



Character Assessment Test Regulations

(January 2025)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

1. GENERAL

- 1.1. Preparation for the assessment
- 1.2. Character assessor
- 1.3. Procedure
- 1.4. Requirements for participation
- 1.5. Minimum number of participants
- 1.6. Test Days and Registration

2. EQUIPMENT

3. CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

- 3.1. Impartiality
- 3.2. Social behavior
- 3.3. Noise sensitivity
- 3.4. Confidence with movement
- 3.5. Play and prey instinct
- 3.6. Basic character

General abbreviations used in these regulations:

AI	Assessor Instruction
BDTA	Breeding Disposition Test Assessor
W-B	Character Assessor
USCA	United Schutzhund Clubs of America
USCA HO	USCA Head Office
TR	Testing Regulations

USCA implements these regulations for the examination and classification of each German Shepherd Dog to be used for breeding in a character assessment. Licensed character assessor judges shall objectively record the assessments and the dog presented receives an assessment as an annex to the pedigree. The Test Regulations allow for one type of assessor within the meaning of the USCA Judging Regulations:

1. Character Assessors (W-B)

It is possible for a person with the appropriate expertise to be appointed as a W-B and as a Breeding Disposition Test Assessor (B-ZAP) for both activities, however, ZAP is not offered by USCA and therefore, not included in these regulations at this time. An IGP test is not a substitute replacement for a character assessment.

CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

1. GENERAL

1. Preparation for the assessment

The dates shall be coordinated in the Region and assigned in agreement with the USCA Head Office.

The club shall inform the regional clubs in advance of the appointment of a head assessor and an email address for the entries.

The assessors to be used shall be coordinated by the club and appointed after consultation with the Regional Director and the USCA HO.

The nationwide dates of the character assessments shall be published in the USCA Magazine and on the USCA website, events pages, along with the details of the assessor and head assessor.

Character assessments shall always be carried out in public.

2. Character assessors

Each W-B shall arrive at the appointment with their own assistant, or an assistant can be appointed by the hosting club. This assistant must be experienced and will actively accompany the character assessor.

The USCA HO has the possibility to send an additional character assessor to attend the appointment.

3. Procedure

For an objective, uniform assessment of character, it is necessary to carry out the entire procedure in a standardized manner and in the order of specified stations.

The order of the procedure and the nature of the equipment for all character assessments are therefore specified below.

Structure of the character assessment:

1. Impartiality check
2. Social behavior
3. Noise sensitivity
4. Confidence with movement
5. Play and prey instinct
6. Basic character

This is followed directly by a public discussion of the behavior shown during the entire character assessment.

4. Requirements for participation

All German Shepherds registered in the USCA breed registry or annex register or in a breed registry or annex register recognized by USCA and which can be identified by a chip number or tattoo are eligible to participate.

The participating dog must not be younger than nine months and not yet thirteen months old at the time of the character assessment.

The owner/handler must be a member of USCA or a member of a WUSV organization in order to participate in the character assessment.

Each handler is allowed to present a maximum of two dogs at each character assessment.

5. Minimum number of participants

The minimum number of participants is four dogs with four different handlers; the maximum number per day and assessor is sixteen dogs.

6. Test days and registration

As a rule, test days should take place at the weekend and on public holidays. Friday tests may be applied for in conjunction with a Saturday or Sunday.

Fridays may only be approved if more dogs are entered on Saturday than can be shown.

Days before weekday public holidays may not be approved.

The public holiday regulations of the respective states must be observed.

The closing date for entries 12:00 midnight at the end of the day 15 days before the event. The local club organizing the event shall send the entry forms to the USCA Breed Registry Office immediately after the closing date (on the following day, 14 days before the event). The organizer must inform the assessor of the number of dogs entered. The participants shall be published in SV-DOxS by the SV Breed Registry Office and/or in the USCA online database by the USCA Breed Registry Office.

2. EQUIPMENT

The following equipment is to be kept available by the club in charge of the character assessment.

- Assessment sheets pre-filled in.
- At the beginning of the assessment, the order of the dogs shall be determined. The fixed procedure shall be announced on a noticeboard.
- The handlers must wear a start number during the assessment.
- A public address system is desirable for public discussion of the dogs but not required.

For the character assessment stations the following equipment is required:

1. Impartiality check:

- Chip reader
- Breed survey measurement stick
- Measuring platform
- Table to store the W-B's documents

2. Social behavior

- Ball on a rope, Bringsel with loop, chew tug, etc. (to be brought by the handler)

3. Noise sensitivity

- Chainsaw (without blade)
- Chain (stable iron chain, approx. 150 cm)
- Sheet metal (approx. 100 x 100 cm)
- Starter pistol 6 mm

4. Confidence with movement

- Wobble table (industrial pallet with a smooth surface (120 x 100 cm) with fixed 10 cm round timber in the middle, underneath the pallet)
- 5 standard beer garden tables or build tables with same measurements

- Climbing aid (fixed beer garden table or similar with non-slip base as a climbing aid)

5. Play and prey instinct

- A toy known to the dog (ball on a ribbon, chewing sausage etc.)
- Fruit crate made of perforated plastic or similar.
- Room with a smooth floor (tiled floor approx. 30 m²)
- Metal food bowl
- Place where the dog can be secured (post, fence or tree, which must not be on the training grounds).
- 1.5 m leash (better: a thin steel chain with a carabiner)

3. CHARACTER ASSESSEMENT

1. IMPARTIALITY CHECK

- **Exercise 1 - ID check**

The handler reports with their dog on a leash to have its chip checked. The W-B checks the dog's identity by means of a chip reader. The W-B records and describes the dog's behavior during the identification check.

- **Exercise 2 - Dental check**

The handler shows the dog's teeth to the W-B or their representative. It is, of course, also possible to delegate the active part of the dental check to the W-B or their representative. In this case, the W-B records and describes the dog's behavior during the dental check. The dental status is not entered in the assessment sheet and the result is not recorded.

- **Exercise 3 - Measurement on platform**

The handler leads their dog onto the platform. The dog must stand freely and not restrained. The handler is permitted to hold the dog. The W-B or their representative measures the height at withers and the depth of chest. These values are not recorded. If the dog is male, the testicles are also checked. The W-B records and describes the dog's behavior during the measurement and the testicle check, the latter of which is obligatory for male dogs.

2. SOCIAL BEHAVIOR

- **Exercise 4 - Dog/handler relationship**

The handler approaches the assistant standing alone at a distance of about 15 metres. The handler unleashes their dog on command and moves casually with the dog. Voice commands to call the dog are permitted. The dog's bond with its handler is recorded and described by the W-B.

- **Exercise 5 - Behavior in a group of people**

After exercise 4, the dog is called by its handler and leashed. The handler hands over their dog to the assistant on a leash and moves away behind the group of at least eight people. On command, the dog is called by its handler. The assistant unleashes the dog and releases it. The dog should move happily and directly through the group to its handler. The handler then moves casually through the moving group with their dog still following freely. The dog's behavior is recorded and described by the W-B.

- **Exercise 6 - Encounter with an unknown dog**

For this exercise, the next team should be ready. The handler walks their dog on a leash to the left past an unknown dog two times at a distance of about 3 metres. The other dog is also on a leash. The W-B records and describes the dog's behavior during the encounters with the unknown dog.

3. NOISE SENSITIVITY

- **Exercise 7 - Noise source: chainsaw, without blade**

The handler goes to a designated position and remains there with the dog on a leash. The assistant walks neutrally around the dog at a distance of about 4 meters with a motor (chainsaw without blade) running at different speeds and then switches off the motor and place it on the ground if necessary. The handler then goes with their dog to the source of the noise. The dog's behavior in relation to the noise source is recorded and described by the W-B.

- **Exercise 8 - Noise source: chain**

The handler goes to a designated position (about 5 metres away from a metal base) and remains there with their dog on a loose leash. The dog faces the W-B. The assistant should 5 PO ZAP - Wesensbeurteilung Fassung 2021_E have previously positioned a chain in such a way that it falls on to a sheet metal plate on command. As soon as the chain falls, the handler and their dog go directly towards the source of the noise. Verbal assistance during the approach by the handler is permitted. The

dog's behavior in relation to the chain as a noise source is recorded and described by the W-B.

- **Exercise 9 - Shot sensitivity**

The handler takes the dog on a leash to a designated position and stays there. The dog must remain standing on a loose leash with its handler. The assistant fires two shots with a 6 mm starter pistol at an interval of 5 seconds. The dog's behavior in relation to the shot as a noise source is recorded and described by the W-B.

4. CONFIDENCE WITH MOVEMENT

- **Exercise 10 - Wobble table**

The handler goes with their dog on a leash to the prepared wobble table, which consists of an industrial pallet with a smooth surface. The dog should stand freely on the pallet on a loose leash. The assistant moves the pallet with their feet accordingly. The dog's confidence with movement and motor skills are recorded and described by the W-B.

- **Exercise 11 - Target on wobble table**

After exercise 10, the dog is offered its motivational object by the handler. The object was given to them by the assistant at the beginning of the exercise. The assistant moves the pallet in the same way as in exercise 10. The W-B records and describes how intensively and with what motor skills the dog engages with its motivational object under stress.

- **Exercise 12 - Climbing/height sensitivity**

The handler goes with their dog on a leash to the stairway. The handler leads their dog on a loose leash up the stairway on to the arranged tables (total length of the set-up, without stairway, L-shaped: 5 tables, approx. 11 metres, width of tables approx. 70 cm, 10 cm gap in front of the last table). When the dog reaches the end, it turns and goes back. The dog may jump off or be carried. During the exercise only verbal assistance is permitted. The dog's behavior with regard to its motor skills and lack of sensitivity to height is recorded and described by the W-B.

5. PLAY AND PREY INSTINCT

- **Exercise 13 - Play with the handler**

The handler goes with their dog on a leash to the designated position near the assistant. The assistant gives the motivational object to the handler. The dog is taken

off leash and the handler plays with their dog. The W-B records and describes the intensity of the dog's play with its handler.

- **Exercise 14 - Play with the assistant**

After exercise 14, the handler throws the motivational object to the assistant. The assistant motivates the dog to play with them. The assistant may also moderately block the motivational object. The assistant gives the dog the opportunity to bite and, after briefly preying with the motivational object, leaves it to the dog. The W-B records and describes the intensity of the dog's play with the assistant.

- **Exercise 15 - Inclination as a retriever**

The dog is handed over to the assistant on a leash at the designated place. The handler goes with their motivational object to the prepared, fixed vegetable crate and places the motivational object under it. The motivational object must be completely covered by the crate. The handler goes to the assistant to get the dog back. The dog is taken off leash and released by the handler. Verbal aid is not permitted. The W-B records and describes the intensity of the dog's efforts to get the motivational object.

- **Exercise 16 - Confidence with movement on a smooth surface**

The handler goes with their dog on a leash into the prepared clubhouse. A firm, smooth floor (e.g. tiles, laminate) is mandatory. The handler moves through the room with their dog off leash following the W-B's commands. In this phase, background noise is produced by dropping a metal food bowl. The dog's confidence with movement, boldness and motor skills are recorded and described by the W-B.

- **Exercise 17 - Play and prey instinct on a smooth surface**

The handler plays with their dog briefly on command and throws the motivational object into a concealed corner of the clubhouse. They then release the dog on command. When the dog has found the object, the handler takes it from the dog and hands it to the assistant. The assistant briefly motivates the dog, held by the handler, to play and hides the object in a concealed, not freely accessible place in the clubhouse. As soon as the assistant is back with the handler, the handler releases the dog. The intensity of playing and searching for the motivational object is recorded and described by the W-B.

6. BASIC CHARACTER

- **Exercise 18 - Behavior when left alone**

After exercise 17, the handler goes with their dog on a leash to the designated position (not on the exercise grounds), ties their dog to a leash about 1.50 metres long and leaves the area. The handler must be out of sight. No other people may be in the dog's field of vision. After the dog has been left alone for at least five minutes, the W-B moves neutrally towards the dog, passes it neutrally and returns to their basic position. The handler collects their dog when instructed and puts its leash back on. The W-B records and describes the behavior of the dog left alone. The W-B then publicly discusses the behavior shown throughout the character assessment. If the W-B terminates the character assessment in the dog's best interest, the W-B must document this on the assessment sheet and submit it to the SV Home Office and/or the USCA Home Office. Termination in the dog's best interest may also take place in the event of injury or illness of the dog. It is at the discretion of the W-B to terminate the character assessment. The dog may then be presented at the next possible appointment. If the dog is older than 13 months, the assessment may be repeated within three months without any special permission. Repeating at a later date requires special permission from the SV and/or USCA Breed Registry Office, which is subject to a fee.

3. Assessment Documents

Each participant receives an assessment sheet and, if desired, a certificate after successfully completing the character assessment. The Character Assessor enters the character assessment into the scorebook. If participation was successful, an additional stamp is placed on the first page of the pedigree. The results must be reported by the assessor to the SV and/or USCA Breed Registry within seven days. The results are published by the SV Breed Registry in SV-DOxS and/or by the USCA Breed Registry in the USCA database.