



## Association of British Riding Schools

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### INITIAL TEACHING AWARD EXAMINATION SYLLABUS

This is a foundation qualification showing the holder is capable of teaching basic levels in a Riding School.

#### REQUIREMENTS:

At least 17½ years of age.

First Aid Certificate (Minimum of a one day course)

Child Protection Certificate

Riding & Road Safety Certificate

Plus one of the following:-

- ABRS Progressive Rider Tests 6 (Stable Management and Equitation) and Lunge unit
- ABRS PHC 2 or above
- PC 'B' plus ABRS Lunge unit
- BHS Stage 2
- NVQ Level 2
- RC Level 3 (Equitation and Horse Welfare) plus ABRS Lunge unit
- National Diploma in Horse Studies (inc Riding)
- Overseas or college equivalents of the above – must include riding and lungeing.

#### REQUIRED TEACHING EXPERIENCE

1. Safety checks:  
horse & rider, dismounted & mounted
2. Assisting riders:
  - mounting from the ground
  - using a mounting block
  - method of adjusting rein length and stirrups
  - method of changing different types of whip from one hand to the other
3. Placing the rider in the saddle; checking position, posture and balance
4. 'Warming up' procedures including
  - good use of the school, and suitable school figures
  - assessment exercises
  - exercises for the rider to bring about improvement in the riders' confidence, ability and position
  - identifying riders' position faults
  - giving corrections to improve/correct riders' position faults
5. School movements
  - halt to walk and walk to halt transitions; turns and circles at walk;
  - walk to trot and trot to walk transitions;
  - sitting to the trot; rising to the trot;
  - how to recognise and change the diagonal; riding on a named diagonal;
  - turns and circles at trot;
  - riding at walk and trot without stirrups;
  - trot to canter and canter to trot transitions;
  - balance and posture in canter, circles and figures and riding without stirrups in canter;
  - canter on a named lead;

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- changes of lead in canter through trot;
  - selecting leading file and keeping the riders at safe distances;
  - safe control for transitions;
  - methods of obtaining accuracy in school figures (turns, loops and circles);
  - introducing riders to ground pole work and jumping; basic jumping position in all gaits;
  - balanced position for riding over varying terrain in trot and canter;
  - riders' correct posture and balance and the influence these have on the horse;
  - allowing periods of rest for horses and riders, e.g. walking on a long rein, lining up and questioning; sequence of footfalls in walk, trot and canter;
6. Drill Ride Work:
- numbering the ride and commanding simple exercises 'as a ride'
  - numbering riders into 2 rides with simple exercises to follow
  - the procedure for returning the ride to single file.
7. Winding up the lesson:
- cooling the ride off
  - lining the ride up
  - dismounting and preparing to lead in hand
8. Give an action plan for future work
9. Lunging:
- Use of equipment
  - Safety checks
  - Lunging a horse without rider
  - Rider's position and balance
  - suppling exercises
  - winding down the lesson
  - dismounting and preparing to return to stable.

### CONTENT OF THE EXAMINATION

Candidates must be able to show experience and ability in the practical and theoretical areas identified below.

1. Teach a group of 4-6 pupils for approximately 45 Minutes, showing progress and awareness of safety of both horses and riders. Exercises must include double ride work.
2. Teach a lunge lesson for approximately 20 minutes with a novice rider on a suitable horse. The candidate will be assessed lunging the horse prior to putting a rider on (5 – 10 minutes). If the candidate's technique is deemed to be unsafe the session will be stopped.
3. Give a lecture/demonstration, lasting 15 minutes, to a group of pupils. (To be prepared beforehand, from any ABRS Progressive Stable Management Tests 1-6.)
4. Discussion and Theory:  
Candidates will be questioned on:
  - Qualities of a good teacher/coach
  - Sports Psychology: goal setting, motivating junior or adult riders
  - Lesson plans for differing ability/age groups
  - Day course plans for junior holiday courses
  - Procedures for conducting hacks
  - Special considerations when teaching children and older riders and riders with physical disabilities
  - The effects of weather conditions on the horses and riders when teaching
  - Basic riding school administration: rider registration forms, booking procedures
  - Procedure in the event of an accident
  - Any other relevant topic

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## GENERAL

Completed application forms, full payment and all relevant paperwork must arrive at the ABRS office not later than 6 weeks prior to the requested exam date. Candidates are expected to arrive 20 minutes before the commencement of the examination and will be required to make their own arrangements for accommodation and food. They must bring to the examination riding clothes and any individual equipment they feel is necessary for the lecture/demonstration. The candidate's appearance will be taken into account.

As great emphasis is placed upon the candidate's ability to assess and teach appropriately unknown horses and riders, they may **NOT** be examined at the Centre where they have trained, unless they have been absent from that Centre for at least 12 months.

Lists of Approved Coaching Centres, Examination Centres and dates may be obtained from the Examinations Secretary at the ABRS Office.

Results will not be available on the day of the examination but will be forwarded to the candidate as soon as possible thereafter. **The examiners' decision will be final.**

## CANCELLATION

The fee, less an administration charge, is returnable up to 4 weeks before the examination date. In the event of a late notification of sickness/accident, accompanied by a Doctor's note, the fee may be held for a future examination date.

The Association reserves the right to postpone/cancel examinations, giving at least 10 days notice to the candidate. In the event of the examination being cancelled/postponed, the fee may be held over to the next scheduled examination, unless instructed otherwise by the candidate.

**Please address all enquiries to the Examinations Secretary at the ABRS Office.**

(All examination documentation is subject to alteration in line with government and employment regulations and employer requirements.)

*The **Initial Teaching Award** is a qualification in its own right. Candidates achieving the Certificate will be entitled to show the letters "**ABRS ITA**" after their names.*

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## GUIDANCE NOTES

The Initial Teaching Award exam is the first step on the ladder for people working in the horse industry who wish to gain teaching qualifications. The exam is focused on basic teaching techniques and the candidate must show the ability to teach the requirements of the syllabus in a safe, sympathetic and friendly manner. The 'guinea pigs' used in the examination will be asked if they enjoyed the lesson and if they would return for another session.

Safety is paramount and any slackness in the initial checking of horses and riders or the placing of them in potentially dangerous situations will be severely marked.

Candidates will be expected to show consideration for the horses used and emphasis must be placed on good posture for the rider.

The discussion section will include questions on teaching clients in different age ranges, and in various areas and weather conditions and the reasons why people ride. Candidates will be expected to show a basic awareness of the effect teachers can have on the commercial aspect of a riding school.

Drill rides are extremely useful in teaching groups; candidates should be practised in this technique and must show it in their exam.