

Guidelines for grading Brachycephalic Obstructive Airway Syndrome (BOAS Guidelines)



Approved by the Board of the Finnish Kennel Club 6th October 2022. Valid as of 1st January 2023.

These guidelines complement the Rules for Combating Hereditary Defects and Diseases (Council 26th November 2023) and the Directives for the Programme for Combating Hereditary Defects and Diseases (PEVISA Guidelines, Board 24th November 2023).

This document is a translation. In cases of doubt, the Finnish version will prevail.

1 General provisions

The severity of signs of BOAS and dogs' exercise tolerance are assessed using Guidelines for grading Brachycephalic Obstructive Airway Syndrome.

The test used for grading includes a clinical assessment and an exercise tolerance test. The dog's BOAS grade, nostril stenosis, cranio facial ratio (CFR) and exercise tolerance/recovery are measured and assessed. The Finnish Kennel Club approves as official tests that are carried out and results that are obtained in accordance with these guidelines.

The test must be carried out in the dog owner's home country or in Finland.

The Finnish Kennel Club approves test results for imported dogs, foreign stud dogs, and imported semen by a separate decision. The test certificate must state that the dog has been identification marked at the time of examination.

2 Right to participate and validity

The test is intended for short-muzzled breeds which often show signs of upper respiratory tract stenosis. The Finnish Kennel Club decides on and keeps a [list of breeds](#) entitled to participate in tests.

The test can be taken by a dog that is at least 18 months of age and meets valid identification and vaccination criteria set by the Finnish Kennel Club. A dog's identification marking must always be verified in connection with a test. Test result of a dog younger than two years is valid for one year.

Right to participate does not extend to

- dogs with breathing difficulties
- dogs with surgically corrected airways
- sick dogs
- bitches less than 30 days before whelping or less than 75 days after whelping.

The Finnish Kennel Club's anti-doping regulations as well as general rules regarding incompatibilities are observed at tests.

3 Test procedure

The Finnish Kennel Club appoints veterinarians that may supervise tests.

The supervising veterinarian decides, based on an initial examination of the dog, whether the dog can participate in the test or not. The supervising veterinarian may also interrupt a test on animal welfare grounds. A dog is however always tested at the owner's responsibility.

The test is carried out in accordance with Guidelines for organization of BOAS tests, which complement these guidelines.

The walking distance required in the exercise tolerance test is 1,000 metres and must be completed within 12 minutes. Exceptions to the maximum time and minimum distance are recorded in the [breed list](#).

4 Test results

Test results are determined by decision of the supervising veterinarian.

4.1 Exercise tolerance test

Results of the exercise tolerance test	Definition
Approved	<p>The dog walks / trots the required distance within required time and recovers sufficiently from it within the recovery time.</p> <p>After the recovery time, the body temperature does not have to be same as measured before the exercise tolerance test if the dog's status is otherwise completely normal and the veterinarian considers that the dog has recovered. The body temperature must however not exceed 39,5 °C, measured at any point of the test.</p>
Failed	<p>Based on the initial veterinary assessment, the dog shows signs of shortness of breath (dyspnoea), bluish discolouration of mucous membrane (cyanosis), or hyperthermia (body temperature exceeds 39,3 °C).</p> <p>Body temperature exceeds 39,5 °C at any point of the test.</p> <p>Veterinarian interrupts a test in progress due to respiratory signs.</p> <p>Dog does not get through the test and/or recover from it within the required time.</p> <p>Dog must be cooled down during the recovery time in other ways than by giving it water to drink due to animal welfare grounds.</p>
Discontinued	<p>Veterinarian observes some other visible illness or sign in the dog that completely hinders the dog from taking the test or hinders the dog from continuing a test that has already started.</p> <p>Test is interrupted by the dog owner or handler.</p>

4.2 Other results

BOAS grade and grade of nostril stenosis are assessed in accordance with appendices 1 and 2 in Guidelines for organization of BOAS tests.

The cranio facial ratio (*CFR*) is measured.

5 Repeating a test

After a failed exercise tolerance test, the test may be repeated once. An interrupted exercise tolerance test may be repeated twice.

6 Exceptions

The Scientific Commission of the Finnish Kennel Club is entitled to grant an exemption from the regulations presented in these guidelines if there are very compelling reasons to do so in a one-off exceptional case.