



B **Barking**
B **Buds**
Companion
Grades

Client Information Pack



B Barking **B** Buds Companion Grades

Welcome to the All-New Barking Buds Companion Grades!

Our Companion Grades programme is designed to guide you and your dog through a rewarding journey of growth and development. Each level offers clear, achievable goals that not only enhance your dog's obedience but also help shape them into a well-mannered, confident, and happy member of your family.

Whether you're just starting out or looking to strengthen your dog's skills, these grades provide structure, motivation, and a sense of accomplishment for both you and your furry companion.



How It Works

All dogs participating in the Barking Buds Companion Grades program will progress through each grade in sequence. Training can be completed as part of our structured classes or independently at your own pace.

Once you feel your dog is ready, you'll have the opportunity to demonstrate your progress during one of our scheduled Assessment Days. Much like the Canine Good Citizen Scheme, these assessments evaluate your dog's ability to complete all exercises required for each grade.

However, what sets Barking Buds apart is our inclusive approach. We encourage all dogs and owners to take part—regardless of whether your dog is nervous around other dogs or people. We understand that many dogs are highly trained but may need extra support with confidence and social exposure. If you're unsure whether this program is suitable for your dog, please don't hesitate to speak with one of our qualified trainers.

Booking & Assessment Details

When you're ready to be assessed, you can book your place on an Assessment Day via our website: www.barkingbuds.co.uk.

Pricing

£20 per grade

This fee covers:

- Your assessment session with a Barking Buds trainer
- A certificate and rosette upon passing
- Personalised feedback if your dog does not pass

Assessment sessions typically last between 60 to 90 minutes, depending on the number of dogs participating.

If you'd like to attempt multiple grades in one session, you are welcome to do so. However, please be aware that the fee is charged per grade.

For example, if you choose to take Grade 1 and Grade 2 during the same session, the cost will be £40.



Expectations

To ensure consistency and fairness across our Companion Grades program, all dogs must successfully complete and pass each grade in order before progressing to the next level—even if the owner believes their dog is capable of performing at a higher grade.

Participant Requirements

- Minimum Age: Participants must be 9 years or older to apply.
- Ages 9–16: An adult must be present throughout the full assessment for any handler under the age of 16.
 - Handlers in this age group must be able to maintain full control of the dog independently.
 - If a child requires support due to additional needs, please contact the trainer or assessor in advance so appropriate accommodations can be made.

Dogs with Special Considerations

If your dog is nervous, reactive, or requires special handling, please notify your trainer or assessor prior to your assessment. We are committed to creating a safe, supportive, and positive environment for every dog and handler. With advance notice, we can make the necessary accommodations to help ensure a stress-free experience.

Assessment Retakes

If your dog does not pass an assessment:

- You will be required to pay the full assessment fee again for any retakes.
- There is no limit to the number of times a grade can be attempted.
- We highly recommend that both you and your dog feel confident with all exercises before booking an assessment.

If you're unsure about any aspect of the grade requirements, please don't hesitate to reach out—we're here to help.

Companion Grades Portal

We will soon be launching an online portal that outlines the requirements and expectations for each exercise in the Companion Grades. This will serve as a valuable resource to help you prepare and track your progress.

Get in Touch

If you have any questions or would like more information, feel free to contact us:

✉ Email: beth@barkingbuds.co.uk

🌐 Website: www.barkingbuds.co.uk

■ WhatsApp: 07842 516667



General Rules for the Assessment

To ensure a fair, respectful, and supportive environment for all participants, the following rules apply during every Companion Grade assessment:

- **Positive Atmosphere:** Owners are expected to be kind, respectful, and supportive of one another throughout the assessment process.
- **Treat Handling:** Treats must not be held in your hand during any exercise. We strongly recommend using a treat pouch or bag for ease of access while maintaining compliance.
- **No Luring or Guiding:** Physically luring or guiding your dog into a behaviour (e.g., using a treat to lead them into a sit) is not permitted.
- **First Cue Only:** All exercises must be completed on the first verbal or physical cue.
- **Respect Personal Space:** Please ensure your dog maintains an appropriate distance from other dogs at all times. It is your responsibility to prevent your dog from encroaching on another dog's space during the assessment.
- **Respect for Assessors:** The assessor's decision is final.
 - Disrespectful, intimidating, or rude behaviour towards assessors or staff will not be tolerated.
 - If an assessor feels they are being treated inappropriately, you may be asked to leave the assessment immediately, and no refunds will be issued.

These guidelines are in place to ensure a smooth and enjoyable experience for all dogs and handlers. Thank you for helping us maintain a positive and professional environment.

Get in Touch

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Assessed in All Grades

These components will be assessed at every grade level to ensure that your dog is comfortable with having their basic care and handling needs met. This includes your dog being willing to accept routine interactions such as grooming, handling, and general care—key elements in promoting their overall well-being and strengthening the human-animal bond.

Exercises

1. Handling

Dog allows owner to stroke and wipe down the whole of the dog's body. This includes paws, legs, eyes, ears, mouth and tail. Assessor will ask if there are areas your dog doesn't like being touched.

2. Appropriate Equipment

The dog's equipment is clean, and sturdy (not a risk of snapping). Haltis, slip leads, and other aversive equipment will not be accepted and you will not be able to take the grade.

3. Tags

The dog has a legal tag with the owners name and postcode on. Please follow Kennel Club guidelines for this.

4. Health

The dog is in good health, clean, and groomed. There are no signs of distress or illness.

5. Appropriate Greeting

The dog can say hi to the assessor/a person whilst keeping all paws on the floor, no mouthing or any other behaviour deemed inappropriate or dangerous.



Grade 1

Exercise 1: Sit

Dog will put their bottom onto the floor on first cue (can be hand signal or verbal cue).

Exercise 2: Lie

Dog bends elbows and legs to lie down on the floor on first cue (can be a hand signal or verbal cue).

Exercise 3: Stand

Starting in a sit or a lie, dog stands up with all four paws on the floor and does not walk forwards. They do this on first cue (hand signal or verbal cue)

Exercise 4: Boundaries

Dog lies with all four paws on the bed/blanket for 30 seconds on first attempt. No reward given until after the time has elapsed. No 'wait' or 'stay' verbal or visual cue to be used.

Exercise 5: Stay

Dog to stay in a sit or lie position for 30 seconds whilst owner is at 1m. Dog must stay in chosen position (Hand signal or verbal cue).

Exercise 6: Loose Lead Walking

Dog walks by owner's side with a loose lead for 1 minute. Intermittent rewarding accepted. No treat in hand.

Exercise 7: Doorway Manners

Dog to walk through a doorway in a calm and steady manner. Owner to come to door way, dog to sit and wait whilst owner moves through and then get called through to sit at owner's side again.

Exercise 8: Leave It

Food on the floor and the dog must leave it on owner's cue. Owner to reward the dog after they have left the food. Dog on lead. Can use their own food.



Grade 1

Exercise 9: Touch

Dog to touch the owner's hand on cue. The hand is placed at at same level as the dog's head. Reward after behaviour.

Exercise 10: Eyes on Me

When given the cue, dog looks at the owner for 5 seconds. A hand signal can be used for this grade.

Exercise 11: Recall to Name

The assessor holds the dog. When the owner calls the dog, they recall immediately and sit in front or at the side of the owner.

Exercise 12: Middle

Dog moves in between the owner's legs on cue. Hand signal is allowed but luring is not permitted.

Exercise 13: Two Front Feet

When cued (hand signal or verbal) the dog puts their two front paws onto a step or raised object. Luring is not permitted.

Exercise 14: Cone Game

The dog puts their nose into the cone when it is presented to them without hesitation.

Exercise 15: Vehicle Manners

The dog is able to wait before being released from the car whether that is jumping out, being carried, or using a ramp.

If the owner owns a car. If the owner does not own a car, see with bus - unedited videos of this are accepted, but it must clearly show the dog walking on and off the bus.



Grade 2

Exercise 1: Boundaries

Dog lies with all four paws on the bed/blanket for 2 minutes, the owner at 1m. No reward to be given until after the time has elapsed. No 'wait' or 'stay' verbal or visual cue allowed after the first cue.

Exercise 2: Send to Boundaries

Dog goes to it's boundary when cued from a 2m distance. Must end with all four paws on the bed - dog can finish in a sit, lie or stand.

Exercise 3: Wait/Stay

Dog to stay in a sit or lie position for 2 minutes whilst owner is at 2m. Dog can change position during the 2 minutes.

Exercise 4: Loose Lead Walking

Dog walks by owner's side with a loose lead for 5 minutes on a road side path. Intermittent rewarding accepted. No treat in hand. Adding in 1 turn. Dog to be forward/owner focused.

Exercise 5: Recall Past Distractions

The dog will sit and wait at 10m away from the owner. The dog will return to the owner past the distraction of a dog or person and sit in front or to the side of their owner.

Exercise 6: Recall to Middle

Dog to sit and wait whilst owner moves 10m away. Dog recalls to owner and immediately enters middle position. Hand signal permitted.

Exercise 7: Leave it

Dog walks past the food without a cue needing to be given. On lead and can be rewarded at the end.

Exercise 8: Drop

Dog and owner to play with toy for 10 seconds. Owner to let go of the toy and ask the dog to drop. This can be dropped onto floor or to hand but toy cannot be grabbed from dog. If dog is not toy driven you can use a fetch to drop.



Grade 2

Exercise 9: Emergency Turn/Lets Go

The dog and owner are to walk in a straight line and cue a 180-degree turn. The dog follows without pulling on the lead, and tension is not caused by the owner.

Exercise 10: Emergency Stop

The dog will sit and wait at 10m away from the owner. The owner will call the dog and stop them at around 5m away. Owner will then move towards the dog and reward.

Exercise 11: Touch

Dog distracted at 5m distance and, when cued, comes to owner to touch hand with their nose.

Exercise 12: Chin Rest

The dog rests their chin on the owner's hand, leg, or surface for 5 seconds.

Exercise 13: Back Up

The dog when cued by the owner can move straight backwards. For this grade we are looking for 3m. Hand signal permitted.



Grade 3

Exercise 1: Boundaries Out of Sight

The dog to have all four paws on the bed whilst the owner goes out of sight (min 3m) for 2 minutes.

Exercise 2: Send to Boundaries

The dog goes to the bed on cue and waits for 3 minutes. All 4 paws must be on bed and dog must be in a lie position. No lie cue accepted.

Exercise 3: Leave It

One item of food and one toy placed on the floor and the dog must leave it on owner's cue. Owner to reward the dog after they have left items. The dog is off lead. More interesting items than previous grades.

Exercise 4: Emergency Stop

The dog will sit and wait at 20m away from the owner. The owner will call the dog and stop them at around 10m away. Owner will then move towards the dog and reward.

Exercise 5: Loose Lead Walking

Dog walks by the owners side with a loose lead for 10 minutes on a roadside path. Including a wait and cross the road as well as 2 turns. Intermittent rewarding permitted. Dog must be forward/owner focused.

Exercise 6: Wait/Stay

Dog to stay in a sit or lie position for 3 minutes whilst owner sits, stands and moves around. Dog must stay in chosen position.

Exercise 7: Muzzle Acceptance

A similar exercise to the Cone Game in Grade 2. Dog to put nose in muzzle and allow it to be clipped on and taken off again. It does not need to be kept on.

Exercise 8: Nose Target

Dog touches a round target with their nose that is not attached to the owner. Dog must not use their paw.



Grade 3

Exercise 9: Recall Away From Distractions

Dog will be interacting with either another dog or person at 10m distance and comes away as soon as the owner calls them. Dog finishes by sitting in front or to side of owner.

Exercise 10: Fetch/Retrieve

Dog to start by the owner's side, waits whilst the toy is placed 5m away, and fetches it back to the owner's hand. Toy will be placed not thrown.

Exercise 11: Chin Rest

The dog rests their chin on the owner's hand, leg, or surface for 10 seconds.

Exercise 12: Vehicle Manners

The dog is able to wait before being released from the car whether that is jumping out, being carried or using a ramp. The dog is to stay within a 1m radius of their owner.

If the owner owns a car, if not, to be seen with a bus through video submission. The video submission must clearly show the dog walking on and off the bus.

More Grades Coming Soon!

Get in Touch

If you have any questions or would like more information, feel free to contact us:

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UPCOMING ASSESSMENT DAYS 2025

8th November 12-2pm

20th December 12-2pm

At the Barking Buds Training Field.