



# Canadian Association for Photographic Art

## Judging Standards Policy

### Implementation and Review

After review and approval by the Board of Directors, this policy takes effect on the date stated below and supersedes all previous judging standards policies.

The Director of the Judging Program will review the policy annually and update it as needed.

Effective: March 17, 2025

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## Introduction

CAPA is committed to maintaining high judging standards for all competitions judged by CAPA Certified Judges or CAPA Apprentice Judges. This policy outlines performance standards guidelines both for judges and the Director of the Judging Program.

The goal of this policy is to:

- a) create consistency in the judging process,
- b) support judges' growth, and
- c) promote a positive environment.

## Definitions

The following definitions apply to this policy:

- CAPA Judging Standards or Judging Standards: All of the criteria outlined in the CAPA Judging Standards Policy document.
- CAPA Certified (CC) Judge: Refers to an individual member of CAPA in good standing who has completed the CAPA Judge Certification Program and been granted the designation by CAPA.
- CAPA Apprentice (CA) Judge: Refers to an individual member of CAPA in good standing who has completed the Basic Training for New Judges (BTNJ) course within the past two years and is enrolled in the CAPA Judge Certification Program.
- CAPA National Judges List: A list of active CAPA Apprentice and CAPA Certified Judges maintained by the Director of the Judging Program. It is used to select judges for CAPA sanctioned competitions and events. The list is also made available for the use of CAPA member clubs when selecting judges for their competitions and events.
- Certification Period: The CAPA Certified Judge designation is valid for a five (5) year period from the date of issue. To maintain certification, CAPA Certified Judges must complete refresher training before the end of the five (5) year period.
- Director of the Judging Program: Person on the Board of Directors who manages the training and certification of CAPA judges, monitors to ensure CAPA's judging standards are maintained and reviews the judging of CAPA competitions.
- Image Evaluation: The process of studying an image to determine its strengths and weaknesses, taking into consideration the Creative Intent, Organizational and Technical components.
- Creative Intent: Creative Intent refers to the characteristics of originality, expressiveness and imagination in communicating a story or eliciting an emotional response that gives the image a strong and lasting impact.



- Organizational Components: Composition/design, use of space, balance of elements, use of light, and image presentation.
- Technical Components: Exposure Triangle (aperture, ISO, shutter speed), sharpness, depth of field, choice and effectiveness of in-camera and post-processing techniques.
- In-Camera Techniques: Any adjustments made directly within the camera during image capture.
- On-Camera Techniques: Utilizing on-camera features and settings for image enhancements.
- Post-Processing Techniques: Editing an image after capture using post-processing software.



## Performance Standards

Judges are expected to meet the following performance standards:

### 1. Compliance with Rules and Procedures:

- Be familiar with the rules and judging criteria for each competition prior to commencing judging.
- Excuse themselves as a judge (this includes declining the request to judge) if the judge feels they lack the knowledge and/or skill to judge the genres of the competition in a fair and professional manner.
- Disclose to the competition organizer if the judge has images in a competition that they are scheduled to judge. Follow the direction of the competition organizer with respect to this.
- Conduct judging in accordance with the rules and judging criteria for the competition, seeking clarification when necessary.
- Advise the Director of the Judging Program if the judge observes other CAPA Apprentice or Certified Judges who appear not to be complying with CAPA policies and procedures.
- Ensure that the hardware, software and procedures used for on-line judging meet the technical viewing standards in accordance with the CAPA On-line Judges Viewing Requirements document, as published on the CAPA website.
- CAPA Certified Judges may not charge a fee for their services. However, some organizations may (at their discretion), reimburse out-of-pocket expenses incurred as a result of an in-person judging event. Some organizations may provide a small honorarium to individuals called upon to judge.

### 2. Judging Knowledge and Quality:

Judges are required to:

- Demonstrate a high-quality of judging skill in accordance with CAPA standards.
- Identify the characteristics of a strong image.
- Demonstrate a knowledge of the characteristics and associated judging criteria for each genre as outlined in the CAPA Judges Reference Manual. (There is no universally agreed upon list of photographic genres. CAPA has compiled a list of photographic genres that are commonly seen in competitions.)
- Demonstrate a balanced assessment, considering first the Creative Intent components, and then how well the Organizational and Technical components support the Creative Intent.
- Adhere to the CAPA accepted judging and scoring criteria as outlined in the CAPA Judges Reference Manual. When an organization specifies a different judging and scoring criteria, judges shall use that organization's criteria.



- Show consistency in scoring and be able to justify that the number of points deducted or assigned to an image is in line with CAPA's philosophy on judging.
- Consistently maintain a maximum scoring variation of +/- 2 points with other CAPA Certified Judges for at least 90% of the images in a competition.

### 3. Photographic Knowledge and Skill:

A judge must be familiar with and competent in the functional use of the following skills and techniques:

- Making use of the Guiding Principles of composition (use of space, placement of elements, leading lines, patterns, textures and colour, etc.) to create a connection with the viewer by telling a story and/or creating an emotional response.
- Camera exposure metering systems (how they work, metering area, and limitations).
- Camera Metering Modes: Auto, Shutter Priority, Aperture Priority, Program, Manual.
- The Exposure Triangle and relationship between shutter speed, aperture, and ISO.
- Equivalent f-stop and shutter speed combinations, bracketing, exposing for highlights or shadows, freezing or blurring movement and controlling depth of field.
- Grey card, 18% reflectance.
- High-key and low-key.
- Colour space, colour gamut, colour temperature – the Kelvin scale.
- White balance.
- Different lighting situations including direction, quality, and strength.
- Effect of lens focal lengths – wide angle through to telephoto.
- Filters – polarizing, neutral density, graduated neutral density.
- Shooting in RAW versus JPG.
- High Dynamic Range (HDR) workup and processing.
- Post-processing using at least one of the more popular software programs (e.g. Adobe Photography Plan products, On1Photo Raw, Capture One, Luminar Neo, PaintShop Pro, Affinity Photo), including the ability to recognize both the positive and negative impact post-processing can have on the final image.

### 4. Image Feedback:

- Comments should be framed in the context of helping to educate the maker and other photographers.
- Whether verbal or written, comments must be clear and concise.
- Feedback must be balanced regarding what works well and include suggestions for improvement.
- Feedback must always include something positive.



- Comments should utilize appropriate photographic terms, defining acronyms the first time they are used.
- Do not overload the maker with a long list of suggestions. Stick to the one or two suggestions that are likely to result in the greatest improvement if followed.

#### **5. Adaptability and Flexibility:**

- Rules and criteria vary between organizations. Become familiar with, and adapt to, the rules and judging criteria of the competition being judged.
- On arrival for a live judging event, take the time to become familiar with the room setup and any judging tools used by the organization. Ask for assistance when needed.
- For online judging, take the time to become familiar with the judging software and recording tools before commencing judging. Ask for assistance when needed.
- Be open to learning new photographic skills both in-camera and post-processing.
- Demonstrate willingness to adapt to changing trends and processes.
- Become knowledgeable with new technologies and tools that enhance the photographic process.

#### **6. Professionalism and Respect:**

- In their judging activities, judges are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the Canadian Association for Photographic Art Code of Conduct.
- Conduct judging in a manner that supports CAPA Objectives
- Maintain confidentiality and discretion in sensitive matters.

## Responsibilities

Judges are responsible for upholding the standards outlined in this policy. Failure to comply may result in remedial action, up to and including termination of Certified status.

CAPA Certified Judges and CAPA Apprentice Judges are responsible for:

- Complying with the CAPA Judging Standards Policy and other guiding documents related to the CAPA Judging Program.
- Keeping their CAPA membership up-to-date and in good standing.
- CAPA Certified Judges must successfully complete the recertification requirements within five years of their initial certification or recertification date.
- CAPA Apprentice Judges must successfully complete the Judge Certification Program within two years of entering the program.



CAPA Certified Judges who are conducting an evaluation on a CAPA Apprentice Judge are responsible for:

- Completing the Judge Evaluation Report in a timely manner and forwarding it to the Director of the Judging Program. Generally this will be within 14 days after judging.
- Review the evaluation report with the CAPA Apprentice Judge, giving them an opportunity to ask questions and if they wish, add their comments.

The Director of the Judging Program is responsible for:

- Providing clear communication and training on this policy.
- Setting performance expectations and providing feedback.
- Maintaining a process for judges to offer suggestions or raise concerns.
- Monitoring CAPA competitions to identify trends or anomalies that may require an in-depth review.
- Conducting periodic evaluation of individual active judges to ensure they are judging in accordance with the CAPA Judging Standards.
- Providing detailed guidelines related to the process of evaluating CAPA Apprentice Judges.
- Monitoring the progress of CAPA Apprentice Judges in the Certification Program.
- On behalf of CAPA, issuing, and when appropriate, revoking the certification status of judges.
- Addressing performance concerns and taking appropriate action.
- In cooperation with the Director of Education, provide training to judges including, but not limited to, a Basic Training Course for new judges, Refresher Training for CAPA Certified Judges and additional advanced training or reference material as required.

## Remedial Action

From time to time, there will be situations where an individual is found to be not following the CAPA Judging Standards. In order to maintain the integrity of the program, it is important that the concerns are discussed with the individual and appropriate corrective action is taken.

In order to determine the most appropriate action, the Director of the Judging Program will review the judging performance concern with the judge to identify the contributing factors. From this, the appropriate Remedial Action will be decided, which may include:

- a. No further action. Being aware of the concern may be all the judge needs to correct it.
- b. Creating a training plan that may include self-study, one-on-one coaching and/or practice exercises to address specific judging concerns.



- c. If contributing factors relate to the Judging Program, changes to procedures, communication practices and/or training may be implemented.
- d. Follow-up monitoring to confirm that the remedial action was effective.

If after completion of remedial action for an individual judge, it is found that their judging ability is consistently not conforming to the rules and guidelines as set out in CAPA's Judging Standard Policy, the Director of Judging Program, in consultation with the President of CAPA may suspend and/or revoke the CAPA Certified Judge designation or remove a CAPA Apprentice Judge from the Judge Certification Program.

## Monitoring of Judging in CAPA Competitions

The monitoring program is a means of maintaining the Judging Standards and to provide ongoing improvement to the Judging Program by observing the judging process as it applies to CAPA competitions. The program is carried out in cooperation with the Director of Competitions, and monitoring is conducted by the Director of the Judging Program or a named designate.

The monitoring program has three elements:

1. The Director of Competitions provides each judge of a CAPA competition with an analysis report on both the competition's results and judges' scoring, to assist them in self-evaluation of their judging performance. This analysis report will also go to the Director of the Judging Program.
2. The review of all CAPA competitions in order to ensure that Judging Standards are being maintained and identifying trends or anomalies in judging that may require a more in-depth review.
3. Conducting periodic evaluations of individual active judges to ensure that Judging Standards are being maintained. Offering feedback to help individuals refine their judging skills and identify training needs. These are conducted randomly or when a potential problem has been identified.

As and when warranted, individual CAPA Judges will be contacted by the Director of the Judging Program to discuss their judging performance. This is to determine whether or not they are reflecting an up-to-date awareness with the art and craft of photography, are fully knowledgeable with CAPA Judging Standards, and are maintaining these standards.