

Breeding

What is a Breed Standard?



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Every breed has a written 'Breed Standard' which is like a blueprint for the perfect dog. The breed standard is often very detailed, listing all of the hallmarks of the breed and their importance.

Judges at a Conformation Show have to know the Breed Standard for every breed they judge. During the judging, they are comparing the dogs presented to them with that written description of the perfect example of that breed.

The breed standard will often contain some history about the origins and purpose of the breed along with the characteristics and temperament expected. Then there is a description of the shape and size of the overall dog as well as the relative shape and size of eyes, ears, head, body, tail and legs and feet. It lists how the dog should look both standing and when on the move, and lists the type and texture of the coat along with allowable colours.

Many of these breed features were important because they were directly linked to the dog's ability to perform the function it was bred for and ensured that the dog was sound and fit to work.

Who writes the Breed Standards?

Most breed standards were developed a long time ago when dog showing first started and have remained the same over a hundred years or more. Occasionally a breed standard may have been updated or changed to address issues that breeders felt were important to ensure the soundness of the breed or to make the wording more clear.



Internationally there may be some variation in the Breed Standard used for judging, with the American Kennel Club, the FCI (Federation Cynologique Internationale) and the Kennel Club in the UK sometimes adopting slightly different standards. As a result, the ANKC (Australian National Kennel Club) recognises the 'official' standard as the standard that is accepted in the breed's country of origin.

Where can I find the Breed Standard for my Breed?

The ANKC website hosts the current accepted Australian standard for every breed that is registerable in Australia. You can find them at <http://ankc.org.au/Breed/Index>

Many breeds also have a 'Breed Standard Extension' which is a document written by breeders and breed experts to explain the Standard further. The Breed Standard Extension helps to clarify areas of the standard that may not be easy to understand, and often contains illustrations to help readers understand what the Standard is referring to.