



AMERICAN  
KENNEL CLUB®

# AKC® Virtual Obedience Test Regulations

**AKC® Virtual Obedience Test Regulations**  
**Table of Contents**

<b>Virtual Obedience Test Purpose</b> .....	4
<b>Chapter 1 General Information</b> .....	4
Section 1. General Eligibility .....	4
Section 2. Class Eligibility .....	4
Section 3. Assignment Conflicts .....	4
Section 4. Dogs that May Enter .....	5
Section 5. Dogs that May Not Enter .....	5
Section 6. Collars, Leashes, and Training Aids .....	5
Section 7. Performance Area and Ring Size Requirements .....	5
Section 8. Ring Set Up and Equipment .....	5
Section 9. Camera Position and Filming, Uploading Videos .....	6
Section 10. Obedience Performance Requirements and Scoring .....	6
Section 11. Physically Challenged Handlers .....	7
Section 12. Double Handling .....	7
Section 13. Decisions .....	7
Section 14. Heel Position .....	7
Section 15. Hands and Arms .....	7
Section 16. Commands and Signals .....	8
Section 17. Additional Commands or Signals .....	8
Section 18. Praise .....	8
Section 19. Handling Between Exercises .....	9
Section 20. Misbehavior .....	9
Section 21. Performance Results, Explanations and Title Certificates .....	9
<b>Chapter 2 Virtual Beginner Novice Obedience</b> .....	9
Section 1. Virtual Beginner Novice Class .....	9
Section 2. Virtual Beginner Novice Class Exercises and Scores .....	9
Section 3. Virtual Beginner Novice Title Requirements .....	9
Section 4. Virtual Beginner Novice Ring Set Up .....	9
Section 5. Introducing the Team .....	9
Section 6. Before and After Each Exercise .....	9
Section 7. Heel on Leash Description .....	10
Section 8. Heel on Leash, Scoring .....	10
Section 9. Figure Eight Description and Scoring .....	10
Section 10. Sit for Exam Description .....	10
Section 11. Sit for Exam, Scoring .....	11
Section 12. Sit Stay – Handler Walk Around the Ring Description .....	11
Section 13. Sit Stay – Handler Walk Around the Ring, Scoring .....	11
Section 14. Recall Description .....	11
Section 15. Recall Scoring .....	11

<b>Chapter 3 Virtual Novice Obedience</b> .....	12
Section 1. Virtual Novice Class .....	12
Section 2. Virtual Novice Class Exercises and Scores .....	12
Section 3. Virtual Companion Dog Title Requirements .....	12
Section 4. Virtual Novice Ring Set Up .....	12
Section 5. Introducing the Team .....	12
Section 6. Before and After Each Exercise .....	12
Section 7. Heel on Leash and Figure Eight Description .....	12
Section 8. Heel on Leash and Figure Eight, Scoring .....	13
Section 9. Down Stay – Place Leash, Handler Walk Around the Ring Description .....	13
Section 10. Down Stay – Handler Walk Around the Ring, Scoring .....	13
Section 11. Stand for Examination Description .....	13
Section 12. Stand for Examination, Scoring .....	13
Section 13. Heel Free, Performance and Scoring .....	14
Section 14. Recall Description .....	14
Section 15. Recall, Scoring .....	14
Section 16. Sit Stay – Get Your Leash Description .....	14
Section 17. Sit Stay – Get Your Leash, Scoring .....	14
<b>Glossary of Terms</b> .....	15

## Virtual Obedience Test Purpose

Responsible dog ownership includes training your dog to be a well-mannered and happy companion. Obedience training is the foundation for all the fun activities and performance sports available to you and your dog. The American Kennel Club Virtual Obedience program provides an opportunity for exhibitors to train their dogs, evaluate their skill and teamwork, and stay engaged in the sport of Obedience when they are not able to attend events in person.

The performance area, known as the ring, may be set up outside or inside and on any surface. Instructions are provided to assist you in properly setting up the ring and positioning the camera. You may use the same ring set up/course map; **however**, it must be newly performed each time you submit an entry and video link. Once the online entry form and fee are received, you will receive a confirmation email and your video will be assigned to an approved AKC Obedience judge for review. AKC will notify you of the preliminary scoring results via email. All eligible qualifying scores will be recorded on your dog's AKC record and applied towards the relevant title. The Virtual Obedience Test program is a standalone program and there is no crossover to the regular AKC Obedience program titles.

You and your dog are judged the same as you would be at a regular trial; however, some of the exercises are different than what you will see at in-person trials. The main differences are that you are responsible for setting up the ring according to the map, and because there are no judge's orders, you must demonstrate an obvious pause where stated in each exercise to avoid penalty.

If, after reading the information contained in these Regulations, you have questions about the virtual obedience program, you may email [Obedience-VOE@akc.org](mailto:Obedience-VOE@akc.org).

## Chapter 1 General Information Regulations and Requirements Virtual Obedience

**Section 1. General Eligibility.** To be entered in an AKC Virtual Obedience event, the dog must be six months of age or older and registered with the American Kennel Club or recorded through the AKC Purebred Alternative Listing Program (PAL) or Canine Partners Program.

- [AKC Registration](#)
- [Purebred Alternative Listing \(PAL\) Program](#)
- [Canine Partners Program](#)
- [Foreign Registration](#)

Dogs with a foreign registration number may enter and show for 30 days using the dog's Foreign number. To be eligible beyond the 30 days, the dog must be registered/recorded with AKC. A title certificate will not be issued until the dog is AKC registered/recorded.

**Section 2. Class Eligibility.** The requirements to enter a class are covered under each class section in these Regulations. Any dog that has been disqualified at an AKC event is not eligible to be entered in any AKC events, including all virtual events.

**Section 3. Assignment Conflicts.** To avoid judge assignment conflicts, the following owners/exhibitors should send an email stating the conflict and entry information to [Obedience-VOE@akc.org](mailto:Obedience-VOE@akc.org) as soon as the entry is submitted.

- If the exhibitor has participated in a training session with one of the virtual judges within ten (10) days of submitting the entry.
- If the exhibitor resides in the same household as one of the virtual obedience judges.
- If the dog is owned or being exhibited by one of the virtual obedience judges or by a member of the same household.
- If a dog has been owned, sold, held under lease, or handled in the ring within six months by a virtual judge or by any person residing in the same household as the judge.

**Section 4. Dogs that May Enter.** The following dogs **may** enter Virtual Obedience events:

- Deaf dogs.
- One-eyed dogs.
- Any dog that has been surgically altered to correct a congenital or hereditary defect.
- Spayed bitches or castrated dogs, and dogs with disqualifying conformation faults.
- Females in season.
- Dogs with artificial coloring in their coats; however, the coloring must not cover more than one-third of the dog's coat, must not be in poor taste and cannot contain profanity.
- Handicapped dogs, such as three-legged dogs, provided that the dog appears willing and does not show any signs of discomfort or pain.
- Dogs with pacemakers; these dogs may perform with a harness on, if one is medically necessary (please send an email to [Obedience-VOE@akc.org](mailto:Obedience-VOE@akc.org) before submitting an entry).

**Section 5. Dogs that May Not Enter.** The following dogs **may not** enter in Virtual Obedience events:

- A dog that is under six months of age.
- A dog that is blind, as in without useful vision. One-eyed dogs are considered to have useful vision.
- A dog that appears sick or in pain.
- A dog that is disqualified from AKC events.

**Section 6. Collars, Leashes, and Training Aids.** The dog must wear a properly fitted collar, not too tight and not too loose. No harnesses or special training collars, such as electronic or prong collars, will be permitted. Nothing may be hanging from the dog's collar or leash.

- If an obedience exercise requires a specific length of leash, it is specified in the description of the exercise.
- The leash must be made of material other than chain and be long enough to provide adequate slack.
- Martingale and chain collars, flat or rolled leather collars, and fabric collars are all acceptable.
- In all exercises where a leash is required, it must be clipped to the collar. During the performance, the leash may be held in either hand or both hands but must not be used to aid or guide the dog.
- Incorrect equipment will be penalized up to and including a non-qualifying score.
- Handlers who carry or offer food or toys in the ring, or who verbally or physically discipline their dogs, will receive a non-qualifying (NQ) score.
- Handlers who carry or wear such things as waist packs/pouches or any item that, in the judge's opinion, appears to be a training device that aids the dog's performance will receive a non-qualifying (NQ) score.

**Section 7. Performance Area and Ring Size Requirements.** The performance area is defined as a ring. The ring should resemble a rectangle. Sizes in between the sizes stated below are acceptable.

- Minimum size for the Beginner Novice and Novice ring is 30 feet x 40 feet.
- Maximum size for the Beginner Novice and Novice ring is 40 feet x 50 feet.

**Section 8. Ring Set Up and Equipment.** The ring may be set up inside or outside on any surface. The owner/exhibitor is responsible for following all local/state mandates and ordinances.

- The four ring corners must be identified. The corners may be marked using tall cones, chairs, or posts of any kind. Ring gates and/or ropes may be used but are not required.
- Avoid having obstacles in the ring that may obstruct the judge's view of the performance.
- Obedience heeling pattern markers must be used and visible in the video.
  - The markers may be set up using rally signs, handwritten signs on sticks, cones, etc., to mark the halts, turns and changes of speed. If signs are used, they must be upright and not lying flat on the ground.
  - The markers are placed to the right of the handler's path except for those indicating a change of direction and the last halt; those markers are placed directly in front of the team's path.
- Small cones, pots, buckets, or signs *may* be used as markers to define the location of each exercise and don't need to be visible in the video.
- Cones, pots, buckets, or posts of any kind spaced 8' apart may be used for the Figure 8.

- Ring setup and performance demos [AKC Virtual Obedience Test](#)

**Section 9. Camera Position and Filming.** The video must be clear, not blurry. In all classes where the dog is required to perform exercises on leash, the leash must be visible to the judge. Lighting must be considered; avoid filming directly into the sun and be careful of sun glares where portions of the dog and leash disappear. Heavily shaded areas may cause the video to be too dark.

- Minimum resolution to view videos is **720p HD**. Check the camera settings before filming and set the video to the highest resolution.
- Filming must be done in landscape (horizontal) mode. Do not use the selfie mode as this will put the dog on the wrong side of the handler.
- Filming must be done from the end of the ring shown on the map. The camera should remain in a stationary position.
- A second person may do the filming to pan and zoom, provided a tripod is used and the person remains outside the ring. If a person is filming, they must do so from outside the ring, and they must remain silent once the team enters the ring and until the team exits the ring. They may not call the exercise orders.
- The camera should be elevated to approximately eye level. The team must be in full view of the judge throughout the performance.
- The video must contain audio. The judge must be able to hear the sounds closest to the camera. Background noises are expected but do not add music to the performance.
- Prior to beginning the performance, the handler must be near the camera to state the dog's name and breed, to verbally confirm that they will not have any food or toys with them in the ring, and to show the camera the dog's collar and leash.
- Once the handler enters the ring to perform, the video must be continuous, with no pauses and no edits.
- To avoid cutting out portions of the performance, it is recommended to start recording at least 5 seconds before starting and to not stop recording until about 5 seconds after the team exits the ring.
- To avoid handler error penalties and/or delays in judging, review the video on a device other than the one you used to film it to ensure it is a working link, and that it meets the requirements outlined in these Regulations.

### Uploading videos

- First, create a YouTube channel. You must have a Google Account to create and manage your personal YouTube channel. If you don't have a Google Account, you can create one through YouTube. Sign into YouTube and choose "Create a New Channel."
- You upload videos through your YouTube channel. At the top of the screen and to the right of the search bar is an icon that looks like a video camera; that is the "Create" button. CLICK the "Create" button, then CLICK "Upload Video." It may take a few minutes for the video to upload, and to finish "processing." The faster your internet is, the faster the entire process will be. (If you attempt to upload the video directly from your phone, using cell service, you may run into some glitches.)
- Once the video finishes uploading, you must set the level of visibility. CLICK "Unlisted" or "Public," then CLICK "Publish." Unlisted means that the video can only be seen by you and people who have a link to the video. Public means that the video can be searched for on YouTube and is visible to anyone. Do not set the video to private; the judge will not be able to view it.
- To enter the video link into the entry form, have the entry form opened in one window and your YouTube channel opened in a second window. Start the video playback, then pause it. Locate the share button; it is just below the video playback screen. CLICK it. Another screen will pop up with a copy option; CLICK "Copy." Return to the entry form window and right click to "Paste" the link into the link field. You must use the YouTube link; do not rename or alter the link in any way.

**Section 10. Obedience Performance Requirements and Scoring.** These Regulations set the standard of perfection by which the performance of each dog is scored; however, not every possible error and penalty is covered, only the more common and serious ones. Performance requirements are described for each exercise followed by the relevant scoring section.

The judge must carry a mental picture of the theoretically perfect performance for each exercise and score each dog and handler against that standard. The dog should demonstrate the utmost in willingness, enjoyment, and precision while the handler remains gentle, smooth, and natural. Speed alone does not indicate willingness. A lack of willingness and enjoyment on the part of the dog is to be penalized, as must a lack of precision. Roughness in handling or harsh commands by the handler will be penalized.

A perfect score in obedience is 200 points, and there will be no deduction of less than one-half point. A minor deduction is defined as  $\frac{1}{2}$  - 2  $\frac{1}{2}$  points. A substantial deduction is defined as 3 points or more, up to and including a non-qualifying (NQ) score. A qualifying score consists of more than 50 percent of the points for each exercise with a total score of at least 170 points; this certifies that the team has performed all the required exercises according to these requirements.

A qualifying score must never be awarded to a dog whose performance has not met the minimum requirements, to a dog that shows fear or resentment, or to a dog that relieves itself while in the ring.

In deciding whether a faulty performance of an exercise warrants a qualifying score, the judge will consider whether the awarding of an obedience title would be justified if all teams performed the exercise in a similar manner. The judge must not give a qualifying score for the exercise if they decide that it would be contrary to the best interest of the sport if all teams were to perform in the same way.

The dog and handler are under judgment from the time they enter the ring until they leave the ring.

The virtual obedience judge will follow these Virtual Obedience Regulations and refer to the regular Obedience Regulations for additional matters concerning judging.

**Section 11. Physically Challenged Handlers.** Specific requirements of these regulations may be modified so that physically challenged handlers may compete. Such handlers must be able to move around the ring without physical assistance or guidance. However, an assistant may position a blind handler before, between and after each exercise, read any ring markers used in the class and communicate to the handler the dog's performance. Dogs handled by such handlers will be required to perform all parts of all exercises as described in these regulations and will be penalized for failure to perform any part of an exercise.

Physically challenged handlers should email Virtual Obedience at [Obedience-VOE@akc.org](mailto:Obedience-VOE@akc.org) with specific questions.

**Section 12. Double Handling.** Any attempts to control the dog by someone other than the handler, or to assist the handler, must be penalized substantially.

**Section 13. Decisions.** The decision of the judge will be final in all matters concerning the performance and scoring of the team.

**Section 14. Heel Position.** The heel position as defined in these regulations applies whether the dog is sitting, standing, lying down or moving at heel. The dog should be at the handler's left side, straight in line with the direction the handler is facing. The area from the dog's head to shoulder is to be in line with the handler's left hip. The dog should be close to but not crowding its handler, so that the handler always has freedom of motion.

**Section 15. Hands and Arms.** The handler is required to have their hands and arms in a natural position throughout each exercise to avoid penalty.

The Heel on Leash and Figure Eight exercise specifically states that the hands must be in a natural position, i.e. not behind the handler's back, but do not require that they be at the handler's side while heeling on leash.

In all exercises where the dog is required to heel free, i.e. off leash, one of these options should be followed:

- When the handler is in motion, the arms and hands must move naturally at the sides and must hang naturally at the sides when stopped; or
- The right hand and arm must move naturally at the side, while the left hand must be held against the front of the body, centered in the area of the waist, with the left forearm carried against the body.

There will be a deduction if the hands and arms are not carried in one of these positions. The hands and arms may be adjusted during the fast portion of an exercise in order to maintain balance.

In any exercise that requires a dog to sit in front, the handler's arms and hands must hang naturally at the sides until the dog has sat in front. The handler must receive a deduction for not doing so.

- Any movement of the handler's hands or arms, from the time the dog sits in front and prior to the dog returning to the heel position, will be considered an additional signal or command, and will be penalized, unless such movement is otherwise permitted by these regulations.

In any exercise that requires the dog to stay in one position until the handler returns to heel position, handlers may fold their arms once while leaving and once while returning to the dog without penalty. Additional movement of the arms and hands that aid the dog will be considered additional signals and will be penalized.

No judge should consider that a handler's position is unnatural just because they do not perform with the hands and arms in the same position for each exercise. Handlers need not maintain the same position of hands and arms across exercises.

**Section 16. Commands and Signals.** Each exercise states when a command or signal is permitted, only one or the other, or if both a command and/or signal may be used.

- When these regulations mention a command or signal, only a single command or signal may be given.
- When these regulations specify command and/or signal, the handler may give either one or the other, or both command and signal simultaneously.

Loud commands by handlers to their dogs create a poor impression of obedience and should be avoided. If a dog is properly trained to respond to a normal tone of voice, shouting is not necessary. Commands the judge feels are excessively loud under the circumstances will be penalized substantially.

When a signal is permitted, it must be a single gesture with one arm and hand only, and the arm and hand must immediately be returned to a natural position.

- A handler may bend their body and knees to bring their hand level with the dog's eyes while giving a signal to a dog in heel position.
- Signals must be inaudible, and the handler must not touch the dog. Any unusual noise or motion may be considered a signal.
- Position of the arms and hands and movements of the head and/or body that aid the dog will be considered additional signals.
- Signaling a correction to a dog will be penalized.

Lack of prompt response by the dog to a command or signal is subject to a penalty. Delays by the handler in giving a command or signal, beyond the obvious pause, will be penalized. The dog should not anticipate the handler's directions but will wait for the appropriate commands and/or signals. Moving forward at the heel without any command or signal other than the natural forward movement of the handler's body will not be considered anticipation.

The dog's name may be used once immediately before a verbal command or before a verbal command and signal when these regulations permit a command and/or signal. A dog that responds to its name without waiting for the verbal command will be scored as having anticipated the command. The name will not be used with any signal not given simultaneously with a verbal command. Whistling is not permitted and will be penalized.

**Section 17. Additional Commands or Signals.** Any extra commands or signals must be penalized. If a handler gives an additional command or signal not permitted by these Regulations, the dog shall be scored as though it had failed to perform that part of the exercise. This includes giving a signal or command when none is permitted or using the dog's name with a permitted signal but without a permitted command. An extra command and/or signal in any non-principal part of an exercise (e.g., the finish in the Novice Recall) does not constitute a failing score for that exercise.

**Section 18. Praise.** Praise and petting are allowed between and after exercises, but points will be deducted from the total score for a dog that is not under reasonable control while being praised. There will be a substantial penalty for any dog that is picked up or carried at any time in the obedience ring.

**Section 19. Handling Between Exercises.** In the Beginner Novice and Novice classes, the dog may be guided gently by the collar between exercises. No other physical guidance is permitted and, if used, will receive minor or substantial penalties, depending on the circumstances. *Judging Procedures: Errors occurring before, between or after an exercise will be penalized under miscellaneous penalties.*

**Section 20. Misbehavior.** The handler is required to enter and exit the ring with the dog under control and without jumping, pulling, or tugging on the leash. Any display of fear or nervousness by the dog will be penalized according to the seriousness of the misbehavior whether it occurs during or between an exercise or before or after judging.

If a dog is working smartly and continuously but goes outside a ring boundary while completing an exercise (as opposed to a dog that bolts out of the ring or leaves the ring between exercises), the penalty, if any, is left to the discretion of the judge.

If the misbehavior occurs during an exercise, the penalty must first be applied to the score for that exercise. Should the penalty be greater than the value of the exercise, the additional points will be deducted from the total score under Miscellaneous. If such behavior occurs before or after the judging or between exercises, the entire penalty will be deducted under Miscellaneous.

**Section 21. Performance Results, Explanations and Title Certificates.** Handlers will receive their preliminary performance results, via email, after an event's judging is complete. Results will include the overall score and scores for the individual exercises; judges may add brief comments on occasion. Once the official results are posted to the dog's record, a title certificate will be mailed to the address on file. Please notify us if your address has changed in the last five years.

## Chapter 2 Virtual Beginner Novice Obedience

**Section 1. Virtual Beginner Novice Class.** The Beginner Novice Virtual class is a titling class for all dogs who are eligible according to Chapter 1 of these Virtual Obedience Regulations.

**Section 2. Virtual Beginner Novice Class Exercises and Scores.** The exercises and maximum scores:

1. Heel on Leash	40 points
2. Figure Eight	40 points
3. Sit for Exam	40 points
4. Sit Stay	40 points
5. Recall	40 points
Maximum Score	200 points

**Section 3. Virtual Beginner Novice Title and Requirements.** The letters BN-V will be added after the name of each dog that has been certified to have received three qualifying scores in the Virtual Beginner Novice class. That dog will receive a Virtual Beginner Novice title certificate from the AKC.

The letters BN-V will be followed by a numeric designation indicating the number of times a dog has met the requirements of the BN-V title as defined in the regulations. (BN-V2 for six qualifying scores, BN-V3 for nine qualifying scores, BN-V4 for twelve qualifying scores, etc.)

**Section 4. Virtual Beginner Novice Ring Set Up.** There are five different ring setups from which to choose [AKC Virtual Obedience Test](#). You may use the same ring set up/course map; **however**, it must be newly performed each time you submit an entry and video link. Set the exercises up according to the setup on the map. The grids are 10' x 10'.

**Section 5. Introducing the Team.** Prior to beginning the performance, the handler will be near to and facing the camera to state the dog's name and breed, verbally confirm they will not have any food or toys with them in the ring and show the dog's collar and leash to the camera. Failure to include this information with the video performance will be penalized.

**Section 6. Before and After Each Exercise.** There must be an obvious pause at the start of each exercise. Handlers may choose to cue the dog prior to the start (e.g., "ready") but must then pause before beginning. There also must be an obvious pause at the end of each exercise before the handler releases, pets, or praises the dog.

Praise and petting are allowed between and after exercises. The dog must remain under control between exercises to avoid deductions.

**Section 7. Heel on Leash Description.** The principal feature of this exercise is the ability of the dog and handler to work as a team.

The signs/pattern markers used for this exercise are “Start,” “Right Turn,” “Left Turn,” “About Turn,” “Slow,” “Normal,” “Fast,” and “Halt/Sit.” Slow means to slow down noticeably and fast means the handler and dog must move forward at a noticeably accelerated speed. Turns will be used only when the handler is moving at a normal speed.

The handler will enter the ring with the dog on a loose leash and stand at the Start marker with the dog sitting in heel position. After pausing, the handler may give a command or signal to heel and will walk briskly and naturally with the dog on a loose leash. The dog should walk close to the handler’s left side without moving wide away from, lagging behind, forging ahead of, or crowding the handler. The dog should not interfere with the handler’s freedom of motion at any time. At the Halt/Sit marker the handler will stop, and the dog should sit promptly and straight in heel position without a command or signal. After an obvious pause, the exercise is finished, and the handler may release, pet and/or praise the dog, and move efficiently to begin the Figure Eight exercise.

**Section 8. Heel on Leash, Scoring.** If the leash is consistently tight, i.e. not loose, or if the handler is constantly controlling the dog by tugging on the leash, constantly talking to the dog, or continually adapting to the dog’s pace, that dog must receive a non-qualifying (NQ) score for this exercise.

Minor or substantial deductions will be made for a handler who does not pause at the start prior to moving forward, and who does not pause after the Halt/Sit.

Minor deductions will be made for lagging, heeling wide, forging, crowding, poor sits, failure to sit at a halt, and other heeling imperfections. Similar deductions will be made for any tightening or jerking of the leash, for guiding the dog with the leash or failing to walk at a brisk normal pace. Minor deductions will be made for additional commands or signals to heel, or for failure of dog or handler to speed up noticeably for the fast or slow down noticeably for the slow.

**Section 9. Figure Eight Description and Scoring.** The principal feature of this exercise is the ability of the dog and handler to work as a team.

The Figure Eight cones will be spaced 8 feet apart. This exercise is performed on leash. The handler and dog will move to the place indicated on the map for this exercise. The handler will stand with the dog sitting in heel position, slightly back and centered between the two cones, facing forward. The Figure Eight will be performed in the direction of the arrow. The team will complete one Figure Eight and halt in the middle, pause, and then continue to complete the second Figure Eight with a halt in the middle and pause. After the second obvious pause, the exercise is finished, and the handler may release, pet and/or praise the dog, and move efficiently to set up for the Sit for Exam exercise.

Scoring is the same as described in the Heel on Leash.

**Section 10. Sit for Exam Description.** The principal feature of this exercise is that the dog sits in position before and during the examination.

This exercise is performed with the dog on a 6-foot leash held by the handler. The handler may gather the leash when approaching the dog for the exam and/or returning to heel position.

The handler and dog will move to the place indicated on the map for this exercise. The handler will stand with the dog sitting in heel position. The handler may command the dog to sit, pause, then may give the command and/or signal to stay, walk straight forward to the end of the 6-foot leash, turn, face the dog, and pause. The handler will then move forward to approach the dog from the front. Using the fingers and palm of either hand, the handler will briefly touch the dog’s head, and then walk around behind the dog to return to heel position. After an obvious pause, the exercise is finished, and the handler may release, pet, and/or praise the dog, and move efficiently to begin the Sit Stay – Handler Walk Around the Ring exercise.

**Section 11. Sit for Exam, Scoring.** A dog must receive a non-qualifying (NQ) score if it stands, lies down, or moves away from the place where it was left either before or during the examination.

Substantial deductions will be made for the handler talking to the dog after the handler has left heel position.

Minor or substantial deductions will be made for dropping or tightening of the leash during the exercise, or if the dog stands and/or moves away after the examination has been completed.

Minor deductions will be made for a dog that moves its feet at any time.

**Section 12. Sit Stay – Handler Walk Around the Ring Description.** The principal feature of this exercise is that the dog remains in the sit position once the handler has left the dog and until the handler has returned to heel position.

During this exercise, the leash remains clipped to the dog's collar.

The handler and dog will move to the place indicated on the map for this exercise. The handler will stand with the dog sitting in heel position and will drop/place the leash on the ground alongside the dog. The handler may command the dog to sit, pause, then give the command and/or signal to stay, and immediately proceed to walk around the inside perimeter of the ring in either direction as indicated on the map.

Upon completing a full perimeter walk around the ring, the handler will approach the dog from the front, and proceed to walk around behind the dog to return to heel position. After an obvious pause, the exercise is finished, the handler will pick up the leash, and then may release, pet and/or praise the dog, and move efficiently to begin the Recall exercise.

**Section 13. Sit Stay – Handler Walk Around the Ring, Scoring.** A non-qualifying (NQ) score is required for the handler talking to the dog once the handler has left heel position, and for the dog moving a substantial distance away from the place where it was left any time during the exercise, not remaining in the sit position until the handler has returned to heel position, and repeatedly barking or whining.

A substantial deduction will be made for a dog that moves even a short distance from where it was left, barks or whines only once or twice, or changes position after the handler has returned to the heel position but before the exercise is finished.

**Section 14. Recall Description.** The principal features of this exercise are that the dog stay where left until called by the handler, and that the dog responds promptly to the handler's command or signal to come.

The handler and dog will move to the place indicated on the map for this exercise. The leash is removed for this exercise and is kept by the handler. The handler may hold the leash in either hand, put the leash in a pocket, or drape it around their neck. The handler will stand with the dog sitting in heel position. The handler may command the dog to sit, pause, then give the command and/or signal to stay and walk forward approximately 25 feet turn to face the dog, and pause. The handler will command or signal the dog to come. Thereafter, the handler's arms and hands should hang naturally at the sides until the dog has sat in front.

The dog must come at a brisk trot or gallop and sit straight, centered in front of the handler.. The dog must come close enough to its handler so that the handler could touch its head without excessive bending, stretching, or moving either foot. After an obvious pause, the exercise is finished, and the handler may release, pet and/or praise the dog. The handler will clip the leash to the dog's collar and exit the ring with the dog under control and without jumping, pulling or tugging on the leash.

**Section 15. Recall, Scoring.** A dog must receive a non-qualifying (NQ) score if it is given an additional command and/or signal to stay, if more than two commands or signals are required for the dog to come, if it fails to come, if it moves from the place it was left before being called or signaled to come, or if it does not come close enough to its handler so that the handler could touch its head without excessive bending, stretching, or moving either foot.

Substantial deductions will be made for a handler's extra command or signal to come or to sit.

Minor or substantial deductions will be made if the dog fails to come at a brisk trot or gallop or fails to sit.

Minor deductions will be made for slow or poor sits.

## Chapter 3

### Virtual Novice Obedience

**Section 1. Virtual Novice Class.** The Novice Virtual class is a titling class for all dogs who are eligible according to Chapter 1 of these Virtual Obedience Regulations.

**Section 2. Virtual Novice Class Exercises and Scores.** The exercises and maximum scores:

1. Heel on Leash & Figure Eight	40 points
2. Down Stay (Place Leash - Walk Around)	30 points
3. Stand for Examination	30 points
4. Heel Free	40 points
5. Recall	30 points
6. Sit Stay – Get Your Leash	30 points
Maximum Score	200 points

**Section 3. Virtual Companion Dog Title and Requirements.** The letters CD-V will be added after the name of each dog that has been certified to have received three qualifying scores in the Virtual Novice class. That dog will receive a Virtual Companion Dog title certificate from the AKC.

The letters CD-V will be followed by a numeric designation indicating the number of times a dog has met the requirements of the CD-V title as defined in the regulations. (CD-V2 for six qualifying scores, CD-V3 for nine qualifying scores, CD-V4 for twelve qualifying scores, etc.)

**Section 4. Virtual Novice Ring Set Up.** There are five different ring setups from which to choose [AKC Virtual Obedience Test](#). You may use the same ring set up; **however**, it must be newly performed each time you submit an entry and video link. Set the exercises up according to the setup on the map. The grids are 10' x 10'.

**Section 5. Introducing the Team.** Prior to beginning the performance, the handler will be near to and facing the camera to state the dog's name and breed, verbally confirm they will not have any food or toys with them in the ring and show the dog's collar and leash to the camera.

**Section 6. Before and After Each Exercise.** There must be an obvious pause at the start of each exercise. Handlers may choose to cue the dog prior to the start (e.g., "ready") but must then pause before beginning. There also must be an obvious pause at the end of each exercise before the handler releases, pets, or praises the dog.

Praise and petting are allowed between and after exercises. The dog must remain under control between exercises to avoid deductions.

**Section 7. Heel on Leash and Figure Eight Description.** The principal feature of this exercise is the ability of the dog and handler to work as a team.

The signs/markers used for this exercise are "Start," "Right Turn," "Left Turn," "About Turn," "Slow," "Normal," "Fast," and "Halt/Sit." Slow means to slow down noticeably and fast means the handler and dog must move forward at a noticeably accelerated speed. Turns will be used only when the handler is moving at a normal speed.

The handler will enter the ring with the dog on a loose leash and stand at the Start marker with the dog sitting in heel position. After pausing, the handler may give a command or signal to heel and will walk briskly and naturally with the dog on a loose leash. The dog should walk close to the handler's left side without moving wide away from, lagging behind, forging ahead of, or crowding the handler. The dog should not interfere with the handler's freedom of motion at any time. At each Halt/Sit marker the handler will stop, and the dog should sit promptly and straight in heel position without a command or signal. After the last Halt/Sit and obvious pause, the exercise is finished, and the handler may release, pet and/or praise the dog, and move efficiently to begin the Figure Eight exercise.

The Figure Eight cones will be spaced 8 feet apart. The handler and dog will move to the place indicated on the map for this exercise. The handler will stand with the dog sitting in heel position, slightly back and centered between the two cones, facing forward. The Figure Eight will be performed in the direction of the arrow. The team will complete one Figure

Eight and halt/sit in the middle, pause, and then continue to complete the second Figure Eight with a halt/sit in the middle, and pause. After the second obvious pause, the exercise is finished, and the handler may release, pet and/or praise the dog, and move efficiently to begin the Down Stay exercise.

**Section 8. Heel on Leash and Figure Eight, Scoring.** If the leash is consistently tight, i.e., not loose, or if the handler is constantly controlling the dog by tugging on the leash, constantly talking to the dog, or is continually adapting to the dog's pace, that dog must receive a non-qualifying (NQ) score for this exercise.

Depending on the circumstances, minor or substantial deductions will be made for a handler who does not pause at the start prior to moving forward, and after each halt/sit, for additional commands or signals to heel or for failure of dog or handler to speed up noticeably for the fast or slow down noticeably for the slow.

Minor or substantial deductions will be made for lagging, heeling wide, forging, crowding, poor sits, failure to sit at a halt and other heeling imperfections. Similar deductions will be made for any tightening or jerking of the leash, for a handler guiding the dog with the leash, or not walking at a brisk normal pace.

**Section 9. Down Stay – Place Leash, Handler Walk Around the Ring Description.** The principal feature of this exercise is that the dog remains in the down position once the handler has left the dog and until the handler has returned to heel position.

The handler and dog will move to the place indicated on the map for this exercise. The handler will stand with the dog either sitting or standing in heel position. The handler will remove the leash, pause, and command and/or signal the dog to down. The handler may bend their body and knees while giving a signal, but then must immediately stand up and pause. If a signal is used, it must be given with the hand that is not holding the leash. The handler will give a command and/or signal to stay, then immediately leave the dog and proceed to place the leash on a leash holder, (e.g., chair, post, cone) and then walk around the inside perimeter of the ring in either direction as indicated on the map.

Upon completing a full perimeter walk around the ring, the handler will approach the dog from the front, and proceed to walk around behind the dog to return to heel position. After an obvious pause, the exercise is finished, and the handler may release, pet and/or praise the dog, and move efficiently to begin the Stand for Examination exercise.

**Section 10. Down Stay – Handler Walk Around the Ring, Scoring.** A non-qualifying (NQ) score is required for any additional command and/or signal once the handler has left heel position, and for the dog moving a substantial distance away from the place where it was left any time during the exercise, not remaining in the down position until the handler has returned to heel position, and repeatedly barking or whining.

A substantial deduction will be made for a dog that moves even a short distance from where it was left, barks or whines only once or twice, or changes position after the handler has returned to the heel position but before the exercise is finished.

**Section 11. Stand for Examination Description.** The principal feature of this exercise is that the dog stand in position before and during the examination.

The handler and dog will move to the place indicated on the map for this exercise. The dog does not need to be in a sit to begin this exercise. The handler may stand/pose the dog using only hands and/or voice, without being rough, and take reasonable time to pose the dog. The handler will then stand up in heel position, give the command and/or signal to stay, walk straight forward about 6 feet, turn, face the dog, and pause. The handler will then move forward to approach the dog from the front. Using the fingers and palm of either hand, the handler will briefly touch the dog's head, body, and hind quarters, and then walk around behind the dog to return to heel position. After an obvious pause, the exercise is finished, and the handler may release, pet, and/or praise the dog, and move efficiently to begin the Heel Free exercise.

**Section 12. Stand for Examination, Scoring.** A non-qualifying (NQ) score is required for the following: The dog sits, lies down, or moves away from the place where it was left either before or during the examination; the dog growls, snaps or displays fear or resentment; the handler gives an additional command and/or signal after leaving heel position.

Substantial deductions will be made for rough treatment by the handler or active resistance by the dog to stand.

Minor or substantial deductions will be made for a dog that shows shyness, moves its feet at any time, or sits and/or moves away after the examination has been completed.

**Section 13. Heel Free, Performance and Scoring.** This exercise will be performed the same as the Heel on Leash, using the same heeling pattern, but without either the leash or the Figure Eight. The scoring will be the same. Once the exercise is finished, after an obvious pause, the handler may release, pet, and/or praise the dog, and move efficiently to begin the Recall exercise.

**Section 14. Recall Description.** The principal features of this exercise are that the dog stay where left until called by the handler, and that the dog responds promptly to the handler's first command or signal to come.

The handler and dog will move to the place indicated on the map for this exercise. The handler will stand with the dog sitting in the heel position. The handler may command the dog to sit, pause, then give the command and/or signal to stay and walk forward to the other end of the ring to the place indicated on the map, turn to face the dog, and pause. The handler will command or signal the dog to come. Thereafter, the handler's arms and hands should hang naturally at the sides until the dog has sat in front.

The dog must come directly at a brisk trot or gallop and sit straight, centered in front of the handler. The dog must be close enough to its handler so that the handler could touch its head without excessive bending, stretching, or moving either foot. After an obvious pause, the handler will give a command or signal for the dog to finish, i.e. to move from the front position to heel position. The dog must go smartly to heel position and sit. The direction and manner in which the dog performs the finish is optional, provided it is prompt and that the dog sits straight at heel. After an obvious pause, the exercise is finished, and the handler may release, pet and/or praise the dog and move efficiently to begin the Sit Stay exercise.

**Section 15. Recall, Scoring.** A dog must receive a non-qualifying (NQ) score if it is given an additional command and/or signal to stay, if it fails to come on the first command or signal, if it moves from the place it was left before being called or signaled to come, or if it does not sit close enough to its handler so that the handler could touch its head without excessive bending, stretching or moving either foot.

Substantial deductions will be made for a handler's extra command or signal to sit or finish and for a dog that fails to remain sitting and either stands or lies down, fails to come at a brisk trot or gallop, fails to sit in front, or fails to finish or sit at heel.

Minor or substantial deductions will be made for slow or poor sits, for finishes that are not prompt or smart, for touching the handler on coming in or while finishing, and for sitting between the handler's feet.

**Section 16. Sit Stay – Get Your Leash Description.** The principal feature of this exercise is that the dog remains in the sit position.

The handler and dog will move to the place indicated on the map for this exercise. The handler will stand with the dog sitting in heel position. The handler may command and/or signal the dog to sit without touching either the dog or the dog's collar. The handler will give a command and/or signal to stay and will walk forward immediately to the leash holder, pick up the leash, turn, face the dog, and pause. After an obvious pause, the handler will return directly, walking around and behind the dog to heel position, and then pause. The dog must not move from the sitting position until released after an obvious pause. The handler will clip the leash to the dog's collar and exit the ring with the dog under control and without jumping, pulling, or tugging on the leash.

**Section 17. Sit Stay – Get Your Leash, Scoring.** A non-qualifying score (NQ) is required for the following: The dog moving a substantial distance away from the place where it was left any time during the exercise, not remaining in the sit position until the handler has returned to heel position, and repeatedly barking or whining.

Substantial deductions will be made for a dog that moves even a short distance from where it was left, that barks or whines only once or twice, or that changes from the sit position after the handler has returned to the heel position but before an obvious pause by the handler. A substantial deduction, under Miscellaneous Penalties, must be made for a dog that does not remain under control while exiting the ring.

## Glossary of Terms

**AKC Canine Partners** – an American Kennel Club program that is available to spayed/neutered dogs that are not currently eligible for AKC registration, AKC Foundation Stock Service (FSS) enrollment, or an AKC Purebred Alternative Listing (PAL) number.

**Brisk, briskly** – keenly alive, alert, energetic.

**Command** – verbal order from handler to dog.

**Crowding** – a dog so close to the handler as to interfere with the handler's freedom of motion.

**Directly** – immediately, without deviation or hesitation.

**Down** – the dog's body is on the ground; the dog's weight is off the feet and legs.

**Finish** – the dog goes from a position in front of the handler to the heel position.

**Gently** – with kindness, without harshness or roughness.

**Guiding gently by the collar** – control of the dog by holding any part of the collar with minimal pressure on the dog's neck.

**Leash Holder** – an item identified as a place to put the leash during the class.

**Minor deduction** – 1/2 point to 2 1/2 points.

**Natural** – not artificial; free of affectation; what is customarily expected in the home or public places.

**Pause** – a complete stop of movement and motion by the handler.

**Prompt response** – without hesitation, immediate, quick.

**Resentment** – resistance, unwillingness.

**Ring** – performance area, resembles a rectangle, four corners must be marked, void of obstacles that obstruct the judge's view.

**Signal** – nonverbal direction from the handler to dog, as described in Chapter 1, Section 16.

**Sit** – the dog has its rear and/or hocks on the ground.

**Smartly** – quickly, vigorously.

**Substantial deduction** – 3 points or more.

**Training session** – as related to where a student-handler/teacher-judge relationship is established, with or without compensation.