



FEI™ SPORTS FORUM

31 March – 1 April 2025, IMD Lausanne

FEI Officials Working Group
Update



AGENDA

1. Background
2. Officials Working Group
3. Working Group mandate
4. Officials survey
5. National Federations survey
6. Questionnaire to the Disciplines/Veterinary Departments
7. First findings
8. Other areas for focus:
 - Appointment of Officials
 - Officials Rotation System
 - Mentoring Officials



1. Background



Background

From 2016 to 2018, the FEI Officials Working Group analysed the situation of the FEI Officials and presented its findings at the FEI Sports Forum in 2017 and 2018. The FEI Officials Working Group gave 15 recommendations.

In May 2024, the Education & Officials and Technology and Sport Services Departments conducted a simulation of all “Open” and “On hold” Officials functions of the last three years (Officiating Review): **25.28%** did not match the required number of assignments.

The FEI Board came to the conclusion that a high number of Officials would be lost and that the Sport in Regional Groups III to IX could be at risk.

The new FEI Officials Working Group was approved by the FEI Board on 5 June 2024.

OVERVIEW OF ALL FUNCTIONS

6,905
FUNCTIONS

4,944
REVIEWED

1,250
NOT MATCHING

THE BIG PICTURE



**NON-MATCHING FUNCTIONS RATIO
TO REVIEWED FUNCTIONS**

GLOBAL
25.28%

JUMPING

25.15%

DRESSAGE

21.66%

EVENTING

20.83%

VETERINARY

22.88%

DRIVING

25.53%

PARA DRESSAGE

21.66%

ENDURANCE

30.50%

VAULTING

12.79%



JUMPING FUNCTIONS (-25.15%)

619 JUDGES - 127 (20.52%)

	ALL	REVIEWED	NON-MAT.	% TO ALL
Ju ₁	166	99	56	33.73
Ju ₂	160	148	46	28.75
Ju ₃	278	278	25	8.99
Ju ₄	15	15	0	0.00
	619	540	127	20.52

1928 FUNCTIONS

1672 REVIEWED

485 NOT MATCHED

850 STEWARDS - 167 (19.65%)

	ALL	REVIEWED	NON-MAT.	% TO ALL
St ₁	228	93	45	19.74
St ₂	336	324	81	24.11
St ₃	273	273	39	14.29
St ₄	13	13	2	15.39
	850	703	167	19.65

459 COURSE DESIGNERS - 191 (41.61%)

	ALL	REVIEWED	NON-MAT.	% TO ALL
CD ₁	86	86	63	73.26
CD ₂	171	141	65	38.01
CD ₃	174	174	57	32.76
CD ₄	28	28	6	21.43
	459	429	191	41.61



FEI™



2. Officials Working Group



Composition of the Officials Working Group



Mark SAMUEL
(CAN)

Chair



**Giuseppe DELLA
CHIESA**
(ITA)

Eventing
Course Designer



Sharon DU PLESSIS
(BOT)

Endurance
Technical Delegate



Lisa GORRETTA
(USA)

Dressage
Steward



Glenn MAES
(BEL)

Jumping
Judge



3. Working Group Mandate



Current remit

- Evaluate the CES Officiating Review and its goals
- Recommend future CES Maintenance requirement(s) to the E&O Department
- Advise the E&O Department on an FEI Officials education system survey and recommend actions based on the information gathered

Activities up to now

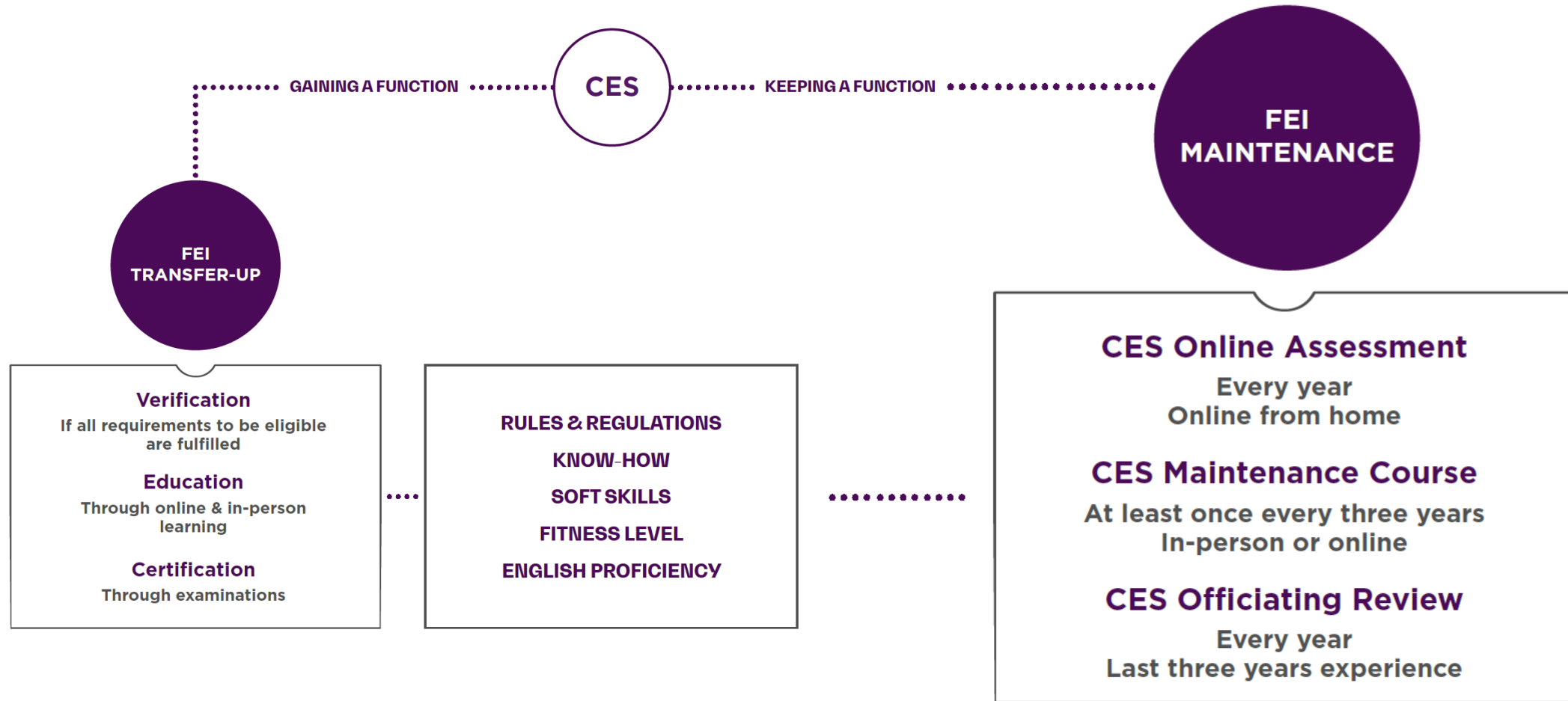
- 5 online and 1 in-person meetings
- 2 surveys: 1 to FEI Officials and 1 to NFs
- Extensive review of statistical data
- Questionnaire to and in-person meeting with the Disciplines/Veterinary Departments

Reporting

The FEI Officials Working Group shall report in writing to the FEI Board through the E&O Department Director



Competency-based-Evaluation-System



FEITM





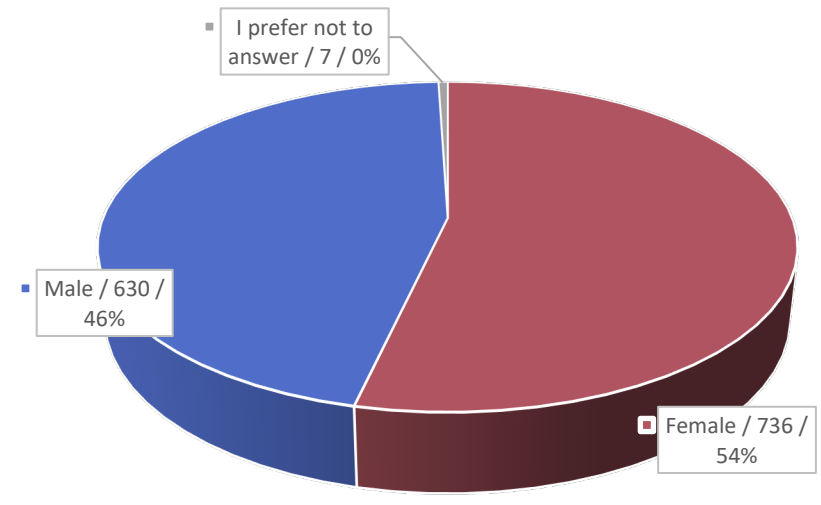
4. Officials survey



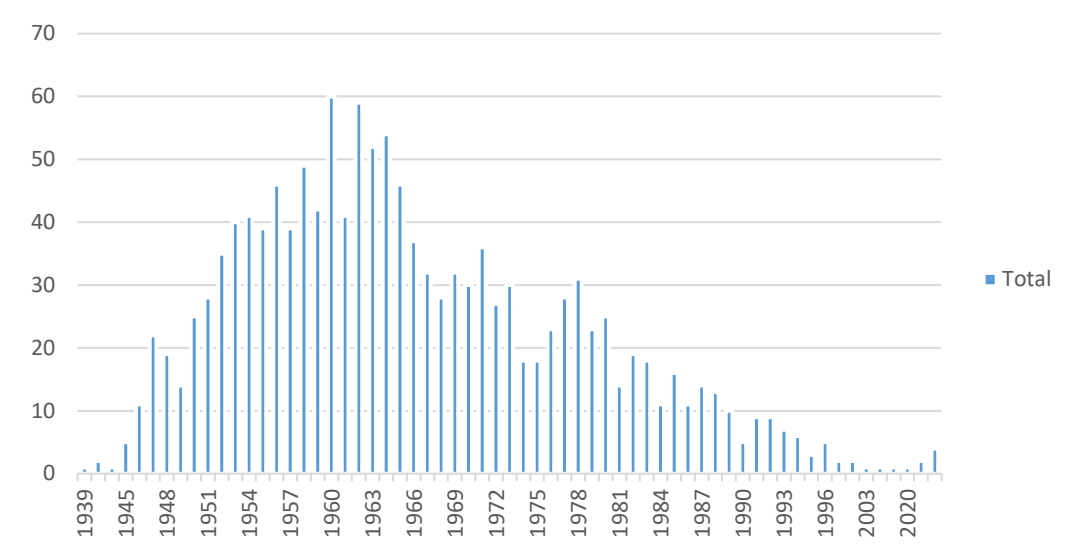
Officials survey 2025

- 1,373 out of 5,227 FEI Officials participated in the survey
- 54% female and 46% male
- Average age: 65 years old

Gender distribution

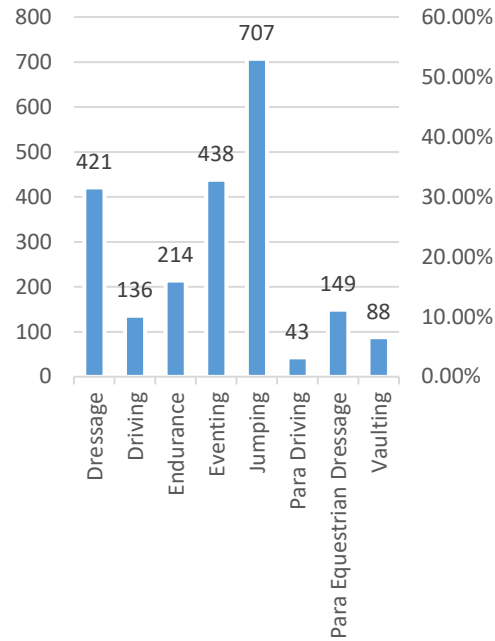


Year of birth

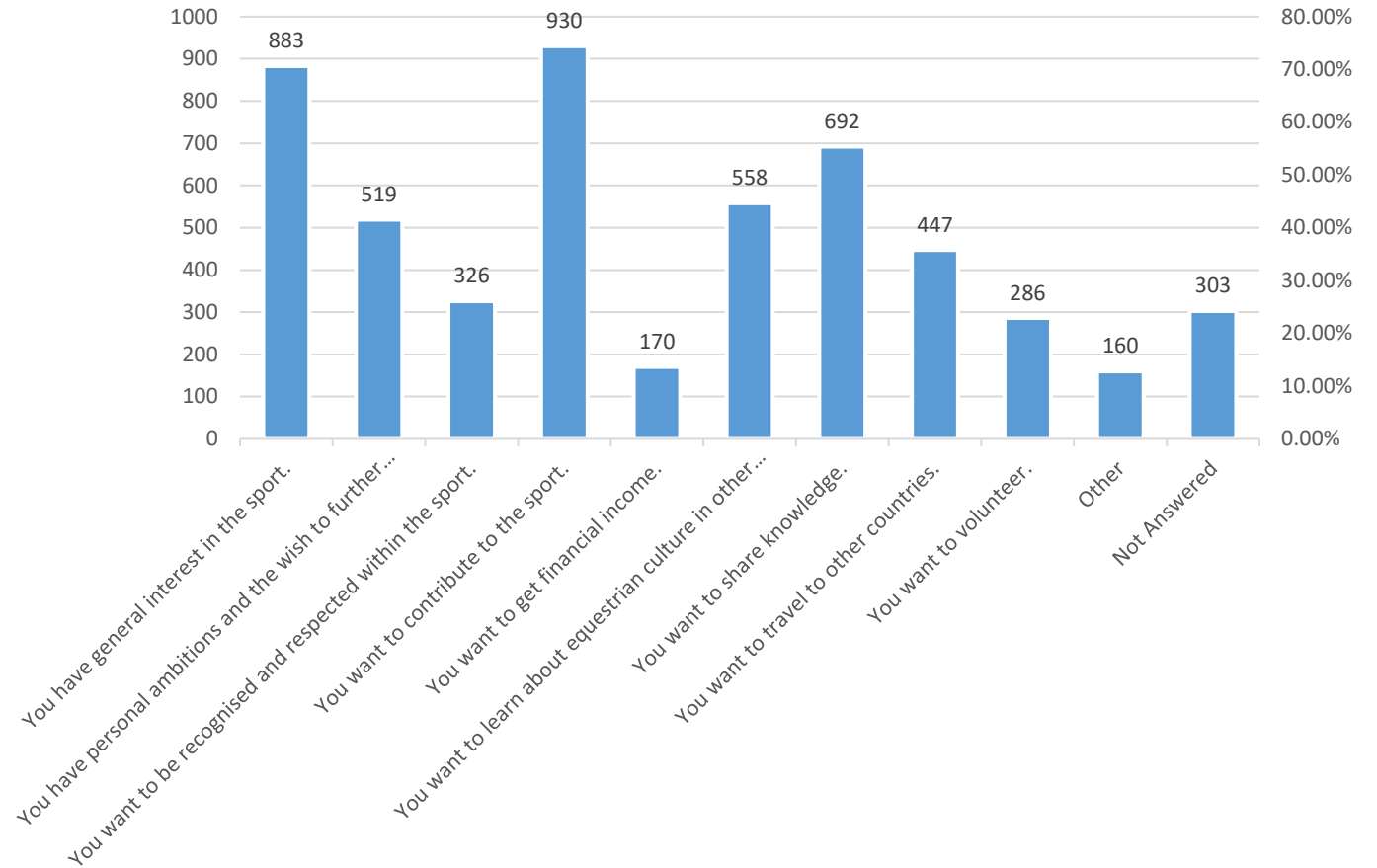




Disciplines:



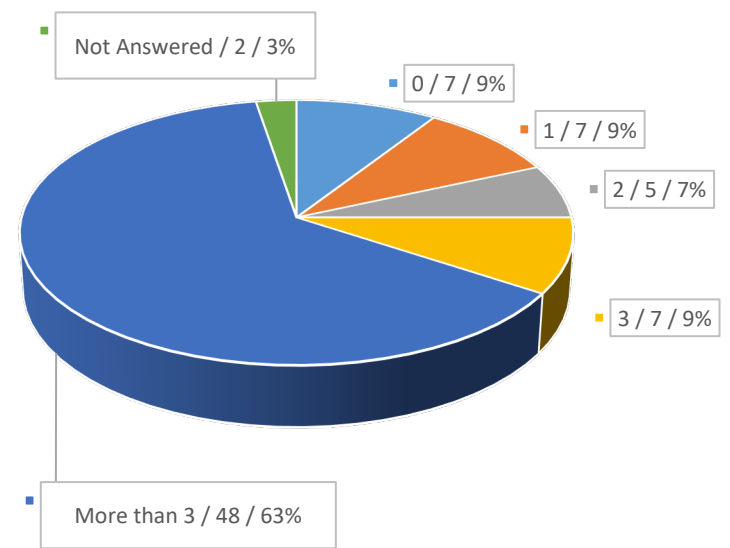
Motivations to become an Official:



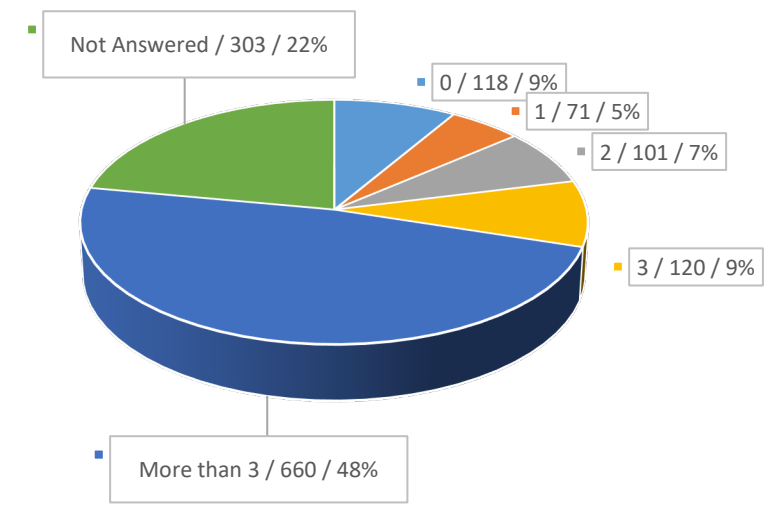


Number of National/ International Events the Officials officiated in 2024:

National Events



International Events



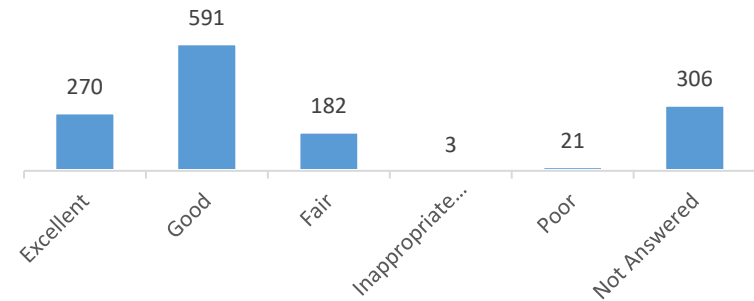


Education

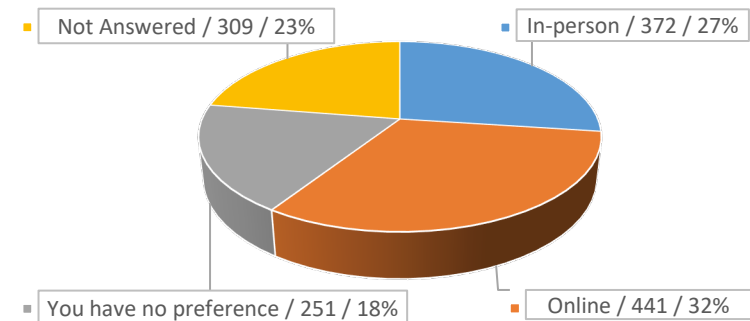
CES Online Assessment and CES Maintenance Courses:

- Officials agree with both the content and length of the Maintenance Courses.
- Many Officials find the in-person Maintenance Courses expensive and logistically challenging, especially for those in remote regions.
- There is a call for more practical training, mentorship programs, and case-based learning to better prepare Officials for real-world scenarios.
- The annual CES Online Assessment is seen as a useful tool for keeping Officials updated.
- There is a need for more online courses to reduce costs and improve accessibility.

How Officials evaluate the content of the CES Online Assessment



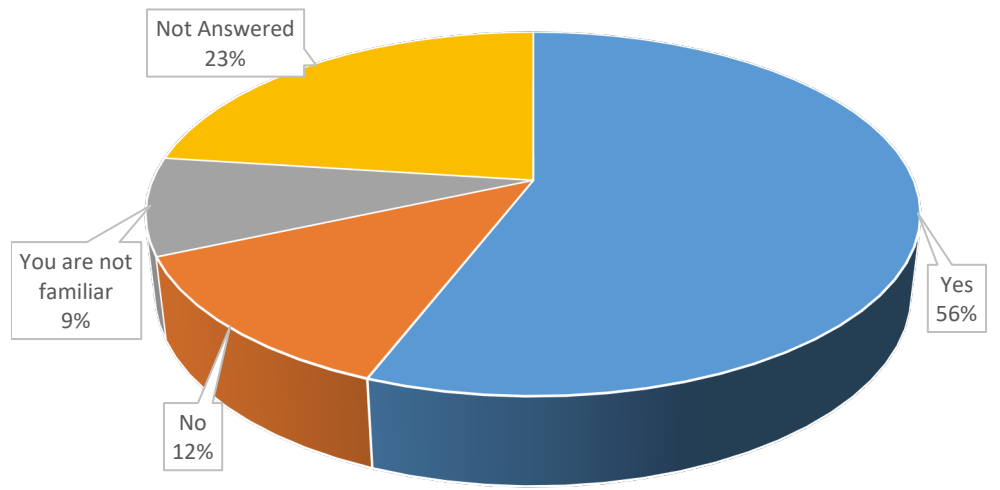
In-person vs online MC



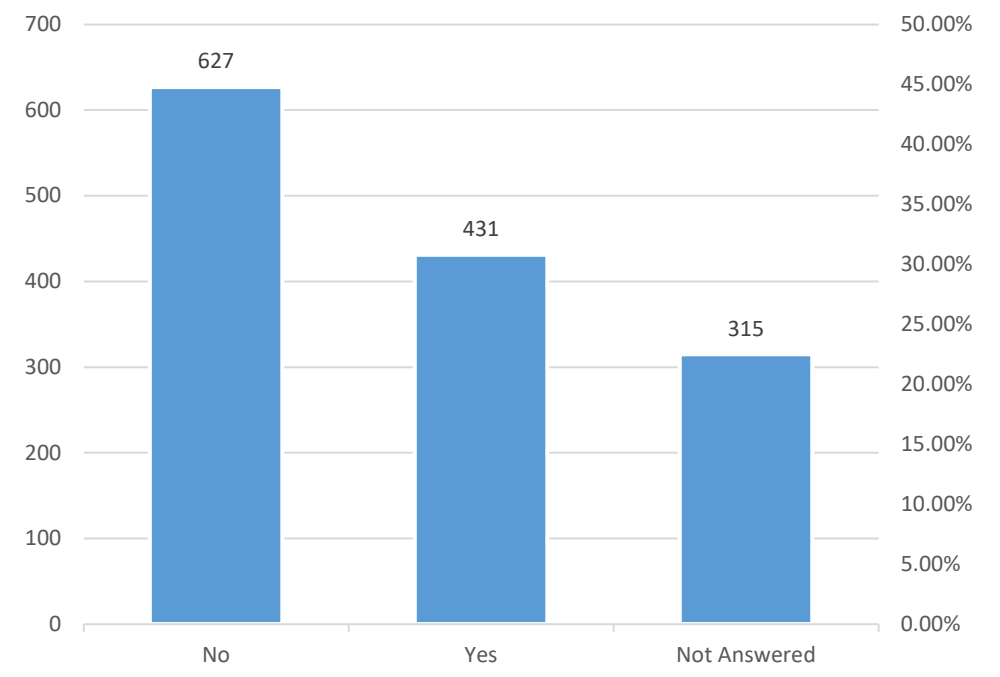


CES Officiating Review:

Officials responses to:
Is the number of officiating requirements fair and reasonable?



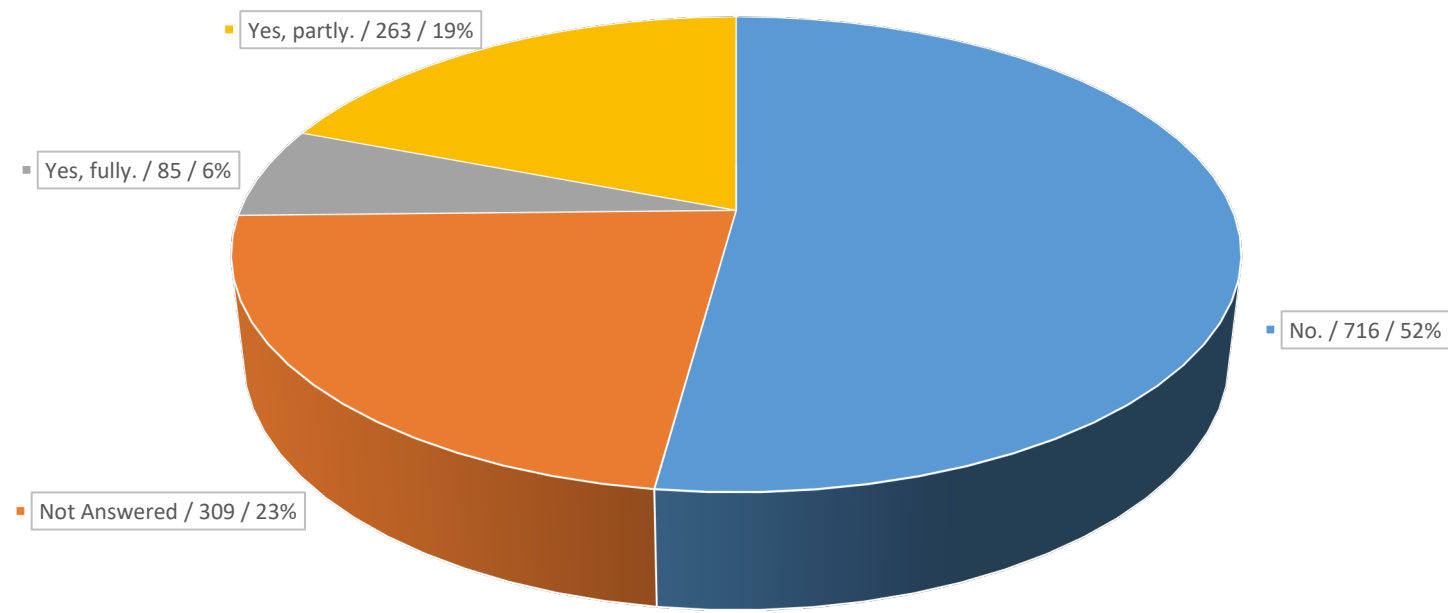
Officials responses to:
Have you experienced difficulties gaining officiating experience?





Financial support of a CES Maintenance Course by NFs:

Officials' responses





Financial and logistical challenges:

- In-person Maintenance Courses are expensive, especially for Officials from small NFs who struggle to meet the FEI requirements for maintaining/upgrading their status.
- Travel costs prevent Officials from remote regions to gain international experience (some are asked to cover their own costs).
- Perception that the FEI prioritise Officials from Europe and North America. Not seen as transparent and fair.
- The same Officials are repeatedly invited to major events (no rotation).



Recurring Issues:

- Lack of rotation in appointments
- Per diems are insufficient to cover their costs
- Limited opportunities for upgrading
- Lack of Transfer-up Courses
- Lack of opportunities to gain the necessary experience



fEI™



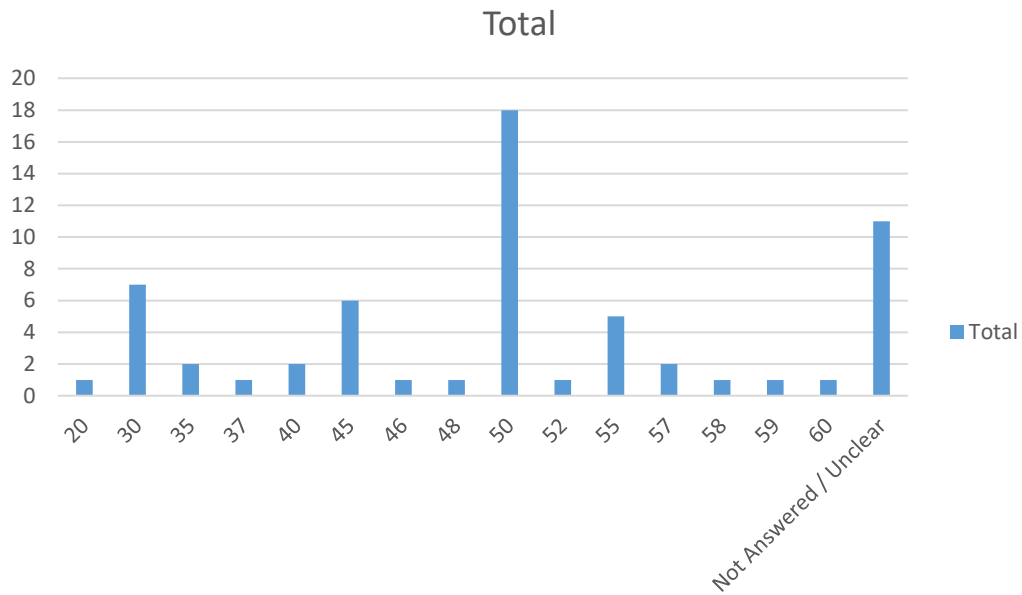


5. National Federations survey



NFs that participated in the survey

- 46 National Federations responded to the survey
- Average age of National Officials: 46



EEF

AUT
 BEL
 DEN
 GER
 GBR
 HUN
 IRL
 ITA
 LUX
 MLT
 NED
 POL
 POR
 ROU
 SVK

Group IV

BAH
 BAR
 BER
 CAN
 CAY
 HAI
 JAM
 USA

Group V

COL
 CRC
 GUA
 HON
 PAN
 PUR
 VEN

Group VI

ARG
 BRA
 CHI
 URU

Group VII

BRN
 KSA
 TUN

Group VIII

AUS
 CHN
 HKG
 JPN
 MAS

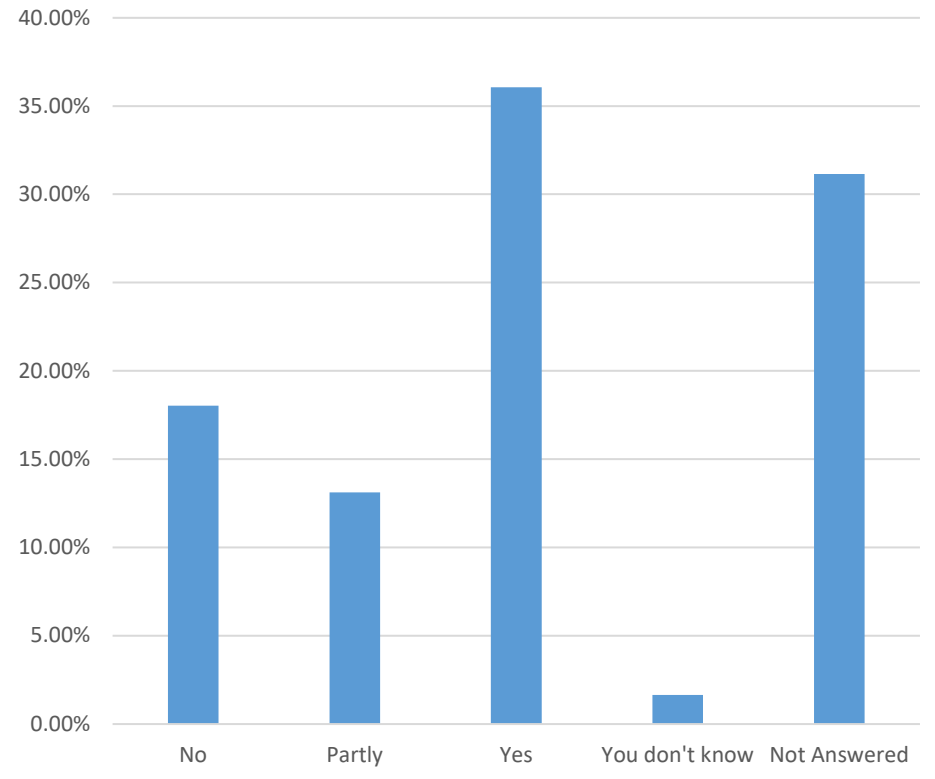
Group IX

NAM
 RSA
 ZAM
 ZIM

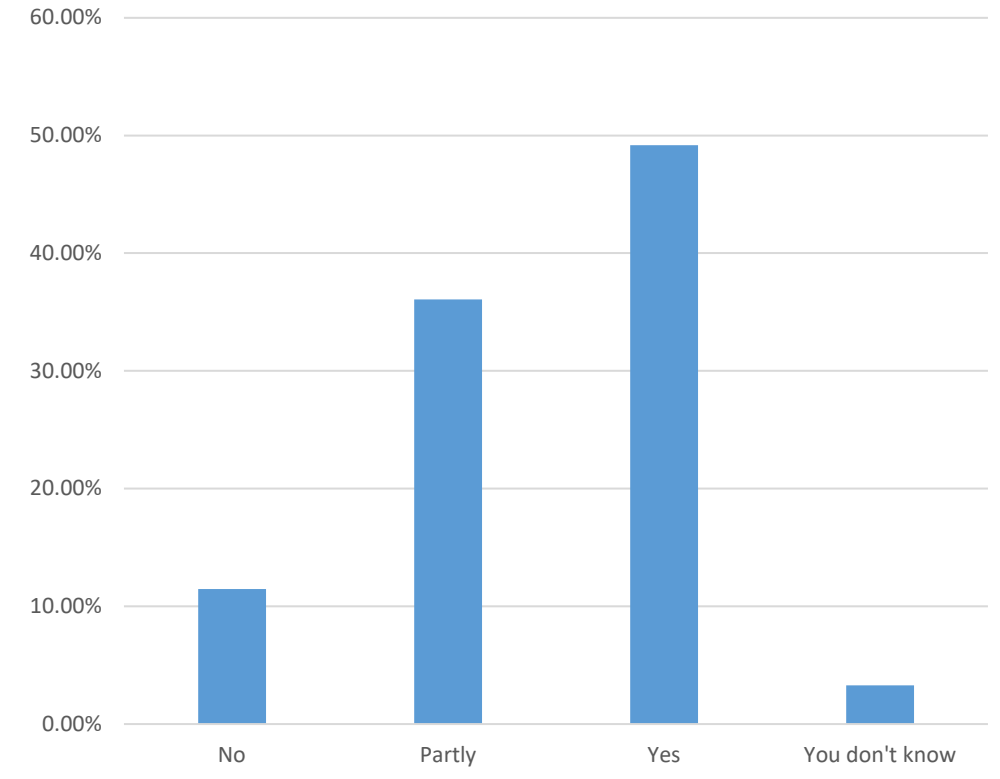


Do you have an Education System? Do you have a lack of Officials?

National Education System



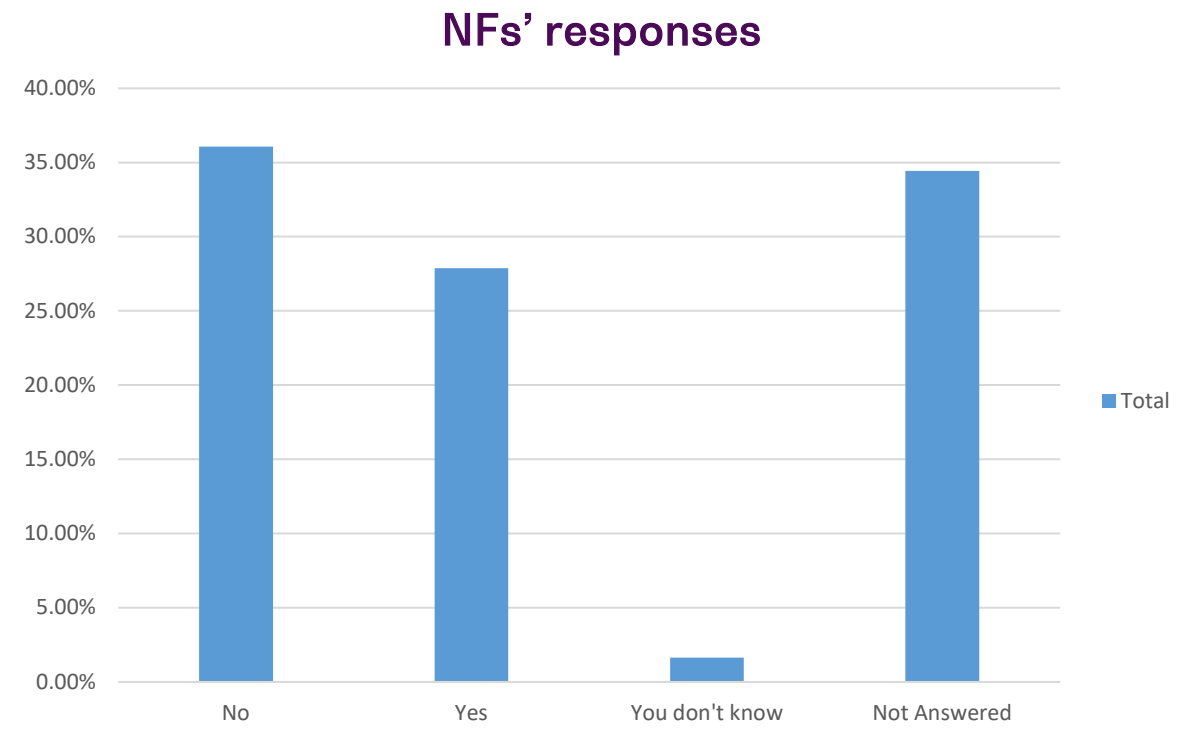
Lack of Officials





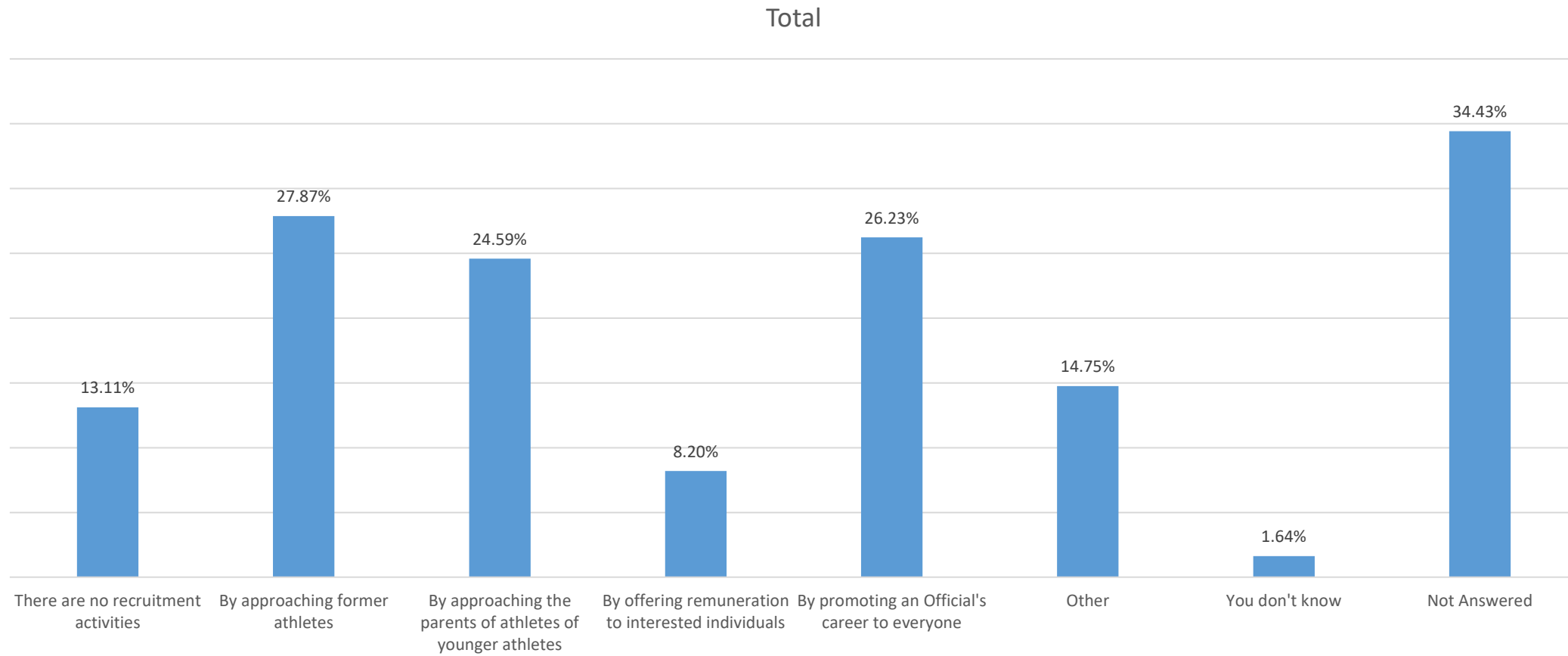
Financial support of a CES Maintenance Course by NFs:

Most respondents don't financially support their Officials in national courses:





How do NFs recruit National Officials?



FEI™



6. Questionnaire to the Disciplines/ Veterinary Departments



**Questionnaire
Disciplines /
Veterinary
Departments**

- CES Officiating Review
- Maintenance/Transfer-up Courses
- Appointments of Officials
- Officials Rotation System
- Evaluation of Officials





**Questionnaire
Disciplines / Veterinary
Departments**

**CES Officiating
Review:**

- **Goals of the Officiating Review**

Ensuring Officials stay active in the sport, increasing the number of younger Officials, and maintaining officiating standards.

- **Challenges in officiating and retention**

Difficulty in recruiting and retaining young Officials, balancing requirements, and in particular addressing the loss of veterinary professionals.

- **Alternative approaches to officiating maintenance**

Suggestions like shadow judging, reducing CES requirements.

- **Quality and evaluation of Officials**

Focusing on performance in real-world officiating, reporting accuracy, and rewarding good officiating rather than imposing rigid exams.



**Questionnaire
Disciplines / Veterinary
Departments**

**Maintenance/
Transfer-up
Courses:**

- Positive general feedback about the courses (CES, Maintenance Courses).
- Online courses help reduce costs yet don't fully replace in-person courses.
- Lack of standardised course content and online courses should be improved to be more engaging.
- Evaluation of Officials is harder online.



**Questionnaire
Disciplines / Veterinary
Departments**

**Appointments of
Officials:**

- Defined in the FEI Rules and Regulations, changes need to be approved by the FEI General Assembly.
- Appointments to Championships and Games are done by the Discipline Director, the Technical Committee and/or the FEI Board.
- Jumping has approximately 900 appointments per year (Foreign Judge/Steward), around 2,000 interactions between Officials and the FEI Jumping Department.



**Questionnaire
Disciplines / Veterinary
Departments**

**Officials Rotation
System:**

Driving already has rotation rules, while others are considering implementing them.

Challenges in implementing rotation

- The rotation system is difficult to enforce without an IT system, leading to inconsistencies and manual verification issues.

Responsibility for monitoring rotation

- The different Departments oversee compliance but enforcement varies across Disciplines.

IT Support for rotation monitoring

- Some database tools exist, but a fully integrated online scheduling system is not yet in place for all Disciplines, making systematic tracking difficult.

General sentiment towards rotation

- While many support rotation for fairness, experience-sharing, and equal opportunities, there is resistance from some Officials and National Federations, particularly in remote regions and from series/circuit organisers.



**Questionnaire
Disciplines / Veterinary
Departments**

**Evaluation of
Officials:**

- **Current evaluation methods**
Evaluations are through CES, Officials' reports and Foreign Judges' reports.
- **Judging statistics and informal monitoring**
 - Dressage Judges' scores are tracked on the statistic platform, monitored by the Judge General.
 - Foreign Judges' reports include peer reviews, but feedback is rarely received, making it ineffective.
- **Consequences of evaluations**
 - No formal consequences currently, but discussions are ongoing.
 - Transfer-up can be denied, and serious cases may lead to warnings, fines, or suspensions.
- **Challenges in the current System**
 - No IT system for tracking evaluations; a dashboard for Judges is under discussion.
 - Retention issues due to the appointment system, leading to the perception of un-equal opportunities.
- **Proposed improvements**
 - A digital database for Officials' evaluations.
 - Consider introducing observer roles to assess Officials, similar to IGA in Endurance.

FEI™





7. First Findings



Findings of the Officials Working Group: CES Online Assessment and CES Maintenance Courses

- If annual CES Online Assessment is not done or not passed, the function becomes inactive until the current assessment is done/the CES interview passed.
- If CES Maintenance Course is not attended/passed, the function will be set inactive until passed.
- To permit greater use of on-line courses for Maintenance Courses balancing cost effectiveness with enriched learning and case study interaction when in person. Perhaps every other Maintenance Course required to be in person.



Findings of the Officials Working Group: CES Officiating Review

- Being active matters. Being active shows engagement.
- A minimum level of activity has to be met to stay listed.
- Insufficient activity in the last three years will lead to an automatic transfer down*.
(*except with regard to Level 1 Officials where it will not apply)
- In the situation that the following year also shows insufficient activity, in total, the function will be closed.



Findings of the Officials Working Group: CES Officiating Review

- The Working Group feels that the minimum activity required should differ from the lower levels (1-2) to the top levels (3-4).
- The Working Group suggests that, in consultation with the Disciplines, for the lower levels (1-2), the following should apply:
 - A minimum of 1, 2 or 3 officiating engagements within the Discipline over the previous three (3) years. Possible credit for different roles and functions within the Discipline.
 - Consider allowing Stewarding experience to count across Disciplines, except in Endurance.
- For the top levels (3-4), the existing criteria will have to be reviewed by the Disciplines/Veterinary Departments with an eye to reduce the total burden while still maintaining relevancy.



Enhanced Evaluation

- Consider developing actionable performance reviews to support both transfer-up evaluation, CES Officiating Reviews and FEI appointments.
- Utilise peer-to-peer assessments, FEI HorseApp, appointed Officials to assist evaluation.
- Will require IT assistance and database development.
- Use of “sit-ins” and shadow judging.
- Focus on performance issues and opportunities for improvement.

FEI™



8. Other areas for focus



Appointment of Officials

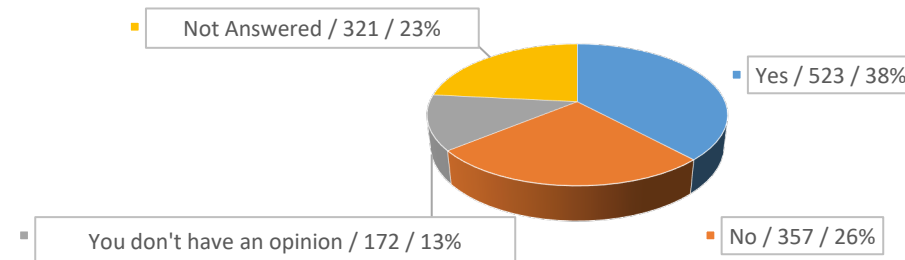
- Appointments are an important tool to ensure that FEI standards are maintained at competitions.
- The appointment process allows for Officials to gain experience, for developing Officials to gain experience and qualifying opportunities and to support rotation in panels.
- Appointments are also a reward for excellent past performance and maturity. As staffing and department budgets permit, it is recommended to increase the number of appointments per Discipline and to push them further down into Level 2 competitions.
- Greater IT support is required to monitor competition schedules, to manage an effective appointment process and to support an effective appointee replacement process. Perhaps move the appointment process as early as possible after the competition schedule is approved.



Officials Rotation System

- The Officials Working Group believes that a wider implementation of rotation would permit greater transparency, accountability, opportunities for experience for developing Officials as well as greater independence for panels.
- Both the Officials and Disciplines support the concept of rotation.
- A rotation system works well in the Disciplines with fewer events and a lack of Series (eg Driving). Disciplines with large multi-location organisers and multiple-week Series are more challenged to implement as effectively.
- FEI IT support regarding online monitoring of competition schedules will be essential to confirm compliance.

Are the Officials in favour of a rotation system?

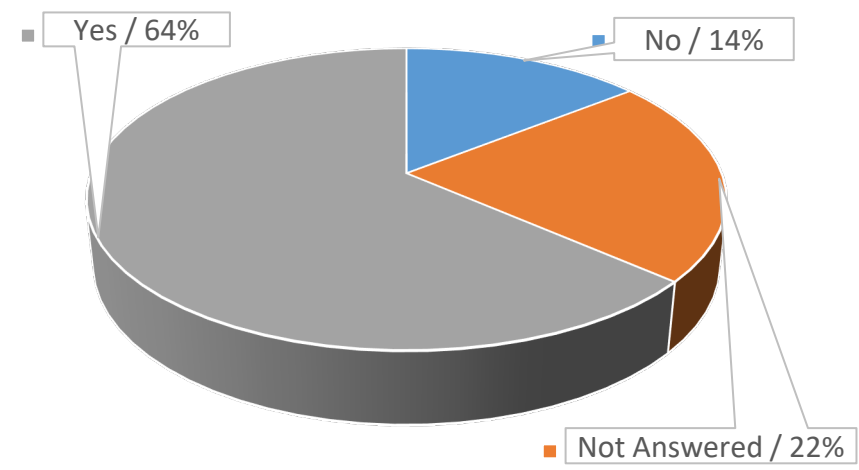




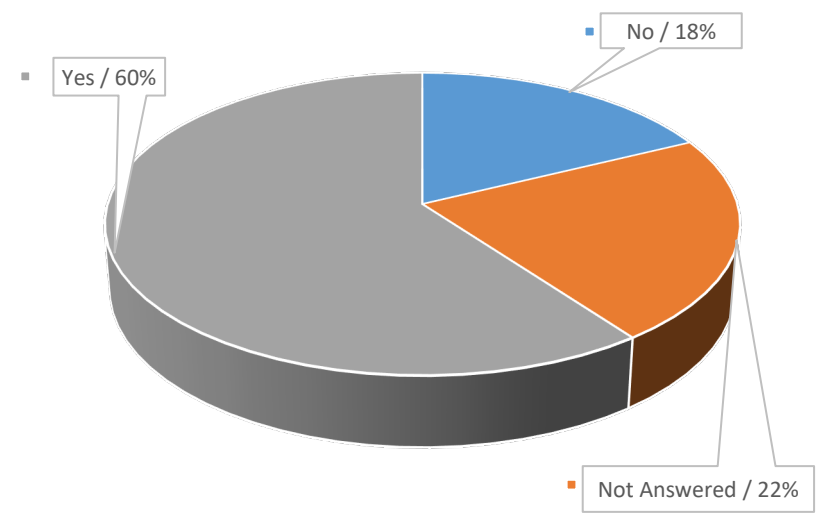
Mentoring

A large percentage of respondents would favour participation in a mentoring system:

As an Official, would you be interested in being mentored?



As an Official, would you be interested in being a mentor?





**Pairing
Officials at an
FEI Event**

AND/OR

**Pairing
Officials over a
longer period
(year/career)**

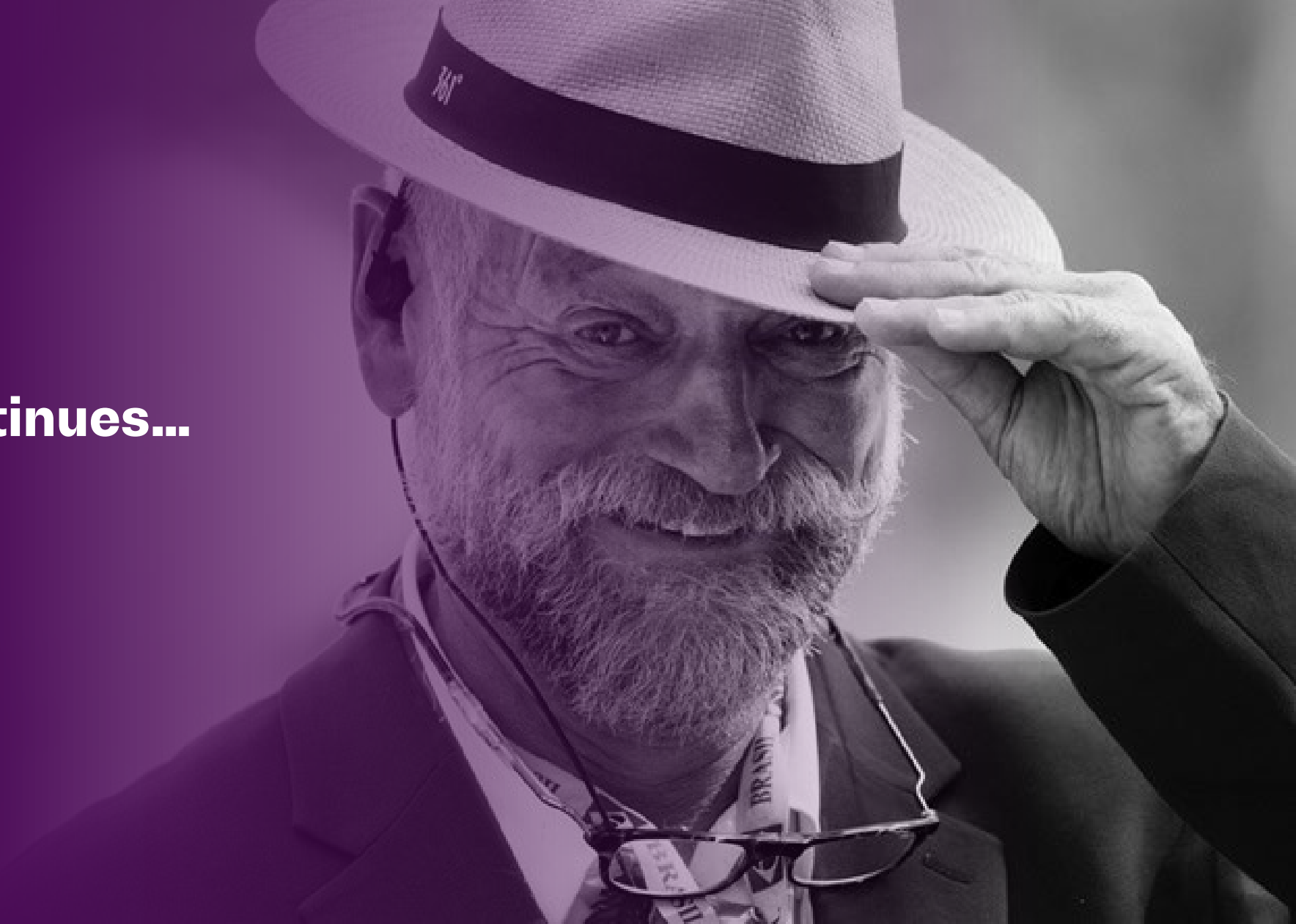
- Develop a match-making system
- Develop a training program for mentors
- Create a pool of Officials willing to be mentors

FEI™ SPORTS FORUM

31 March - 1 April 2025, IMD Lausanne



The journey continues...





FEITM

thanks its partners

LONGINES

 **PIVO**

Agria 

BATES
SADDLES


CAVALOR
EMPOWER YOUR AMBITION



PEDEN BLOODSTOCK
GLOBAL EQUINE LOGISTICS



Ville de Lausanne

VAUD 