

Level 1 Judge Certification Guide

This document is intended give you a comprehensive guide to requirements and provide resources to help you to certify as a Level 1(L1) Judge for *Magic: The Gathering*.

What is a Magic Judge?

From The [O] Blog:

“Judges are neutral arbiters of the game. We ensure that the game is fair, friendly and fun for all of the players involved in an event. We are there to run consistent and fair tournaments. Judges help players learning the rules, give advice and build communities. Judges also provide a myriad of benefits to tournament organizers and customer service to players. Judges ensure the tournament is running smoothly, efficiently and fairly. Judges are there to answer calls, help fix mistakes and ensure integrity of the event. Outside of events, judges are ambassadors of the community. We help players, storeowners, and judge candidates. Judges help make *Magic: The Gathering* a great experience for players!”

Requirements

The following are required by the Magic Judge Program for the certification of Level 1:

- Judge two sanctioned events in the previous six months.
- Brief interview and recommendation from a Level 2 or Level 3 judge.
- A passing score on the Level 1 judge exam, incorporating JAR and subset of CR.
- Agreement to be bound by the Magic Judge Code

So where do I start?

- **Your Local Game Store!** Talk to your local storeowners or tournament organizers, and ask if you can help with their events. This will give you hand on experience with how events are run. Use this time to start answering rules questions that come up at your events. This will give you experience in answering judge calls, customer service, and generally how to handle players during an event. Focus on learning the scorekeeping software, Wizards Event Reporter, and its basic functions.
- **Get in touch with other local judges!** We all work together to make our communities great, and communication is key. Get to know some of your other local judges, and be in close contact with them to help guide you on your way to certification. We can always strike up conversations about rules, policy, procedure, and make great friends along the way.
- **Find a mentor!** A mentor is a judge that can work with you to show you the ropes. Have them challenge you in rules and policy with questions and scenarios. These judges will help you grow as a judge and help with preparation. Ask questions and listen, they want you to succeed!

- **Can't find a judge near you?**

If you are having trouble finding a judge in your area, or if you have any questions regarding anything within the Judge Program, you can always contact your [Regional Coordinator \(RC\)](#). These judges are some of the leaders in our community and can help point you in the right direction, even if they cannot help you out directly, they can get you in touch with someone who can.

What is Regular REL?

Rules Enforcement Level (REL) is the way to communicate to players and judges on how rigid the enforcement of game rules, technical play, and procedure will be at each event.

Regular REL events are focused on fun and social aspects, not enforcement. We use these events to educate players, and make sure they have a good time playing at these events. Players are responsible for following the rules, but our focus is on education and sportsmanship, not precise technical game play.

Most events you will be running in your Local Game Store (FNM, Prerelease, Game Day) are run at Regular REL. If your event has high value prize support and/or requires deck lists, you should consider running that event at Competitive REL, and not Regular REL.

Game Rules & Tournament Policy Documents

As an L1 judge, you are expected to know and understand the core rules of *Magic*. This can be found in the [Core Rule Book](#).

After that, the next document is the [Comprehensive Rules](#) (CR). This document is **HUGE** and is not meant to be read cover to cover, but instead, it is intended to be a reference tool for all the game rules in *Magic*. This document is updated regularly, usually after a new set has been officially released, so keep an eye out for new editions to stay up to date.

At Regular Rules Enforcement Level (REL), the goal of Judges is to educate players and make the most fun and inviting events we can, but naturally, mistakes happen. The [Judging At Regular](#) document (JAR) is a 2 page document made to outline how to fix common issues that come up at your Regular REL events, as well as how to handle unwanted behaviors and serious problems. For the exam, you need to know this document and understand its philosophy.

Tournament policies are the guidelines we abide by when running *Magic* events. For this we use the [Magic Tournament Rules](#) (MTR). For the exam, take a close look at Section 2, Section 10, and Appendix B, but it is good to begin to familiarize yourself with the entire document.

Lastly, as we expect players to act in a matter that is appropriate for the event, we also must behave in a matter that is expected of certified Magic Judges. The [Magic Judge Code](#) is a document that outlines the expected behaviors of judges at events. As part of your

certification, you agree to abide by these guidelines.

Practice Tests

Some of the best ways to prepare for the exam are the online practice exams on the [DCI Judge Center](#) website. These exams will help you get comfortable with the structure of the exams, as well as the wording of the questions and answers. It is recommended you take Easy Practice exams, as the questions closely resemble those on the L1 Exam. It is not recommended that you take any Hard or Policy practices, as the questions are much more difficult and cover some more advanced rules and policy questions that do not pertain to the L1 exam.

You can also create an L1 Practice exam. This practice exam is as close to the actual L1 Exam you can take to find out what you know, and what you need to study for the real thing. After you take the L1 Practice, there is a 28-day cool down period before you can take it again.

The Exam

From The [O] Blog: The L1 exam is 25 questions with a passing grade of 70% or better, which means you need at least 18 questions correct to pass. An L2+ judge is needed to administer the exam. Questions will cover various subjects including:

- General game concepts, such as the parts of a card. This covers card types, mana costs, etc.
- The different zones of the game, and what each zone is used to represent as well as objects in those zones.
- The turn structure, specifically the different phases and the steps of each phase along with what happens in each phase and step.
- The combat phase, specifically the specific steps in the phase, the game actions that take place, and what/when players can cast spells or activate abilities.
- The general process of casting a spell and/or activating an ability.
- The general process of handling triggered abilities and putting them onto the stack.
- The general process of resolving a spell and/or ability.
- Determining a creature's abilities and/or its power and toughness.
- How replacement and/or prevention effects work.
- How copy effects work on creatures.
- The basic rules and elements of Two-Headed Giant.
- The keyword actions and/or abilities present in Standard. (Referring to recent set FAQs can be helpful here.)
- Educating and helping players with Common Issues and Generally Unwanted Behaviors at Regular REL.
- Dealing with players who commit Serious Problems at Regular REL.

- How to sideboard in Limited and Constructed, especially at Regular REL events that do not use decklists.
- The general match structure in an event.
- Minimum requirements to sanction and run an event.

While having specific card knowledge can help, the idea is to have a better understanding of the underlying rules concepts, so they can be applied to any game situation.

Test Taking Tips

Here are a couple of helpful tips to taking the exam:

- Read the questions and answers **CAREFULLY**. These exams are notorious for some tricky wording, as a way to test you on “investigating” within each question. Make sure to take care when reading each question to get all the details before solidifying your answers
- Bring a stack of basic lands, a sharpie marker, and some dice with you. It may help to fully understand a question if you can physically see the game state, these tools can help you do that!
- Eat before the exam. Try to get a snack in before you sit down for the exam. Having some food in your system will help calm any nerves you may have, as well as avoiding distractions from being hungry.

Mobile Apps

There are some mobile apps that give you access to the Oracle text and Gatherer rulings of any card. These apps can also give you set printings, format legality, as well as helpful judge tools.

iOS: [MTG Guide](#)

Android: [Core Judge App](#)

Windows: [MTGBugz NEXT](#)

Resources

This is just a list of great resources for you to get to know for studying for the exam, as well as beginning to enter the Magic Judge Community.

- [The Magic \[O\]fficial Blog](#): This is the end all resource for everything Magic Judge, including everything from this packet, and more!
- [Magic Judge News](#): This hosts all of the articles and blogs.
- [Mystical Tutor](#): Voice guided presentations on various topics about judging, rules, and policy. Highly recommend the Judge Candidate Text Book!
- [JudgeCast](#): A podcast about judging.
- [Magic Judge Chat](#): A 24/7 live chat with certified Judges from all over the world. Use this resource to ask rules questions to get answers quickly.
- [Judge Apps forums](#): A series of forums for discussion on various topics. Focus on the Regular REL and Rules forums. Signup required, but anyone with a DCI number can obtain a JudgeApps account.

Questions? Suggestions? Comments?

Please send any inquiries about this document to Rich DiLeo at rich.dileo13@gmail.com.

The best will be done to make sure emails are responded to in a timely manor.