



Southern Counties Photographic Federation

Judging Feedback - Guide Note to Clubs

Dear Club

We are introducing a new feedback process for judges, with which we would like your help and cooperation. Many of you have asked about a process, so your time spent in providing feedback to our judges, especially positive and constructive feedback, would be greatly appreciated.

It is important to us as a judging community to know how we're doing. We recognise that judging is an important part of your club programme and we are keen to ensure that we are improving continually and that competitions are a positive experience for everyone.

This note provides you with essential information about what is feedback and how to provide constructive feedback to our judges.

What is 'Feedback'?

Feedback, in this context, is structured information given to another person about their behaviour or performance.

Feedback is often thought of negatively, i.e. provided only when there is something to complain about. That should not be the case. Thoughtful feedback, given in a positive way, is invaluable in helping everyone to do better, whatever their role or profession.

- Feedback should be constructive, as we would expect a judge to be about our images.
- Feedback need not be free from criticism but criticism should be expressed in a positive way.
- Feedback should be specific, covering what went well and any areas for improvement.
- Feedback should take into account a judge's current level of training and experience.
- Feedback should be written in a way that is respectful and that we would give personally.

People are most likely to take feedback on board for the long term when there is an optimal ratio of 3:1 - three positive, reinforcing comments to one criticism.

By contrast, negative feedback – criticism expressed in a negative way – is always destructive. It is often aimed at the person rather than their behaviour, has nothing good to say and no positive intent. When negative feedback is given by judges about our photographs, we are understandably upset.

Why is feedback necessary and useful?

Feedback is useful for the SCPF in monitoring how judges are performing in general and in helping us to tune the help we provide to our judges and the training we provide. However, it is not the main purpose. Feedback is really of most benefit to the judges themselves, so that they can work to continually improve.



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What forms are there?

It is important that the process is as easy as possible whilst still providing the information we would like.

There are two forms and one supporting document:

1. **A Feedback Form** – available in Word format (and soon as an electronic form)
2. **A Competency Checklist** – to help you to identify those areas where you feel specific praise or criticism is due. It is for your guidance; you do not need to have someone sitting at the back of the room filling in this checklist in full. Neither do you have to return it, though you might wish to.
3. **Definitions** – definitions for each of the specific elements on the checklist. We hope this will be useful for judges and clubs alike in helping to understand our expectations.

Who can provide feedback?

We will only accept feedback compiled officially on behalf of a club, not from any individual. At least three people should contribute to the process and it must be 'signed' by a named committee member.

When should feedback be provided?

You don't have to provide feedback every time, but please do so:

- a) Always when booking a Level 1 Judge
- b) When a judge asks you for feedback personally – we are encouraging judges to do this
- c) When a judging is especially good and you feel praise is due
- d) When either we or a judge asks you to support a request for upgrade
- e) When you feel that a judge could be helped by providing constructive feedback
- f) If you feel you have grounds for a complaint

The feedback process should not alter anything about the letter of thanks sent to a judge after the event offering thanks, which should still be a normal courtesy.

How do we raise a complaint?

There have been a number of occasions in recent times when we have got wind of complaints or negative feedback via the grapevine. When this happens we can do nothing: we cannot pass anything constructive on to the judge concerned; neither can we raise it officially with another Federation if that judge is out of our area.

Therefore we encourage clubs to use this process constructively and to work with us to discourage all "grapevine complaints", which can quickly become out of control and destructive.

If for any reason your club should feel the need to raise a complaint with us, please follow exactly the same procedure and accompany the feedback form with an official letter from your club stating your reasons.



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Where should feedback be sent?

Initially, send your feedback to me at SCPF only – judging@southerncountiespf.org.uk until we have been able to monitor and improve the process for a short time.

The information is assumed to be allowed under the Data Protection legislation as it is an essential part of the administration of judges. Judges are entitled to see all such information and so we will ensure that feedback is passed on to them. Ultimately, after a trial period, we will be asking feedback to go to the judges themselves.

Our Judging Levels

Level 1 judges have been trained and are gaining experience in club competitions. All feedback is valuable learning and clubs can play a vital role in helping them to gain confidence. We would ask that you provide feedback **every time you welcome a Level 1 Judge** to your club.

Level 2 judges are accredited by SCPF and have gained experience over at least a year in club level competitions. To be accredited, we would expect a judge to be generally competent, showing higher skill levels appropriate to their experience. Some judges at this level are highly experienced.

Level 3 judges have the highest accreditation from SCPF and have demonstrated over a period of at least five years and / or by assessment that they are confident in dealing with all levels of work in club and inter-club competitions. They are expected to be able to work with the higher standards of regional and national events and to be confident before bigger and more demanding audiences.

In particular, Level 3 judges are expected to be competent in all areas, especially the core qualities. We would also expect them to be able to respond articulately to the expressive qualities in a photograph as well as the craft and technical elements.

If you have any queries or concerns, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Thank you for your help and co-operation.

... Ken Scott ARPS
Judging Advisor

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