



Association of British Riding Schools

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Initial Teaching Award Syllabus

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

Content of the Examination

Candidates must be able to demonstrate the required competences 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 for both horses and riders
2. Teach a lunge lesson for approximately 20 minutes with a novice rider.
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

Pre-requisites:

- Candidates must be 17 years or over
- A current First Aid Certificate (Minimum of a one day course)
- A certificate of attendance at a Safeguarding and Protecting Children Workshop.
- A 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 a Lunge unit
- BHS Stage 2
- NVQ Level 2 (Riding and Horse Care)
- 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.



General

Completed application forms, full payment and all relevant paperwork must arrive at the ABRS office not later than 4 weeks prior to the requested exam date.

Candidates are expected to arrive 30 minutes before the commencement of the examination. This is to have a briefing for the day and to read the rider registration forms relating to the clients they will be teaching. Candidates will be required to make their own arrangements for accommodation and food and 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. We do expect candidates to wear clean hacking jackets or smart riding wear. Shirts, ties and hard hats will be expected.

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 a centre where they have worked or trained, unless they have been absent from that Centre for at least 6 months.

Lists of Examination Centres and dates may be obtained from the ABRS website www.abrs-info.org or 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 of 25% is returnable up to 4 weeks before the examination date. In the event of 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, or returned 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 **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.*



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 and may result in the exam being stopped.

Candidates will be expected to show consideration for the horses and riders used and emphasis must be placed on teaching good classical riding positions.

1) Class Lesson

The candidate will have already had chance to read the rider's registration forms in order to assess the rider's strengths and weaknesses.

After safely mounting the ride, selecting a leading file and showing suitable 'warm up' procedures for riders and horses the candidate may continue the lesson, but must show some Drill work and **some** of the exercises listed below. It is up to the candidate to teach what they see on the day and select suitable exercises.

The exercises used must show good use of school figures, identify and correct rider's position, faults and improve their confidence and above all be safe.

The examiner may question the candidate during or after the lesson to discuss the candidate's assessment and plans for progressing the ride.

Examples of exercises that may be used:-

- ❖ Basic school movements
- ❖ Sequence of footfalls in all gaits.
- ❖ Transitions
- ❖ Sitting and rising trot.
- ❖ How to recognise and change diagonals.
- ❖ Canter on a named leg. Simple changes of leg.
- ❖ Riding without stirrups in walk and trot



- ❖ Basic jumping position
- ❖ Introducing riders to ground poles
- ❖ Rest periods for horse and riders e.g. walking on a long rein, lining up and questioning

Drill Riding:-

Basic drill riding is showing that the instructor has control over the class and is a great way to instill confidence in nervous riders.

- Clear preliminary and executive commands are vital
- Clear and concise explanations, keep it simple and controlled e.g. down the next long side whole ride prepare to turn across the school (prelim command)
Whole ride turn now (exec command) and right/left on reaching the track

This can be done at walk, and it is not necessary to divide the ride into double rides as this could cause kicking problems. This could also be a useful exercise without stirrups if safe to do so. Please read the drill riding booklet for other ideas, but do please keep it uncomplicated.

2) Lunge Lesson

The candidate will be examined on:-

- ❖ use of equipment
- ❖ safety checks
- ❖ lunging a horse without rider
- ❖ rider's position and balance
- ❖ supplying exercises
- ❖ winding down the lesson
- ❖ dismounting and preparing to return to stable.

Experience has shown that the lunge section proves to be the weakest area and therefore we do strongly advise candidates to gain experience in lunging horses, and horses with riders on.

3) Lecture

This should last approx. 15 minutes and should be prepared beforehand from any ABRS Progressive Stable Management Tests 1 – 6. It is not permitted to read directly from notes and laptops, notes may be used for bullet points and 'aide memoire'. Examiners may ask to have a copy of the candidate's notes. We encourage the use of hand outs, props and visual aids



4) Discussion

Candidates will be questioned on some of the following:

- ❖ 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
- ❖ Customer Care.
- ❖ Basic riding school administration, rider registration forms, booking procedures
- ❖ Procedure in the event of an accident
- ❖ Any other relevant topic

Suggested Reading:-

ABRS Test Guidelines 1-10 + A - E

101 Riding Exercises by Karen Bush and Julian Marczak

The Principles of Teaching Riding by Karen Bush and Julian Marczak

Drills and Formation Riding by Shirley Renowden (obtainable from ABRS Head Office)

Cost of ITA Exam £200.00