



The Gundog Club

1. About the Gundog Club

The Gundog Club was founded in 2006 to deliver a national Graded Training Scheme for gundogs throughout the UK. The Gundog Club is now owned and managed by national gundog welfare charity The Gundog Trust.

The charity was recognised and registered with the Charity Commission in 2012. The Gundog Trust is committed to the following aims:

- To promote, support and develop gundog training opportunities;
- To encourage community participation in gundog training and fieldwork;
- To promote the humane treatment and welfare of gundog breeds.

In addition to the Graded Training Scheme the Gundog Club provides a register of accredited Gundog Instructors.

2. Geographic allocation of areas

The Gundog Club allocates accreditation by Geographic area. For example, North Yorkshire. We only accredit new instructors who are located more than 15 miles (by road) from an existing instructor training ground to training ground.

Please note the following:

- this policy is under review and may be removed in the future;
- areas are allocated on a first come first served basis where the first person to successfully apply is accredited;
- we do not 'hold' areas as people progress through the application process;
- if you do not run field tests to generate income for the Gundog Club, we will not protect your area from new applicants – that is, if you are not active in running field tests, we will accredit a new instructor even if they are within 15 miles of your location.

3. Evidence required to be accredited as a Gundog Club instructor

Force free trainer

The Gundog Club is in a state of transition from being an organisation that historically accredited both Force Free instructors and traditional trainers to only accrediting Force Free trainers.



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While it is possible that our definition of 'Force Free' might evolve and change, or be replaced entirely with something more sophisticated, at this point in time we specify that trainers must teach students to train gundogs without using:

- **Intimidation** including body postures, body blocking, 'stares', growling, scolding, shouting
- **Physical manipulation** including lead jerks, lifting, pulling, pushing, alpha rolls, ear tugs and tweaks
- **Striking** including nose taps, smacking, hitting, kicking
- **Sound aversives** including rattle bottles, pet correctors, or other forms of compressed air
- **Electric collars**

This list is not inclusive. These are examples. The key point is that we aim to accredit trainers educated and knowledgeable about modern, force free training methods and you need to demonstrate this by an account of your training methods to us.

You must confirm to us that you are a Force Free trainer, provide an account of your methodologies in a personal statement, and tell us how you have learned about these and provide:

- References from at least two students (or other appropriate sources) to confirm this; or
- Evidence of existing accreditation from another organisation with the same or similar requirements as us.

You also need to provide, in list form, how you keep your knowledge up to date and relevant (a formal CPD record is ideal, but otherwise an accurate record of seminars and courses attended will do). You should also include details of your education and any professional qualifications or associations that you hold – in list form, including dates and membership numbers where applicable.

Please note: your personal statement about your training methods, and your CPD record, is used as a first screening assessment by the Trustees. Unless the Trustees are convinced that you train with positive reinforcement, they will not move your application to the next stage and devote resources to taking up references.

Your ability to clearly explain your methods is under assessment. Remember that being able to explain training methods to others is a key skill required from a trainer.

If you have a particular problem that means you are unable to do justice to yourself in writing please let us know before submitting an application – it is too late to tell us afterwards that you are disadvantaged by the requirement for a written application.



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Gundog experience

All Gundog Club instructors must successfully take G4 with their own dog and achieve a merit or above (G5 if you are applying to be a full instructor) – some exceptions to this may be made for exceptional candidates with significant success in competition (for example wins at open level in Kennel Club trials) but normally we expect all applicants to have taken G4/G5 with their own dog.

To be accredited as an Instructor of the Foundation Grades (able to teach and assess grades 1 – 3) you must hold at least a Gundog Club G4 award with your own dog.

Foundation Instructors should normally have completed requirements for Full Instructors within two years.

To be accredited as a Full Instructor (able to teach and assess grades 1 – 5) you must:

- Hold a Gundog Club G5* (both parts including on game) with your own dog with a score of a merit or above; AND
- Provide two references from people with established and recognisable reputation for excellence in Gundog field work**, and who have observed you and your dogs at length, to verify you have the skills to teach to G5.

* As for Foundation Instructor if you only own HPRs – until HPR G5 becomes available.

* **The most suitable referees would be existing Full Instructors of the Gundog Club, but other suitable people might include those with competition success in Kennel Club competitions or similar.

For both Foundation and Full instructor, you must provide details of awards (copies of certificates), and give an account of your Gundog experience (in competitions or the field) and provide references to allow this to be verified.

Instructor Accreditation with the Gundog Club

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Experience as a coach

For Foundation instructors:

- A minimum of three years coaching experience – training people to train dogs.

For Full instructors:

- A minimum of five years coaching experience – training people to train dogs.

You must set out the detail of your coaching experience, with dates and number of clients, and provide references from at least two students (or other appropriate sources) to confirm it.

By coaching experience, we mean coaching people to train dogs in a professional capacity.

Unpaid experience can contribute, but it must have been in a structured form that you can document and provide references to substantiate, eg running classes at a training club.

Experience coaching other subjects other than dog training can be helpful to your overall application, but the criteria for coaching is in relation to dog training.

References

We will arrange telephone interviews with all the referees you provide, so they must be willing to speak to us for about 15 or 20 minutes. Please provide emails, telephone numbers and clearly state which part of the evidence each referee is able to verify (force free, fieldwork, or coaching).

Making the decision to accredit instructors

A committee of at least three Trustees consider all of the evidence provided, including notes of interviews to reach a decision as to whether a candidate should be accredited.

In making this decision, they may also take into account your reputation as a Force Free instructor. That is, if reports that you currently use aversive methods exist, this may be grounds for your application to be refused or additional evidence required.

2. Promoting you as an instructor

As an Instructor of the Gundog Club, we promote your services to our students in a number of ways. We provide all our instructors with dedicated pages on our website – and traffic to our site is high. Together with photos of you and your dogs, your page will contain a brief bio



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of your training experience and the services you would like to offer to students. Students may reach you via our website contact forms, or may find you directly after viewing your page.

We also refer students who contact us by telephone or email, to their nearest suitable instructor. Instructors are also very welcome to join our new Facebook group, where we encourage both students and instructors to form a supportive online community. Instructors may also post their test results in our online groups and we do the same on the main Gundog Club website.

We also offer space for instructors to contribute to student newsletters in the way of articles and advertising, and these letters reach many active students in the UK who are interested in progressing through the Gundog Club's grades.

In the future, as our new website and bespoke marketing platform is launched, we will provide more options for trainers to promote their services and provide content to students including the ability to target material at students interested in certain breeds or having achieved certain Gundog Grades.

3. Field tests

Foundation Instructors are able to act as assessors for Field Tests for grades 1 to 3. Full instructors are able to act as assessors for grades 1 to 5.

Payments are made by the Gundog Club for each assessment carried out. Students pay a test fee to the Gundog Club.

Additional charges made by the assessor, such as ground hire or travelling expenses are dealt with directly by the instructors and students.

Individual students may contact you to arrange a Field Test, although it is more normal for each instructor to come to an arrangement with another instructor and act to assess students on organised Field Test days.

If an instructor holds and organizes a Field Test day, and collects test payments from students to pass on to the Gundog Club, there are discounts available for 6 or more students to cover the effort and time that we recognised is involved in organising large Field Test days.

4. Educational materials

We provide you with a complete set of candidate test handbooks for each grade and type of dog, assessor guidelines for each grade and type of dog, and a set of Pippa Mattinson's candidate training books - many of your students will buy these or wish to buy them.



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Training books are available to buy from us at a wholesale price in packs of 10 or more to resell to your students.

Please note that the books are currently being updated to be Force Free but until this is complete, they carry a caveat that mild aversives are recommended in the books.

5. Contributions to the Gundog Club

The way instructors contribute to the Gundog Club will be the subject of consultation following the announcement that the Gundog Club will move to being a force free organisation. Some form of contribution will be required, but we expect there to be a range of options from direct payments, to targets for students passing grades, to revenue sharing arrangements for content for our new website, or content that we can place behind a paywall. **At a minimum, instructors are expected to use the Club's grading scheme, and be active in entering students into it.**

6. Funding the Gundog Club

The charity aims to be self-funding and the Trustees are committed to making sure the finances of the charity are maintained on a sustainable footing for the future and cover necessary investments that we need to make such as upgrading our website, booking arrangements, and administrative services.

Our income consists of payments from students to register with the Gundog Club, payments from instructors, income from field tests, and the sale of educational materials. Almost none of our income is from donations, although of course these are always very welcome and fund raising activities are most appreciated.

7. Contacting us

As a small charity, we do not have people manning the telephone, and email is always the best and quickest way to communicate with us.

We very much look forward to hearing from you.

Best regards, The Gundog Club