote the official AIS Ballot in a timely manner for two consecutive years will result in automatic disqualification as a judge. Failure to submit a timely activity report for two consecutive years will result in automatic disqualification as a judge. It is the responsibility of the RVP to report any other unsatisfactory performance which could result in disqualification of the judge.

Master judges:

A person who has served the AIS as a judge for fifteen years is elevated to the status of master judge. These fifteen years are counted from the time the judge is first approved by the AIS Board of Directors as an apprentice. If there is an interruption in service, the judge does not lose the years served before the interruption. Master judges are required to earn credit totaling three hours (one hour must be in-garden training, which may be tutoring) during each three-year period.

This credit must be earned by attending or teaching an approved judging training session. When a master judge tutors an apprentice judge, both master judge and apprentice receive training credit.

Master judges are required to submit an activity report each year to the region. Failure to return a timely activity report for two consecutive years will result in the judge being dropped from the official roster of accredited judges. Master judges will receive the official AIS Ballot. Failure to vote the ballot in a timely manner for two consecutive years will result in the judge being dropped from the official roster of accredited judges.

Retired Judges:

A retired judge is a master judge who has requested to be removed from the active judges list. This request should be made to the RVP or designee. They must maintain their AIS membership to be considered retired.

Requests to change from retired judge to active master judge are to be made through the RVP or designee. The change in status will be approved if the judge has met all the requirements of the master judge.

Emeritus judges:

An emeritus judge is appointed by the AIS Board of Directors after being recommended by the AIS chair of judges and approved by three-fourths (75%) of the directors who are present. Emeritus judges are fully accredited AIS judges but are not required to visit gardens, vote the ballot or complete an activity report. This honor is given to judges who have rendered outstanding service to the Society. Nominations for emeritus judge may be made by the RVP or other AIS members. The nominating letter is sent to the AIS chair of judges and must contain a full statement of the nominee's record of service to the AIS. The nomination must be supported by written statements of endorsement from four fully accredited judges, at least two of whom must be from outside the nominee's region.

Appointment as emeritus judge is based on service at the national level that goes far beyond the expected conscientious performance as an AIS judge. To be considered for appointment, one should be a judge whose leadership and dedication to the ideals of the AIS are of genuine and obvious distinction. The honor is accorded only to persons who have served as fully accredited judges for a minimum of ten years except in the most unusual circumstances.

The AIS requires that an annual activity report be sent to every judge by each region. Emeritus judges are not required to return these reports. Apprentice judges, garden/exhibition judges and master judges must complete their activity report and return it to the proper regional official by the specified deadline.

APPOINTMENT OF ARTISTIC DESIGN JUDGES

Guidelines for Certification as an Artistic Design Judge

A person interested in becoming certified as an artistic design judge should notify the appropriate regional AIS judges training chair and ask about the region's policies regarding this category of judge.

To qualify for this certification, the person must already be an AIS accredited judge. In some cases, an AIS member with vast experience in artistic design or with other floral certifications or awards may qualify for this certification. Eligibility will be determined by the regional AIS judges training chair.

The person must have the current edition of the AIS Handbook for Judges and Show Officials in order to study the chapter on Artistic Design.

Training hours required:

- One hour covering Principles of Design, Chapter 27 in the AIS Handbook.
- One hour covering the Scale of Points, Chapter 27 in the AIS Handbook.
- Two hours of instruction that cover the rest of Chapter 27 in the AIS Handbook.
- Two hours of apprenticeship, watching judging of artistic designs at a show.
- Two hours of actual hands-on designing with a design judge (AIS or National Council of State Garden Clubs) or proof of winning a Best Design of Show or a Best of Design Sweepstakes.

Tests given at training sessions must be passed and reported to their regional AIS judges training chair.

An activity report must be completed on a yearly basis until all requirements are met.

There is no time limit for completing the eight hours of training. The RVPs will collect the activity report information and pass it along to the appropriate regional AIS judges training chair in a process similar to the other judge categories (G/E, master, etc.)

Once a certificate for AIS artistic design judge has been given, nothing else is required unless The Principles of Design change, which is unlikely.

Guidelines for being Grandfathered in as an Artistic Design Judge

Any AIS judge or other floral society member judge may be grandfathered in as an AIS artistic design judge if specific requirements have been met. Being a florist may or may not qualify. Qualification will depend on how familiar the person is with the chapter on Artistic Design (Chapter 27, edition 8.0), in the AIS Handbook for Judges especially when specific florist design techniques are not in line with the principles outlined in Chapter 27.

A person interested in being grandfathered in as an artistic design judge should notify the appropriate regional AIS judges training chair and ask about the region's policies regarding this category of judge.

The person must have the current edition of the AIS Handbook for Judges and Show Officials and be familiar with chapter on Artistic Design (Chapter 27 in Edition 8.0), specifically the Artistic Design Point Scale. A written statement that verifies this requirement will be requested by the regional AIS judges training chair.

To demonstrate love of judging design, the regional AIS judges training chair will request proof of the person's record of judging artistic design shows, leading design training sessions, attending design training sessions, awards for Best Design of Show or artistic sweepstakes, or other relevant activities.

The person may be contacted by an AIS judge or the regional AIS judges training chair to answer other questions before being grandfathered in as an artistic design judge.

Once a certificate for AIS artistic design judge has been given, nothing else is required unless The Principles of Design change, which is unlikely.

APPOINTMENT OF OVERSEAS JUDGES

A candidate for overseas judgeship must have expressed an interest and willingness to be appointed an AIS judge. A letter of nomination must be submitted to the AIS chair of judges by an AIS judge outlining the qualifications of the proposed overseas judge. The letter of nomination must be endorsed by a minimum of three additional accredited AIS judges when it is submitted to the chair of judges. There must also be a letter of concurrence from the proposed judge's national society if that society has a formal judge's program. Those nominees properly recommended and endorsed will be included in the annual report of the chair of judges when it is presented to the AIS Board of Directors for approval at the fall meeting.

REINSTATEMENT OF JUDGES

In special circumstances a judge might need to resign. The resignation must be in writing and sent the judge's RVP or designee.

An apprentice judge who has been dropped from the judge's roster or resigns can be reinstated only under the guidelines for new candidates for judgeship. The apprentice must receive the recommendation for reinstatement from the RVP and five other judges in the region and must meet all other requirements of a newly appointed judge.

A fully accredited judge can be dropped from the judges roster for any of these causes: failure to complete the required training hours in a timely manner, failure to submit a timely activity report for two consecutive years, failure to vote the official AIS Ballot for two consecutive years or resignation. The fully accredited judge can be reinstated upon completion of the required hours in approved training sessions and upon the written recommendation of the RVP and five other judges in the region, who are familiar with the activities of the accredited judge seeking reinstatement.

If a master or emeritus judge is dropped for failure to pay dues on time, they may be reinstated upon payment of dues if reinstatement is requested. An apprentice judge or garden/exhibition judge who has been dropped for allowing AIS membership to lapse must wait three full years before applying for

readmission to the program. The apprentice must begin anew on requirements. The garden/exhibition judge must have earned the required hours of approved training since being dropped.

For reinstatement to be granted, the judge must receive the recommendation of the RVP and approval of the AIS Board of Directors.

A retired judge may serve as a show judge as long as they serve on a panel with at least one fully accredited judge. Only one retired judge may serve on a panel. Retired judges may not conduct for-credit judges training course.

Summary

Requirements to be completed as a candidate for judgeship:

1. Maintain three years of continuous AIS membership.
2. Make application for entry into the judges training program.
3. Successfully complete a minimum of two training sessions for a total of ten hours, passing written examinations on each session.
4. Obtain the recommendation of five fully accredited judges.
5. Complete any additional regional requirements.

Requirements to be completed as an apprentice judge:

1. Maintain continuous AIS membership.
2. Complete two two-hour sessions of garden training under different AIS fully accredited judges.
3. Complete two two-hour sessions of show judging under different AIS fully accredited judges.
4. Successfully complete a two-hour course, Awards and Ballot. (A training session on Awards and Ballot taken within the three years immediately prior to appointment as an apprentice judge can be counted to satisfy this requirement.)
5. Complete all requirements within three years after being appointed an apprentice judge.
6. Complete the annual activity report.
7. Complete any additional regional requirements.

Requirements for maintaining status as a garden/exhibition or master judge:

1. Maintain continuous AIS membership.
2. Vote the official AIS Ballot each year before the deadline. Failure to do so for two consecutive years will result in automatic disqualification.
3. Attend and successfully complete refresher courses during each three-year period. Five hours credit (two of which must be in-garden training) is required for garden/exhibition judges and three hours credit (one of which must be in-garden training) is required of master judges.
4. Complete the annual activity report. Failure to do so for two consecutive years will result in automatic disqualification.
5. Complete any additional regional requirements.

Emeritus judges maintain their status as judges by maintaining continuous membership in the American Iris Society.

Requirements for becoming a certified artistic design judge

(the following section is new as of May 2022):

1. Be an AIS accredited judge or an AIS member with extensive experience which would be evaluated by the regional AIS judges training chair.
2. Possess a current copy of the AIS Handbook for Judges and Show Officials.
3. Complete four hours of instruction on Chapter 27 of edition 8.0, “Artistic Design”, in the AIS Handbook for Judges and four hours of apprenticeship and hands-on designing with a design judge.
4. Pass the tests given at training sessions.
5. Complete an annual activity report until all requirements are met and send this report to the regional AIS judges training chair.

Requirements for being grandfathered in as a certified artistic design judge

(the following section is new as of May 2022):

1. Be an AIS accredited judge or other floral society judge with specific requirements which would be evaluated by the regional AIS judges training chair.
2. Possess a current copy of the AIS Handbook for Judges and Show Officials.
3. Proof of diverse experience with artistic design including judging design, winning design awards or other design activities.



Handbook For Judges and Show Officials



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Note: This chapter and others from the *Handbook for Judges* are available online. It is recommended that judges and other readers check out the Introduction and Table of Contents in the full version of the *Handbook* in order to know the full list of available resources, e.g., Glossary, essays, Judge's Activity Record, etc.
