

# Ealdormere Judges' Handbook

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## 1) The Importance of Arts & Science (A&S) Competition in Our Society

The Society for Creative Anachronism, Inc. (SCA) is an Educational Not-for-Profit organization devoted to the study of the Middle Ages and Renaissance.

Our "Arts & Sciences" are the crafts, skills, and technologies recreated for use within the SCA or purely for historical interest. Participants research, study, and practice these skills and then share their results with others. You will see them in use and on display at our events - the recipes used for a feast, the armor worn in combat, the scrolls presented in Court, the costumes (garb) we wear, and the other artifacts we engage with.

Part of our mandate as a not-for-profit is to confirm the validity of research presented to the membership.

## 2) Why People Enter A&S Competition

- a) To inspire others.
- b) Some people are naturally competitive and it is a chance to compete.
- c) A&S activities are often done alone, in the private sphere, so A&S competition is a way of sharing information about current projects and allows artisans to get to know one another.
- d) Some people require feedback on different areas of research or skill, and talking to judges can provide external feedback and sometimes get the artist the in touch with new information and resources
- e) Some A&S Activities are a way to show support for the Crown or Coronet (ie largess tournaments.)
- f) Some people enter because they are strongly encouraged to do so by the Crown, Coronet, or teachers.
- g) A&S provides dedicated time to talk to judges about something the participant is passionate about.
- h) Requirement for Crown Entry or other style of tournament.

## 3) Why Are You a Judge?

You were asked to judge because you are seen as someone who can talk to invested, nervous people with knowledge, tact, and kindness.

Other reasons:

- A. SCA qualifications:
  - a. Member of the Crown or Their Heirs.
  - b. A Laurel or Crucible, especially if known for a particular subject area.
  - c. A member of the Order of the Chivalry or Master of Defense who are well known for related historical or hands on subject matter.
- B. Professional or 'Real World' qualifications, for example a professional potter, chef, farmer, costumer, wood worker, musician, or other modern subject matter expert.
- C. Understanding of Research Methods and/or Scientific method.
- D. Keen sponsor of particular arts or activities.

## 4) Job of the Judge

Part of our mandate as a not-for-profit is to confirm the validity of research presented to the membership.

Each judge is expected to:

- 1) Show up promptly for assigned judges meetings, or assigned judging time slot.
- 2) Expected to understand expectations of the particular tournament as set up by the person in charge of the tournament that day (for example Market-Day Theme Tournament vs Largess Tournament.)
- 3) Expect to read any associated documentation that the artisan has produced as part of their display.
- 4) Complete and submit any required comment sheets, score cards, or verbal reports in a timely fashion.

Comment or feedback sheets are designed to compliment an artist on a job well done, or give focus to improve skills in the future. This is your chance to mentor.

**All tournaments that require judges require feedback or comments.**

Items to include in your comment sheets:

- a) Your contact information, if you want to continue talking about this or similar projects, or be available for questions.
- b) References such as web sites, books, or periodicals related to the artist's work which they might have missed when researching for the current project, and that you know to be excellent sources.

- c) Names of other members of the SCA who could add quality information about the subject matter you are judging.
- d) The things you loved about the project.
- e) Reasons for a very low score in a given area on the judges form, and how to improve in that area for next time.

*Nota Bene:* Never put someone down or destroy someone's enthusiasm.

Scores are used for prize awarding. Scores are trying to give an air of impartiality to comparing apples, oranges, and squid while trying to pick a 'winner' of the tournament.

**Not all tournaments require scores.**

**Current Rubric for Judges Form:** <https://goo.gl/forms/bOdKiPaQhhyUfE402>

The following explains the reasons behind the questions on the Kingdom A&S Judging Form, to help judges make more informed decisions on the qualities of the entry.

*q1: Quality of references and documentation.*

0: No references and no documentation

10: Many primary references properly cited

Museums are an excellent source for photos and research materials, many of which are available online, for free. There are guilds in Ealdormere whose sole purpose is to help with research projects that the artist can reach out to.

Basic documentation has to answer

- 1) What is it? (For example: Helm)
- 2) Where did you find one like it? (For example: Chocolate Museum, Smithfalls)
- 3) Why did you make it? (For example: I needed a new helm.)
- 4) Why did you make it the way you did? (For example: I have a small apartment and no forge so I 3D printed it.)
- 5) What time period is it from? (For example: 1540, England)
- 6) How did you make it? (For example: I modeled it out of clay and soy beans and then....)

Citation examples for references:

<https://www.englishclub.com/writing/plagiarism-citation.htm>

[http://www.umuc.edu/library/libhow/apa\\_examples.cfm](http://www.umuc.edu/library/libhow/apa_examples.cfm)

[http://www.umuc.edu/library/libhow/mla\\_examples.cfm](http://www.umuc.edu/library/libhow/mla_examples.cfm)

There is no preferred citation format for the references over others, (ie APA over MLA) but it must be possible to look up the references listed given the information provided. "Google it" is not adequate.

*q2: Ingredients or Materials*

0-3: Modern materials; unknown materials; store bought kit

10: Artist produced materials; all period materials and ingredients

It is truly impressive to grow the flax for your weaving project. It is less impressive to use a knitting machine to make a polyester hat.

Judges beware, medieval people did buy items for use, and were often unlikely to make every piece on a project (ie a gown) from scratch. Don't mark down a silk tunic because it wasn't handspun.

Using modern materials shouldn't automatically be a markdown in score. The artist knowing what the medieval equivalent would be, and being able to explain why they made the modern choice they did, should be reflected in a better score. Some materials are cost prohibitive, unavailable, or dangerous, and can be legitimate factors for a modern choice. (For example, using lead paint is discouraged from competition.) You as a judge have to balance that information and reflect it in your score.

*q3: Technology used*

0-3: Blender instead of pestle; sewing machine, drill instead of hand tools; 3D printer instead of soap stone mold

10: Period hand tools, medieval technologies used in production

The artifact isn't the only consideration for judges, how the artist got there, the journey, and technique is a large part of the joy and skill base of creation. The research into 'how they did it' is important.

Many of our demos have our artists cooking on fires, spinning with a drop spindle, or carving bone by hand. This category reflects this more 'in persona' area of study.

This is a category that a failed or broken project can really shine in. (For example the book press that exploded while making a book, or a recipe that turned manky because the period recipe book was missing assumed information.)

*q4: Method Explained*

0: No method section in documentation

10: Clearly explains what they did, how they did it, order of steps, clearly shown in documentation

This section is to recreate someone's project. Recipes can be an excellent example:

*Plunge asparagus in boiling water and cook until done. Pour a little oil and lemon on and serve.*

Versus:

- 1) *Break tough ends of asparagus off each spear.*
- 2) *Place saucepan full of water onto a high heat, and bring to a boil.*
- 3) *Plunge asparagus spears into boiling water for 30 seconds, and then remove from heat and drain.*
- 4) *Place hot asparagus onto a platter.*
- 5) *Squeeze the juice of one lemon and 1 tbsp of olive oil onto hot spears and serve.*

Method section should be clear and easy to understand, even if you've never made a similar project before. The order of events should make sense to you as a reader.

*q5: Wow factor and execution*

0-3: Poorly executed; item is burnt; item fits poorly; joins are uneven.

10: Full of awe over entry: ex: Dress fits and drapes wonderfully; food tastes amazing; cabochon is even and glowing.

The "WOW" factor, or x-factor, is that extra little something that makes an entry or a suite of entries exceptional. It's taking the extra steps, doing the extra work that elevates a piece from good to great.

Something that took years to make. Something that looks simple but you know it has a high difficulty given your area of expertise. Something you didn't know was possible.

A project that dwarfs other pieces displayed in the tournament from its awesomeness.

This can even be something that just makes you, as a judge, happy to look at.

## 5) Don't be the Russian Judge

The 'Russian Judge' is the judge who scores significantly lower than the other judges.

Please discuss project scores with the other judges before submitting your scoring sheet. If you feel different about an entry than the others talk it out with them, privately.

If you can't justify your score 0/10 (or a 10/10) think about your score again.