



# ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH RIDING SCHOOLS

## PRELIMINARY HORSE CARE & RIDING

### SYLLABUS FOR LEVELS 1 & 2

The ABRS Preliminary Horse Care & Riding Certificate Levels 1 & 2 are foundation qualifications 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 16.

The syllabus incorporates some relevant requirements of N.V.Q. Levels 1 & 2 and some routines are common to both.

The Level 1 Certificate holder would be employable under supervision while the individual holding the Level 2 Certificate would be employable but in need of some supervision.

The examination is almost entirely practical. Candidates will be expected to show knowledge of and/or perform the following tasks safely, correctly and efficiently and have understanding of the reasons for so doing.

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

#### CONTENT OF EXAMINATION/REQUIRED EXPERIENCE

The following relates to both Levels 1 & 2 but please note additional requirements for Level 2 where stated.

##### Indoor horses

Stable Routine Procedures to include:- approach, fit head collar and tie up horse correctly. Collect appropriate tools for mucking out. Remove water buckets, empty hay nets, feed buckets and so on from stable and place safely in usual location. Use correct tools for mucking out and lay a day bed. Show economy with bedding materials when mucking out and provide sufficient clean material to make a comfortable, warm and safe bed when re-laying. Clean and refill water containers and keep clean and fresh during the day. Build and maintain a muck heap showing safe practice when storing tools. Skep out periodically during the day and keep surrounding areas clean, tidy and free from hazards. Clean and clear surface stable drains. Make early morning and evening inspections and know and use reporting procedure in all situations. **Level 2 candidates**, having had more experience, will be expected to be quicker in completing the tasks.

##### Level 2 ONLY

Lungeing: Reasons for lungeing. Fit equipment and lunge an experienced horse in an enclosed space.

Riding: Mount and dismount. Mounting from the ground, mounting block and with a leg up. Correct posture/balance in halt, at walk, trot and canter with/without stirrups through transitions, circles, turns and changes of direction. Show balance and harmony with the movements of the horse without force or aggression. Riding on the road. Open and shut gates. Riding a steady horse in the open and exercising under supervision. **Level 2 - in addition**: Show more effectiveness as a rider. Exercising a fit, clipped horse under supervision. Jump fences up to 2' 6", including small ditches, in trot and canter. Assist other riders to mount/dismount and give a leg up. Procedure for conducting a hack as per ABRS Handbook.

Grooming and general care of the stabled horse: The name and function of each item of grooming kit and its use. The reasons for grooming. The meaning of 'quartering' and how/when it is done. The meaning of 'strapping' and how/when it is carried out. Picking out feet and what to check for. Care of a horse after exercise. Remove and replace relevant

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rugs (night, day, sweat and coolers) and know the function of each. Plait a mane (plaits to be sewn) using safe practice and the safe maintenance of equipment. **Level 2 candidates** will be expected to be more competent and quicker at plaiting and to know equipment used and procedure for pulling, trimming and tidying.

Clipping: Reasons for clipping and types of clip. Safety procedures for both horse and handler prior to and during clipping, including safe and protective clothing. Assist with clipping and care of the machine.

Horse Clothing: Different types of rug, their uses and fitting. Care and storage of rugs. Bandage for travel and stable. Apply a tail bandage. Care of bandages. Fit boots and know their uses. **Level 2 - in addition**: Dress a horse for travel. Preparing a horse for travel and the precautions necessary when loading and transporting. Assist with loading and unloading during training, using safe practice.

Watering and feeding: The basic rules for feeding and the various types of feed. The methods of watering and keeping water and feed utensils clean. Assist with making up feeds from a chart. Keep a feed store tidy and vermin free. Report any changes in horses' feeding habits. Recognise mouldy and poor quality hay. Fill, weigh and tie a hay net. Lifting procedures following Health & Safety Guidelines. **Level 2 - in addition**: Basic digestive system from mouth to tail. Recognise feed in good and poor condition. Prepare a bran mash and sugar beet for feeding. Prepare feeds following a feed chart. Factors to be taken into consideration when making up a feed chart for a horse. What constitutes a balanced feed. Maintain a feed store considering e.g. hygiene, storage, stacking, labelling bins, feeding utensils. Monitoring stocks and reporting procedure for re-ordering. Safe disposal of waste.

Shoeing: The reasons for shoeing and care of the feet. The blacksmith's tools and their uses. The procedure for removing a shoe. **Level 2 - in addition**: The basic structure of the foot. Common types of shoes, nails and studs.

Veterinary: Signs of good health/ill health and reporting of abnormal signs. Normal temperature, pulse and respiration. Check respiration. Stop bleeding. The basic isolation procedures and precautions from a nursing and handling point of view. Lead a horse in hand for a veterinary check. Contents of a stable veterinary chest. Basic health routines e.g. teeth check, anti-tetanus, worming. **Level 2 - in addition**: Methods of administering medicine. Dress minor wounds. Take temperature and feel for pulse. Basic procedure for identifying lameness and some common causes.

Administration and Safety Codes: Common records to be kept e.g. shoeing, worming etc. Fire drill, road safety and country lore, procedure in the event of an accident as per ABRS Handbook and Health & Safety. Safety and security of yard, entrances, exits and surrounding areas regarding horses, people, equipment and tools.

Personal Effectiveness: Good time keeping. Work with and relate to other staff and those in authority. Receive and assist visitors to the yard. Answer the telephone and record messages accurately.

Saddlery: Tack up and fit a saddle and bridle with a snaffle bit paying attention to the welfare of the horse when so doing. Untack. Procedures for tacking and untacking in both loose boxes and stalls or anywhere that the horse needs to be tied. Leave a tacked horse safe and secure in the stable prior to being ridden. Clean and care for tack, taking it apart and re-assembling it, at the same time checking for defects. Report any defect immediately. Care of different types of girth, saddle cloths and numnahs and washing of these items. Principal types of tack in daily use. **Level 2 - in addition**: Tack up and fit a bridle with a pelham bit. Store saddlery.

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## GENERAL

Candidates may be examined at the centre where they have trained, provided it is an ABRS Approved Examination Centre. If trained elsewhere, they must be prepared to travel to their nearest centre. A list of examination dates and centres may be obtained from the Examinations Secretary at the ABRS office.

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. 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 examination and while on the Examination Centre premises. Candidates must make their own arrangements for food and accommodation.

## Clothing and Equipment

Earrings, necklaces, rings, sleepers and studs to 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), 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.

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.

## NON-RIDING

The examination (Levels 1 & 2) may be taken without the riding section, which can be taken separately at a later date if required. The Certificate will carry the words 'Non Riding'. In the event of the riding section being achieved, the full certificate will be issued. Candidates awarded Level 1 (non-riding) may take Level 2 (non-riding) without having obtained Level 1 riding. To be awarded the Certificate 'non-riding', the candidate must pass all horse care sections of the examination.

## MARKING

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.

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A below standard mark in any of the following subjects constitutes a fail of the examination:

1. Riding
2. Lungeing
3. Watering & feeding
4. Veterinary
5. Plaiting

In addition, three or more below standard marks overall will constitute a fail.

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.

The details and requirements in the syllabus, as with all ABRS syllabi, are 'employer led'. In addition, relevant elements of N.V.Q. Levels 1 & 2 have been incorporated in order that candidates on N.V.Q. based programmes can benefit from the additional training this examination offers.

During training, candidates would benefit from taking the ABRS Equitation and Stable Management Tests. These would introduce them to a progressive system and help them to overcome examination nerves.

**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 **Preliminary Horse Care** certificate is a qualification in its own right. Candidates achieving the Certificate will be entitled to show the letters **ABRS PHC** after their names.*