



The International Cat Association, Inc.

TICA Standard Guidelines Packet

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TICA Standard Guidelines Packet

For Breed Committees

Purpose of Standards: All standards should be clear, concise, quick references for TICA judges and a guideline for breeders. Breeders and judges must “speak the same language”. This packet was developed to help breeders understand how judges interpret standards and to help breed committees in writing standards that are easily read and understood. Even if every breeder in a breed section instantly understands the wording in their breed standard, it fails to accomplish a vital purpose if it is not understood by your judges. Improving a breed standard so it can be quickly, easily and more consistently understood by breeders and judges should be a major goal for every breed section. This package is a tool to help you achieve that goal.

Other References: Drawing – Parts of a Cat; Glossary of Terms; Show Rules, Article 16-Judging Procedures; Registration Rules, Article 7-Eligibility for Registration; Uniform Color Description (UCD).

Guidelines for Standards

Standard Terms & Judges: It is very important to review all the other breed standards before deciding if a descriptive term is a good idea for your standard. You may only be familiar with the terms used in your breed’s standard. Seeing how other breeds describe a feature common to your breed might provide ideas for wording. Judges are familiar with the terms used in all the standards and tend to relate them to each other.

Examples:

“Plush coat” - a judge thinks British Shorthair

“Fine, silky coat” - a judge thinks Turkish Angora

Standards & Relationships: The descriptive terms used should make sense in the context of how your breed relates to all other breeds. A good example is body length. Judges are required on one of their tests to classify breeds by body type (length) from shortest to longest. The shortest breeds are the Manx/Cymric, Persian, Himi, ESH – all are “Cobby”. The longest are Siamese and Maine Coons – described as “Long”. The Ragdoll standard also says “Long” but the breed is not as long as Siamese or Maine Coons so a better description might be “Medium long”.

Phrases versus Sentence: Use short phrases instead of complete sentences. Instead of “The chest is broad.”, say “Broad chest”. Instead of “The more richness and depth of color the better”, say “Rich, deep color preferred”.

Unnecessary Information: The American Curl standard says Legs “set straight when viewed from front or rear”. Per Show Rules, Article 16 any “abnormal positioning of legs while standing” shall be a penalty or DQ depending upon severity. The Korat standard describes Boning as “Medium, Strong”. In this context “strong” is not a quality that can be judged. All boning is strong, or it would break.

Incorrect Information: The Burmese standard describes the Boning as “Sturdy”. Again, all boning is strong and sturdy, but what weight boning? Should the breed have – fine, medium, substantial, heavy?

Judges need that information. Also, per the Glossary of Terms, “sturdy” is defined as “stocky, solidly built, thick set”. That is a definition for torsos not boning weight.

Insufficient Information: The Russian Blue and Munchkin standards describe the muzzle as “Medium in length”. What is the muzzle shape supposed to be – square, rounded, triangle, wedge-shaped? Is the muzzle broad, narrow, pointed, blunt? Is there a muzzle break?

“Moving” Cats: Do not describe how things look when cat is “moving”. Examples:

“Tail is carried at an angle over the back.”

“Coat breaks as cat walks.”

Judges can’t walk a cat around to see these things so we can’t judge those qualities.

The Parts are Related: A common phrase used for full length tails is “as long as body”. Some standards call for a “medium long” body but a “long” tail. To a judge, this says the tail should be longer than the body. Be aware of what you are asking for. Be sure it is what you mean.

Simple & Direct is Better: Many descriptions in standards are long and wordy. Try and Say what you have to say in as few words as possible.

A Place for Everything: Leg description from the Birman standard – “The legs are medium in length, heavily boned, well-muscled, and in good proportion to the body.” The standard does not list boning separately. A judge flips to the standard to quickly check the correct boning and has to hunt for the information. Perhaps a better alternative would be:

Legs: Medium length.

Boning: Heavy

Musculature: Well-muscled.

Since all cats must be balanced, “in good proportion to the body” adds no helpful information.

The Purpose of Points: Judges do not “think in points” when judging. Judges do not mentally “subtract” points for faults. Points in a standard should be used to emphasize the features that breeders regard as crucial to the “look” of the breed. Points should be a tool that judges can use. In too many standards, the point distribution is no help at all.

A number of standards have 10 points on 2 or 3 features. Assume there are four cats that all fit the standard on the 10-point features. Every other feature in the standard has 5 points. Of the four cats let’s say that one has great ears, one has perfect eyes, one a fabulous neck and one with lovely feet. Yes, the neck and feet have as many points as the ears and eyes! This point distribution provides no guidance. The decision among these four cats is now “Judge’s Choice”. What this point distribution says to a judge is that necks and feet are as important as ears and eyes.

An excellent example of effective use of points is the Siamese standard. Years ago, we started seeing round eyed Siamese in the show hall. The breeders changed the standard to put 12 points on eyes. No other feature in the standard has that many points. We do not judge round eyed Siamese very often anymore!

Consider what you are telling the judges when you assign points. A good example is the Norwegian Forest Cat standard. Torso and boning have 7 points each for a total of 14 points. The coat texture has 20 points. This says a NFC that is a little too light boned and long bodied should be placed over one with a soft, thin coat.

Another factor to consider when assigning points is how important a flaw in a feature is to the “look” of the breed. The Maine Coon standard has 10 points on tail and 10 points on ears. A tail that is just a little too short is barely noticeable and certainly does not detract from the “look” of the cat. In contrast, ears can be too small, too wide set, flared out, have narrow bases (hopefully not all on the SAME cat). Any of these flaws are very obvious. The negative impact on the “look” of the breed is much more significant than a slightly short tail. Looked at this way, ears should have more points than tail.

Format Guidelines

Features: A description of every feature listed is not required.

Points: If a feature is described, it must be given points. The TICA Format for Standards shows the minimum to maximum range of points allowed for each of the three major sections. Features must be described separately for easy reference. Features may be combined when assigning points. Suggested combinations are noted in the Format.

Glossary of Terms: Use the terms in the Glossary. Example: Say “Britches”. Do not say - “The fur on the back legs”. If your breed needs a “new” term, a definition must be submitted for the Glossary. Definitions may not be included in standards. Example: The American Curl penalizes “Vertical crimp and horizontal crimp” in ears. Definitions of those terms were taken out of the standard and added to the Glossary.

Uniform Color Descriptions (UCD): Colors and patterns are in the UCD. They cannot be described again in a standard. Any shadings or color variation that a breed allows which are different from the UCD may be described in a standard.

Standard Terms: A list of commonly used terms is attached. You are not restricted to just these terms. Do consider that these terms are already well understood by judges. Creating totally new terms may just create confusion.

Handling: Handling techniques may not be included in a standard.

Condition and Balance:

Condition - All cats being shown must be in excellent physical condition. This includes a clean and well-groomed coat, proper weight and muscle tone, clean ears and clear eyes.

Balance - All pedigreed show cats should be balanced. Within the breed type, all features should be in proportion thus contributing to the breed's distinctive look.

Any deficiency in either condition or balance will be penalized by judges in accordance with TICA Show Rules. Comments telling judges to fault cats for condition deficiencies or lack of balance are not necessary. Points may not be assigned for condition or balance.

TICA Format for Standards

(Total points must add up to 100)

All features must be described separately. Suggested combinations are for points only, not descriptions.

Head:

Total Points (Range – 20 minimum to 40 maximum)

Shape -

Ears -

Eyes - Include color, size, shape, set

Muzzle - May combine with chin

Chin - May combine with muzzle

Nose -May combine chin/muzzle/nose

Profile –

Neck - A maximum of 2 points is recommended.

Body:

Total Points (Range – 20 minimum to 40 maximum)

Torso -

Legs - May combine with feet

Feet - May combine with legs

Tail -

Boning - May combine legs/feet/boning

Musculature – May combine with torso

Coat:

Total Points (Range – 20 minimum to 40 maximum)

Length - May combine with texture

Texture – May combine with length

Pattern –May combine with color

Color – May combine with pattern

Categories: List or just say “ALL” if all are accepted.

Divisions: List or just say “ALL” if all are accepted.

Colors: List or just say “ALL” if all are accepted.

Permissible Outcrosses: Required. See Registration Rules, Article 7.

General Des

Lockets: Allow or Penalize or WW – State which.

Allowances

Penalize

Withhold Wins (WW)

Disqualify (DQ)

Information to Include in Descriptions

Head:

Shape: Describe in frontal view not profile.

Ears: Shape/Set/Size. Include furnishings – Light? Heavy? Lynx tips?

Eyes: Shape/Set/Size/Color. Relationship to coat color? Include any allowance for kitten eye color.

Profile: Side view of head. Include forehead, any change of direction at bridge of nose and nose profile.

Muzzle: Describe frontal view. Include shape and length.

Chin: Include depth and width as relates to upper muzzle. Currently more than ten different wordings in standards for the same chin alignment. Please use “aligns with nose”. Judges know that is “in profile” and the “end of nose”. Term used for softer chins is usually “rounded”.

Nose: Frontal view of nose leather if unusual (puffed; wide; low set nostrils)

Neck: Length/musculature/thickness.

Body:

Torso: Length/Shape/Depth. Back - level or other.

Legs: Length/Relationship to body. i.e. forms rectangle, completes square, etc.

Feet: Size/Shape/Tufted?

Tail: Length in relation to body. Shape – whippy, thick, etc.

Note: All tail lengths are checked by running a hand from shoulders to base of tail and then down the tail to see how the two distances relate (equal, tail shorter, etc)

Boning: State weight – very fine, fine, medium, substantial, heavy

Musculature: Firm, lithe, “like a swimmer”, “like a wrestler”, etc.

Coat:

Length:

Texture:

Pattern: Describe any that are unique. Descriptions already covered by the Uniform Color Description (UCD) should not be repeated.

Color: Category, Divisions, Colors accepted are stated at the beginning of each standard. It is not necessary to repeat. Use to describe any aspects unique to the breed – shadings or color variations allowed.

General Description:

A general overview of the look of the cat. Do not use to restate all the features already covered above. Can include a very brief history of the breed. Can include a brief description of the breed’s personality.

Lockets: Allowance, Penalize or Withhold (WW)

Allowances: Breed specific color or development differences. i.e. Slightly longer coat in kittens; coat color may darken with age; ghost tabby markings on kittens; etc.

Penalize: Do not use this section to state the opposite of feature’s description. Use this for serious faults that are currently being seen in the breed to indicate that the cat should not get a final. This will help eliminate the fault in the breed. To allow quick, easy reference, do not list all penalties in one long paragraph. Instead list the feature, then the penalty. For example:

Eyes: slanted. beady.

Profile: straight. pronounced bump.

Withhold Wins (WW): Use this for cosmetic faults that you feel are serious enough to require placing no award, such as incorrect color, incorrect pattern or coat texture, wrong eye color, incorrect coat length, etc. Examples:

- “Paw pads not all of the same color” (BG), or
- “Unbroken necklaces and circular leg bracelets” (SG) or
- “Pigment absent or spotty on nose leather” (TO).

Overall lack of merit, poor health and condition are covered by Show Rules, Article 16.7 and do not need to be restated here.

Disqualify (DQ): Use this for faults of a structural nature such as those defined in Show Rules, Article 16.12. That rule states “judges shall penalize or disqualify, depending upon severity”. If any of those structural faults **MUST** be a DQ for your breed, list it here. Example: “Any malocclusion”.

The following statements apply to all breeds of cats:

Allow for stud jowls in males

Females proportionately smaller than males

Males proportionately larger than females

The statement below must be included at the end of EVERY standard.

Show Rules, Article Sixteen



Temperament must be unchallenging; any sign of definite challenge shall disqualify. The cat may exhibit fear, seek to flee, or generally complain aloud but may not threaten to harm. **In accordance with Show Rules, Article Sixteen, the following shall be considered mandatory disqualifications:**

a cat that bites (216.9),

a cat showing evidence of intent to deceive (216.10),

adult whole male cats not having two descended testicles (216.11),

cats with all or part of the tail missing, except as authorized by a board approved standard (216.12.1),

cats with more than five toes on each front foot and four toes on each back foot, unless proved the result of an injury or as authorized by a Board approved standard (216.12.2),

visible or invisible tail faults **if Board approved standard requires disqualification** (216.12.4),

crossed eyes **if Board approved standard requires disqualification** (216.12.5),

total blindness (216.12.6),

markedly smaller size, not in keeping with the breed (216.12.9),

depression of the sternum or unusually small diameter of the rib cage itself (216.12.11.1).

See Show Rules, Article Sixteen for more comprehensive rules governing penalties and disqualifications.

Standard Terms

It is not the words in a standard that give each breed its own unique beauty. That beauty comes from the way the parts of the cat are put together. Many different breeds can use the exact same words to describe just one specific feature. A more consistent use of terms in standards does not make any breed less unique. It does enable judges to get a clearer picture of what your particular breed should look like.

To judges, all the breeds relate to one another. It is not unusual for breeders to be “Breed Blind”. They see and know their breed but don’t understand how it fits into the big picture of all breeds. Thus, without meaning to, breeders will use a word or phrase in their breed standard that paints the wrong picture in a judge’s mind.

There are expressions that paint a very clear picture in the US which may have no meaning overseas. The British standard used to say “chipmunk cheeks”; an expression that needs no explanation in the US. However, if another country does not have chipmunks, it is meaningless there. Breeds are international so be careful.

These terms can be used in any standard. Beside each are examples of breeds that currently use these terms correctly in their standards. Some standards use slightly different terms. The Siamese standard describes ears as “strikingly large” not “very large”. That is close enough to paint the correct picture in a judge’s mind.

Reviewing the standards to compile this information revealed two major problems:

- 1) Inadequate descriptions of muzzle size, shape, length.
- 2) Most profile descriptions do not include the forehead, change of direction at bridge of nose and nose.

(continued next page)

Head Shape:

Round – PS, HI, ESH
 Rounded – ASH, BU, CX, EM, MX
 Oval - CR
 Triangle:
 Longer than wide - SI
 Equilateral - NFC
 Modified Wedge:
 Flat planes - RB
 Rounded contours – AB, BG
 Broad – BB, MC
 Heart - KT
 Inverted Pear - PB

Profile:

Straight – NFC, SI
 Two-Planed – RB, TA
 Convex curve (Roman) – CR

Forehead:

Flat – BI, KT, RB
 Sloped back – BI
 Sloping - CU
 Gently Curving – AB, MC
 Slightly rounded – PB, RD, CX, PB
 Moderately rounded - MX
 Rounded – ASH, BU
 Domed

Bridge of Nose:

Gentle rise – OC, EM
 Gentle dip – JB, MX
 Slight dip - TV
 Gentle curve – MC, RD, SF
 Very long – SV

Slight curve - PB
 Gentle stop - TO
 Slight stop – CX, KT, SG, SX
 Modified stop – ASH
 Definite stop - HB
 Strong stop - DR
 Nose break - BU
 Definite break – PS, HI, ESH

Nose:

Straight – RD
 Slightly convex – PB, SB, TO
 Nose bump – PB
 End turns down - KT

Muzzle:**Shape:**

Rounded – AC, BSH, BU, SB, SX
 Square – MC, SR
 Almost square – HB, OC
 Tapered - SV

Length:

Short – BSH, BU, DR, SR, SB
 Medium Short – ASH, SG
 Medium – BI, CX, EM
 Long - CU

Ear Size:

Small - PS, HI, ESH, SF
 Small to Medium - CX, BSH, BG

Medium – ASH, BU, MX, PB, RD
 Medium to medium large – EM
 Medium Large – SB
 Moderately large to large - TV
 Large – AB, CR, JB, MC, RB
 Very large - SI, SX

Body/Torso: (See UCD for Definitions)

Cobby – PS, MX
 Semi-Cobby - KT
 Semi-Foreign – MK, OC, SV, SN
 Foreign - RB
 Oriental – SI
 Medium - SB
 Medium-long - NFC
 Long - MC
 Substantial – MC, NFC, PB, RD, SB



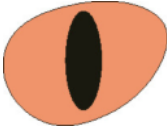
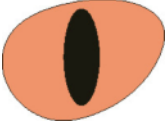
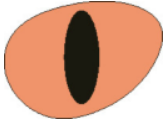





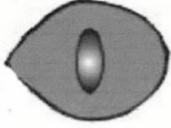
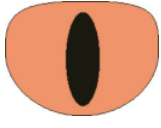

Boning

Very fine - CR
 Fine – RB, CX, SI, SG
 Medium – ASH, KT, EM, SF, SX, TV
 Substantial – BS, MC, NF, RD, SB
 Heavy – PS, BB, PB

Legs

Short – PS, HI, ESH
 Medium – MC, EM, LP, SB
 Long – JB, RB, SI

Eye Shape Chart

 <p>Round</p>	 <p>Almost Round (Rounded)</p>	
 <p>Oval</p>	 <p>Large Oval</p>	 <p>Almost Oval</p>
 <p>Almond</p>	 <p>Large Almond</p>	 <p>Almost Almond</p>
 <p>Lemon</p>	 <p>Peach Pit</p>	 <p>Walnut</p>
 <p>Hooded</p>	 <p>Soft Triangle</p>	