



ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH RIDING SCHOOLS

GROOMS DIPLOMA

SYLLABUS

The ABRS Grooms Diploma is the next level above the ABRS Grooms Certificate and is open to career/work orientated candidates. While there is no minimum age limit our experience suggests that it would be unusual for a candidate to have the necessary skill and experience to fulfil the requirements of the syllabus before the age of 20.

The Grooms Diploma holder should be able to fill a vacancy for a competent groom/yard manager in any type of yard, be it stud/hunt/livery/riding school, other than *racing. S/he should be able to take sole charge of the horses in a small yard and, in addition, supervise and organise junior staff in a large yard with regard to all horse care aspects.

** With reference to National Hunt and racing yards, special training is available for staff contemplating joining this profession at the National Racing School.*

The candidate should have wide knowledge and experience of handling a variety of fit, stabled horses as well as the ability to adapt to working with all types, e.g. competition horses, hunters, polo ponies, show hacks, cobs, ponies etc. S/he should also know how to care for horses and ponies at grass and young stock. The holder of the Diploma should be capable of 'turning out' horses and ponies to show standard.

The level of experience of the candidate (minimum two years) must be substantiated by the candidate's employer or trainer upon application.

While the examination is largely practical, candidates will be questioned in depth on theoretical subjects stated below. Candidates must be prepared to be re-examined in any section examined previously in the ABRS Grooms Certificate.

IN ALL TASKS, SAFETY PROCEDURES MUST BE ADOPTED TOWARDS THE HORSE, SELF AND OTHERS.

PREREQUISITE

ABRS Grooms Certificate and a current First Aid Certificate, photocopies of which must be submitted with the application.

CONTENT OF EXAMINATION/REQUIRED EXPERIENCE

Indoor horses

Stable Routine: Demonstrate a daily routine to include mucking out, bedding down, skipping out, keeping beds and surrounding areas clean and tidy. Quatering. Candidates must be able to discuss methods of coping with problems arising on the yard. Have a practical, competent and efficient approach. Theory discussion on:- fitness work for all types of competition, riding school and hunting horses. Handling young stock.

Lungeing: Reasons for lungeing, variation in use of equipment and methods of lungeing. Fit equipment and lunge an experienced horse in an enclosed space for exercise and/or work.

Longreining: Discuss the advantages in general and of training the young horse.

Double Bridle: Fitting. Discuss its use and functions. Ride in the double bridle.

Riding: Candidates must demonstrate that they are practical riders, showing balance and harmony with the movements of the horse without force or aggression. Exercise a fit, clipped horse in the open and jump coloured and natural fences up to 3' 6", including ditches. Procedures for conducting a hack and in the event of an accident, as per ABRS Handbook. Knowledge of the Highway Code and Country Lore.

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Grooming and general care of the stabled horse: Full care of the horse before and after exercise, especially if hot and sweating or 'breaking out' later. Main groom of the day including strapping, wisping, banging. Discuss roughing off and getting up. Plait a mane and tail (plaits to be sewn) using safe practice and safe maintenance of equipment. Tail to be 'put up' as for polo, muddy conditions, cross-country, etc.

Clipping: General knowledge. Safety procedures for both horse and handler prior to and during clipping, including safe and protective clothing. Care and maintenance of clippers. Practical clipping.

Horse Clothing: Complete preparation for a journey. Procedure for loading into and unloading from a horsebox or trailer. Care in transit. General rugging and bandaging for all situations including bandaging for riding cross-country and other competitions. Fitting and use of various boots and specialised equipment.

Watering and feeding: Show an in-depth working knowledge of watering and feeding throughout the year. An understanding of dietary requirements, alternative foodstuffs and the ability to adapt requirements for specialised work. Discuss charts for relevant work and the values of nutrients i.e. proteins, carbohydrates, fats, oils, minerals, vitamins, fibre and water in the diet. Detailed knowledge of digestive system. Watering systems. Costing, budgeting and storage. Lunchtime stables.

Shoeing: Structure of the lower leg and foot. Recognise worn and ill-fitting shoes and demonstrate ability to remove broken and twisted shoes. Fit studs. Show knowledge of simple corrective and surgical shoes. Discuss action, lameness, foot ailments and poor conformation as relating to shoeing.

Veterinary: Detailed knowledge of horse anatomy and physiology. Health routines, including worming and vaccination programmes, fomenting, tubbing, hosing, poulticing, care of lame horses, knowledge of variation in temperature, pulse and respiration, dressing and treating wounds, including surgical bandaging. Know basic first aid and when and why a horse is unworkable and the appropriate action to take. Recognise symptoms of common diseases and ailments e.g. strangles, colic, laminitis, circulatory and respiratory diseases. Know isolation procedure.

CANDIDATES PLEASE NOTE THAT THEY MAY BE REQUIRED TO APPLY REMEDIAL BANDAGES TO KNEE AND/OR HOCK DURING THE EXAMINATION.

Administration, Communication and Safety Codes: Common records to be kept. Daily routines. Thorough knowledge of overall management practices to include purchase and storage of fodder, bedding and other stable requisites. Instruction/control of staff. Health and Safety. Fire drill and Incident/Accident procedures. Liaise with employer, colleagues, clients, visitors.

Management: General maintenance of establishment throughout the year. Organise and conduct staff appraisals. Principles of trading, including purchasing and selling horses, tack, equipment, clothing etc.

Saddlery: Care and cleaning, fitting and use. Recognition of weaknesses of tack, rugs and equipment. Working knowledge of costs, repairs and storage. Assessing quality and price. Knowledge of gadgets, bits and biting and general fitting for hunters and all types of competition horses.

Evening Stables: Attend to horses needs as required. Late stables procedure, horses, security, gates etc.

GENERAL

Candidates may NOT be examined at the centre where they have trained. Candidates are expected to arrive 30 minutes before the examination which will commence at 8 a.m. and finish at approximately 6.30 p.m. **Smoking is forbidden** throughout the period of the

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examination and while on the Examination Centre premises. Candidates must make their own arrangements for food and accommodation. Candidates are advised that working with/handling and riding horses involves a degree of risk. It is recommended, therefore, that candidates take out individual personal accident insurance cover.

Clothing and Equipment

Earrings, necklaces, rings, sleepers and studs must be removed before the examination.

Riding: candidates must bring to the examination riding clothes which include skull cap/helmet, jodhpurs or breeches, riding boots, hair net, hacking jacket, shirt, tie, gloves, whip (not dressage). **Candidates' attention is drawn to this clothing list which is designed for their safety including the wearing of a properly secured/well fitting skull cap/helmet and a back protector for the jumping phase, both of which must conform to current safety standards.**

Stable management: working overalls, wellingtons, protective clothing suitable for the time of year, complete grooming kit, tack cleaning equipment, plaiting equipment (only blunt nosed needles and scissors to be used), exercise/stable/travel and tail bandages plus gamgee or equivalent. All equipment must be washed and disinfected before the exam.

Disability/Doctors' Notes

These should be given to the Chief Examiner before commencement of the examination. Other disabilities should have been noted on the candidate's application form supported by a doctor's confirmation.

Attitude/Behaviour

Candidates are expected to show a responsible attitude to their exam tasks and demonstrate safe and efficient handling of the Examination Centre's horses, tools and equipment showing due regard to the other users in the stable yard. They will be required to conduct themselves at all times in an orderly and responsible manner. They may approach their immediate examiner for clarification of any task set and not entirely understood. Examiners will take into consideration the candidate's manner in handling horses as well as their general approach and tidiness in their work, including mode of dress.

MARKING

A below standard mark in any subject will constitute a fail. After riding on the flat, candidates who are considered to be below standard may be asked to retire before the jumping section of the examination.

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 four weeks before the examination date. In the event of a late notification of sickness/accident, accompanied by a Doctor's note, the examination fee will be forfeit unless the vacancy can be filled by another candidate. In this case, the fee may be held for a future examination date. In the event of the examination being cancelled/postponed, the fee may be held over to the next scheduled examination unless otherwise instructed by the candidate.

The Association reserves the right to postpone/cancel examinations, giving at least 10 days notice to 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 **Groom's Diploma** is a qualification in its own right. Candidates achieving the Certificate will be entitled to show the letters **ABRS GD** after their names.*