

The Kennelworks Standard

One way to measure every dog: 13 core skills, one 0 to 10 grading scale where every score is defined, and four Core badges from Foundations to Elite. Free to use with any dog. Every trainer on Kennelworks grades against it, and owners see the grades in Handlr.

WHY A STANDARD

“Good recall”, “fully trained” and “bombproof” mean whatever the person saying them wants. Owners can’t tell how far their dog has come, trainers can’t show what their work achieves, and buyers of trained dogs take the seller’s word for it. A 7 on this scale means the same thing whoever grades it.

THE 13 CORE SKILLS

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|------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Name response | 6. Leave it | 11. Settle |
| 2. Sit | 7. Drop | 12. Dog neutrality |
| 3. Down | 8. Wait | 13. Handling and grooming |
| 4. Stay | 9. Loose lead walking | |
| 5. Recall | 10. Greeting people calmly | |

THE CORE BADGES



Foundations

Reliable at home on the first cue, with no lure.

5 or more on every core skill



Intermediate

Reliable with distractions in familiar public places, like class or the local park.

7 or more on every core skill



Advanced

Proofed under high distraction anywhere, at full distance and duration.

9 or more, on two different days



Elite

Proofed anywhere, in new places and for any handler, with no reward needed in the moment.

10 on every core skill, on two different days

- Each badge needs every core skill at its grade or above, and the badge before it.
- Only a trainer’s shared grades from the last 12 months count. Owners’ own grades never do.
- Advanced and Elite need their grades on two different days.
- Every badge has its own code and names the trainer and business that awarded it. It stays with the dog through a sale.

Grade to the standard

Trainers: grade on the built-in guide, award badges with your name on them and give every client Handlr free.
Owners: book a grading session with a Kennelworks trainer to find out where your dog is at.
getkennelworks.com/standard

0 to 10, and every number means something

Score	Level	Cue and help	Reliability	Where and distraction
0	Not started	Not taught yet	No response	–
1	Just started	Behaviour captured or lured now and then	Under half the reps, even with a lure	Home, none
2	Following a lure	Lure in hand	Most reps with the lure	Home, none
3	Learning with a lure	Lure fading to an empty-hand signal; verbal cue being added	About 7 in 10 with the signal	Home, none
4	On cue, patchy	Verbal cue or signal alone, but sometimes needs a repeat or body help	About 7 in 10 on the first cue	Home, none
5	Reliable at home Foundations	First cue, no lure (reward after)	9 in 10 first cue	Home or training room, none; entry-level distance and duration
6	Generalising	First cue	8 in 10 first cue	Two or more familiar places, including outdoors; low distraction
7	Reliable with distractions Intermediate	First cue	9 in 10 first cue	Familiar public places (class, local park); low to medium distraction
8	Reliable out and about	First cue, rewards intermittent	9 in 10 first cue	New places; medium distraction; working distance and duration
9	Proofed Advanced	First cue, rewards delayed or occasional	9 in 10 first cue	Anywhere; high distraction; full distance and duration
10	Proofed anywhere Elite	First cue, no reward needed in the moment	10 in 10 first cue	High distraction in novel places, with another handler too, held on at least two different days

Rules of thumb

- A rep counts when the dog responds to one cue within about two seconds and meets the criteria for that level. A second cue is a failed rep.
- Grade the level the dog meets today, not its best day. A dog that regresses gets a lower grade.
- If a dog meets a level's distraction but not its distance or duration (or the reverse), grade the lower level.
- Corrections, lead pressure or physical help in the moment cap the grade at 4.

Distraction levels

None	Indoors, no one moving, no food or toys loose
Low	Garden or quiet street, a familiar person moving about, a toy on the floor out of reach
Medium	Group class with dogs 3 m+ away, people walking past, food on the floor at a distance, park with dogs in the distance
High	Dogs playing or running close by, joggers and cyclists, food dropped near the dog, wildlife or livestock in view, busy high street, the dog's known triggers

What each Core badge looks like

Skill	Foundations · 5	Intermediate · 7	Advanced · 9	Elite · 10
Name response	Snaps round with eye contact on the first call 9/10 at home from across the room	Orients first call 9/10 in class or the park with dogs and people around	Breaks off sniffing, watching dogs play or a person with food on the first call	Same anywhere, for any handler, every time
Sit	Sits on the first verbal cue 9/10 at home, handler standing, holds 3 s	First cue 9/10 in class or park, handler at 2 m or not facing the dog, holds 10 s	First cue 9/10 with high distraction (dogs playing nearby, food on the floor), at distance, holds 30 s	Same anywhere, any handler, held across days
Down	First verbal cue 9/10 at home, from a sit or stand, holds 5 s	First cue 9/10 in class or park, handler at 2 m, holds 30 s	First cue 9/10 with high distraction, at 10 m+, drops fast	Same anywhere, any handler, held across days
Stay	Holds 30 s at 3 m at home 9/10, released on cue	Holds 1 min at 10 m in class or park 9/10, people and dogs passing at a distance	Holds 3 min at 20 m+ or 1 min out of sight with high distraction (dogs playing, food dropped near)	Same anywhere, any handler, held across days
Recall	Comes on the first cue 9/10 from 10 m at home or garden, arrives within reach for a collar touch	Comes first cue 9/10 from 20 m in a familiar park with dogs and people at a distance; turns away from mild distractions and allows a collar hold	Comes first cue 9/10 off lead from high distraction: out of play with another dog, mid-chase of a thrown toy, away from a person with food	Same anywhere, including off fresh wildlife scent, for any handler, held across days
Leave it	Leaves food or a toy on the floor on the first cue 9/10 at home and walks past on lead	Leaves food, rubbish or a toy on a walk or in class 9/10 on the first cue	Leaves high-value food thrown past it, a ball in flight, or wildlife in view, 9/10	Same anywhere, off lead, any handler, held across days
Drop	Drops a toy on the first cue 9/10 at home, no food shown	Drops a ball mid-play or a found item on a walk 9/10	Drops a tug mid-game, found food or a carcass, with high distraction, 9/10	Same anywhere, any handler, held across days
Wait	Waits 10 s at the bowl, door and car at home 9/10 until released	Waits at kerbs and gates in public places 9/10, released on cue	Waits with high distraction on the other side (dogs, food, people), 9/10	Same anywhere, any handler, held across days
Loose lead walking	Slack lead for a whole walk round the garden or a quiet stretch 9/10 of the time	Slack lead on a normal walk past people and dogs at a distance, 9/10 of the time	Slack lead past high distraction (dogs reacting, food, wildlife, joggers) 9/10	Same anywhere, any handler, held across days
Greeting people calmly	Greets family and familiar visitors with four paws down 9/10 at home	Greets strangers calmly in public 9/10, handler can redirect	Calm with excited people, children and people who encourage jumping, 9/10	Same anywhere, any handler, held across days
Settle	Settles for 15 min at home 9/10 while the handler gets on with things	Settles for 15 min in a café, pub or class while people pass	Settles for 30 min+ in busy places (dogs, children, food dropped), 9/10	Same anywhere, any handler, held across days
Dog neutrality	Walks past calm dogs at 5 m on lead 9/10, takes food, responds to cues	Works in a group class 3 m from other dogs, ignores dogs on a normal walk 9/10	Stays neutral when a dog barks, lunges or runs up to it, 9/10	Same anywhere, any handler, held across days
Handling and grooming	Accepts brushing, nail trims, ear, teeth and paw checks at home 9/10	Accepts a vet-style check from a familiar person in public, 9/10	Accepts restraint, a muzzle if needed, injections and a full groom calmly	Same anywhere, any handler, held across days