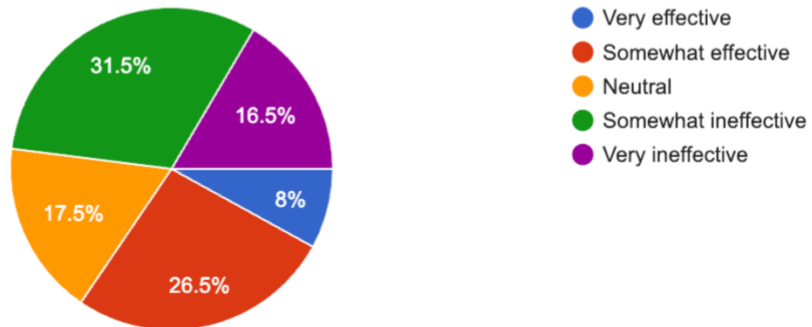


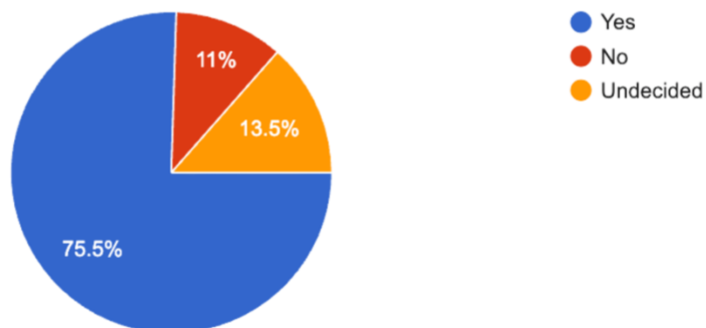


Judges September 2026 Survey Results

1. Based on your experience as an evaluator, how effective do you feel the current evaluation process is?

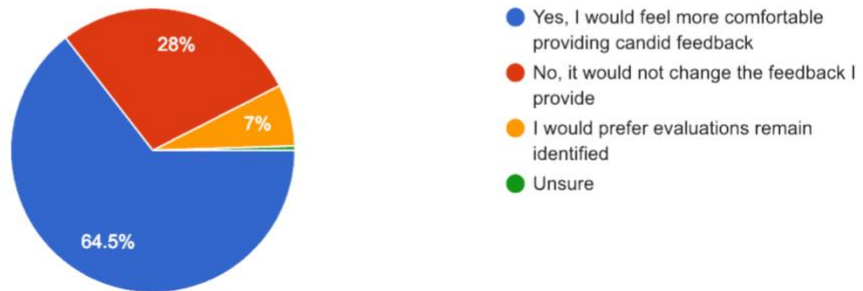


2. Would you support making individual judge applicant evaluations anonymous?

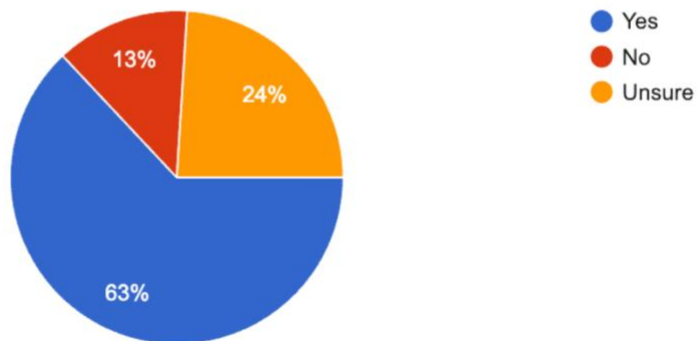




3. Would anonymity affect your willingness to provide candid and constructive feedback?

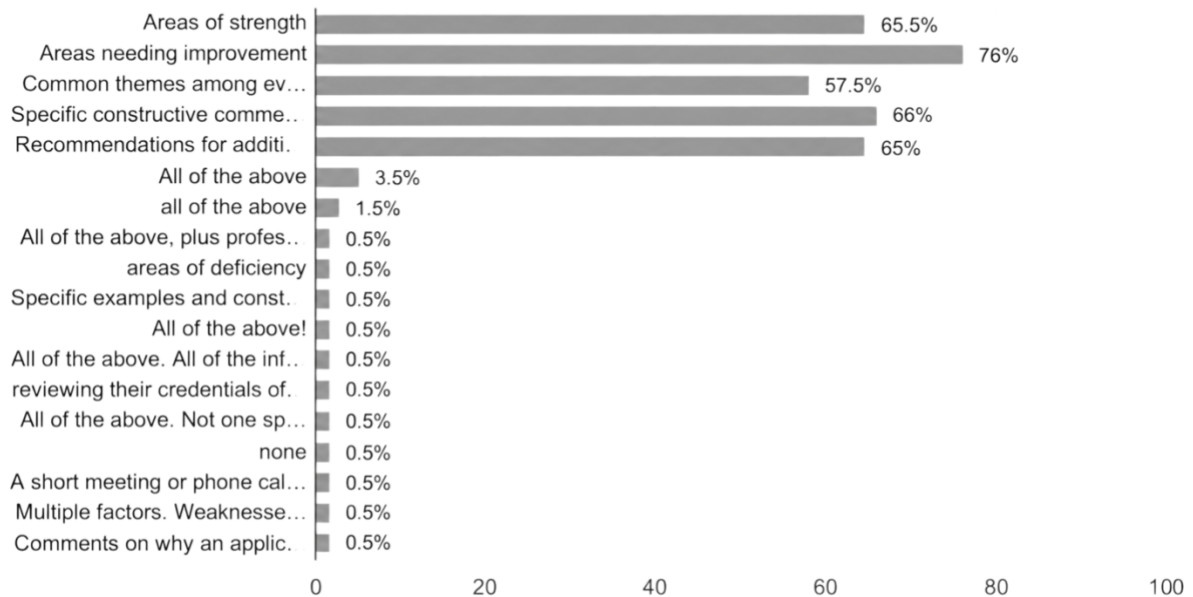


4. Would you support replacing the current practice of providing each individual evaluation to the applicant with one cumulative evaluation compiled from all evaluators?





5. If a cumulative evaluation is used, what information do you believe should be included?



6. Do you have any concerns about making individual evaluations anonymous?

A large portion of the written responses expressed **little or no concern about making evaluations anonymous**. Many respondents felt anonymity could allow evaluators to be more candid, particularly because the current practice of completing an evaluation and returning it directly to the applicant can make providing critical feedback uncomfortable.

Several respondents referenced the previous system in which evaluations were submitted directly to USEF and indicated a preference for returning to a similar process.

Among respondents who did express concerns, the most common issues involved **accountability, personal bias, personality conflicts, potential retaliation or targeting, and the possible loss of direct mentorship**. Some respondents felt evaluators should be willing to stand behind their comments and that constructive criticism can be more meaningful when it comes directly from a mentor.

A recurring middle-ground suggestion was that evaluations could be **anonymous to the applicant while the evaluator's identity remains known to USEF or the Licensed Officials Committee.**

Takeaway: The written feedback generally supports greater confidentiality for evaluators, but respondents also want safeguards that maintain accountability and ensure anonymity does not interfere with constructive feedback and mentorship.

7. Do you have any concerns about providing applicants with one cumulative evaluation rather than each individual evaluation?

Many respondents expressed **no concern with providing applicants one cumulative evaluation** and felt it could create a more streamlined and comprehensive process.

The primary concern was the possibility that **important individual feedback could be lost or diluted when multiple evaluations are combined.** Respondents emphasized that applicants sit with different judges, at different shows, and may demonstrate different strengths and weaknesses in each experience.

Another recurring concern was the importance of showing **growth and development over time.** Because the applicant process can span a significant period, several respondents noted that an applicant may improve substantially between their first and final evaluations.

Respondents also raised practical questions about **who would compile the cumulative report, how all evaluator opinions would be represented, how quickly applicants would receive feedback, and how the process would remain unbiased.**

Some suggested maintaining individual anonymous comments within the cumulative report so applicants could still receive the substance of each evaluator's feedback without knowing which judge provided each comment.

Takeaway: Respondents generally appear receptive to a cumulative evaluation, but they want it to be comprehensive rather than simply an overall summary. Individual observations, differing opinions, strengths, weaknesses, and an applicant's progression throughout the process should remain visible.

8. Are there other changes to the current USEF judge applicant evaluation process that you believe should be considered?

The open-ended responses raised broader concerns about the judge applicant and promotion process beyond anonymity and cumulative evaluations.

Recurring themes included the need for **more meaningful practical judging experience, stronger vetting of applicants, greater emphasis on education and mentorship, and consideration of an applicant's previous judging and horse-industry experience.**

Respondents also expressed concern about applicants advancing too quickly without sufficient experience and emphasized that becoming a successful judge involves more than recognizing good performance. Practical skills such as **bookkeeping, managing multiple cards, understanding rules, handling large classes, and working efficiently in a real horse-show environment** were repeatedly identified as important.

Another theme was the quality and independence of evaluators. Some respondents suggested using **designated or particularly qualified mentor/evaluator judges**, while others raised concerns about applicants selecting evaluators with whom they already have personal or professional relationships.

There was also interest in making the process more structured and educational, including suggestions for **stronger mentorship, clearer expectations, more opportunities for feedback throughout the process, and potentially additional educational or judging-school components.**

Takeaway: Respondents are looking beyond simply changing the evaluation form. The written feedback reflects interest in a judge development process that places greater emphasis on **experience, education, mentorship, strong vetting, practical preparedness, and meaningful feedback throughout the applicant's progression.**

Overall Survey Takeaway

The updated results demonstrate substantial support for changing how judge applicant evaluations are handled. **75.5% support anonymous individual evaluations, 64.5% say anonymity would make them more comfortable providing candid feedback, and 63% support providing applicants with one cumulative evaluation compiled from all evaluators.**

At the same time, the written responses show that respondents do not want confidentiality or consolidation to reduce the quality of feedback applicants receive. There is a consistent desire to balance **evaluator candor and confidentiality with accountability, mentorship, transparency of the applicant's strengths and weaknesses, and meaningful opportunities for development.**

The broader feedback also suggests that respondents view the evaluation process as only one component of judge development. **Experience, education, mentorship, vetting, and practical preparedness** were recurring themes in suggestions for improving the overall process.