Some of the criteria judges look for

General Appearance:
Item should be neat, clean, and "show ready" with no visible markings, loose threads, bearding, soil, pet hair, odor, or stains. No major distortion or sewing problems should appear on the front and/or back of quilt.

Unity and Design Elements:
Design of the top, quilting, fabric choices, sashing, borders, imagery, and finishing should be well planned and integrated. Line, shape, color, texture and value should be effectively used to produce an interesting, balanced, and well-proportioned design. Quilting pattern should complement the top design, fill the spaces well, and be consistent in proportion to the top design elements.

General Construction:
Piecing should be precise; corners matched and points sharp using appropriate thread type and color. Seams should be secure. Borders should be straight and well executed with no ripples, puckers, or stretching. Appliqué should be securely attached without puckers, using matching thread (unless stitches are decorative). Curves should be smooth and points sharp, with no shadowing of dark fabrics under light.

Quilting:
Stitches should be even and consistent with balanced tension, front and back. No knots, backstitches, pleats, or bubbles should be evident. Starts and stops should be unobtrusive. Amount of quilting should be sufficient and appropriate for the design of the quilt top, with the consistency of quilting stitches reasonably maintained throughout.

Finishing:
Batting should extend to edge of binding with corners neat, well executed, and consistent. No wobbles or distortion should be evident on quilt edges. Stitching should be secure.

Special techniques:
Embroidery, embellishments, beading, overlays, trapunto, photo transfers, etc. should be secure, neat, effectively executed, and appropriate to the design.

From the website of the National Association of Certified Quilt Judges (nacqj.com)