



## **PROTOCOL FOR EXAMINERS/ASSESSORS**

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### **THE EXAMINER/ASSESSOR'S ROLE:**

- To examine competence of the candidate's practical ability and knowledge of the subject, against the standard of the exam.
- To put the candidate's at ease so that they can give of their best.
- To be fair and unbiased in their opinions and not be influenced by anything other than the standard they are considering.

### **THE STANDARD:**

- The riding ability, the teaching ability and the stable management care and ability, at the required level, as set by the National Federation and in line with the levels of the International Group for Equestrian Qualifications.
- International Level 1. Level 2. Level 3. (See the IGEQ matrix.)

## **EXAMINING/ASSESSING:**

Examining = Assessing = Obtaining information, usually through a test or exam. How examining may take place:

- Observation of practical tasks (e.g. riding/jumping/teaching/ stable management.)
- Observation of work in the work place.
- Simulated situation. (Setting up an artificial 'role play'.)
- Completing a set piece of work. (A case study or assignment relating to a specific situation.)
- Answering questions either orally (spoken) or written.

### • **WHY EXAMINE/ASSESS:**

- To find out the level of competence or knowledge.
- To ensure competence.
- To award a level of achievement.
- To ensure standards (of exams/levels) are maintained.

## **THE EXAMINER: YOU:**

- Your image: Turnout (clothing.) Appropriate to the weather. Warm or water proof. Neat, clean and tidy. Professional image of a professional person doing a professional job.
- Your body language: Welcoming. Pleasant voice and manner. Allowing the candidates to feel comfortable and at ease with you. Allowing the candidates to feel that they can ask a question if they are unsure of anything.
- Body language can be encouraging or intimidating.
- Your attitude: Encouraging. Be patient with the candidates. Do not make them feel as if you are in a hurry or that they are irritating you.
- Make eye contact when you are speaking to a candidate and face them, showing interest in what they have to offer you.
- Eye contact and facial attitude should be inviting and encouraging.
- Be aware that the candidate sees you in a very different way to how you see yourself. You are the person who has the power to pass or fail them today if they achieve or do not achieve the standard.
- That makes YOU a very POWERFUL and IMPORTANT person.
- The more you can put the candidate at ease the more they will be able to demonstrate their competence. Making them feel comfortable will increase their confidence in themselves and the situation and you are more likely to see them at their best.
- If the candidate feels nervous or ill at ease in your presence, then they will lack sufficient confidence to show you their level of capability.
- If the candidate fails to achieve the standard of the exam, they must blame their lack of knowledge or competence, they must not blame you for making the exam such an ordeal. Only if they blame themselves will they work harder to improve their weaknesses.
- The way you make them feel can affect their attitude to future situations in exams or assessments.

## QUESTIONING:

This is one of the most effective ways of finding out knowledge and ability and so it is used extensively in examining/assessing. It is a powerful tool and you must learn to use it skilfully to find out exactly what you want to know.

### How to develop a clear and easy questioning style:

- Always introduce yourself to an individual or a group.
- The style of your questioning will discover the understanding of the candidate not just whether they have learnt the facts. (e.g. they may be able to tell you that one of the rules for feeding a horse is: 'Feed plenty of bulk or fibre in the diet' but unless they can explain why this is important then the statement 'feed plenty of bulk' is not supported by the knowledge of WHY.
- A good questioning technique should encourage the individual (or group) to THINK.
- Always introduce the subject, e.g. 'we are going to talk about Rules of Feeding'.
- Start with an easy question and then as the candidates answer with confidence progressively make the questions more searching and in depth.
- Make questions clear and simple, e.g. what does the word 'impulsion' mean?'
- Be systematic and avoid jumping about from one subject to another without an apparent link.
- Offer the opportunity for others in the group to add to what has been said before moving to another subject.
- Give the question first, then pause and allow thinking time before directing the question to a named individual. This will make the whole group listen and think. If you name the person and then ask the question the rest of the group are thinking 'thank goodness it's not me' and will not be concentrating on the subject.
- If you ASK A QUESTION- pause – NAME PERSON TO ANSWER. All will keep thinking and will have more to offer when asked.
- Avoid questions that are so vague there could be any number of answers. e.g. 'Look at that horse and tell me what you see?' This requires a 'guess what the examiner is thinking' answer. It could be the colour, markings, health, condition, conformation, breeding, size, fitness etc. etc.! Better to say: 'look at this horse and tell me about its colour and markings.' Or 'describe this horse's conformation'.
- Try to use a question that includes why/which/what/ where/when?? These are known as 'open questions' and they invite an answer which has some depth and substance to it, e.g. 'What can you tell me about the rules of feeding horses?'
- Closed questions usually only require a yes/no answer or have a 50% guess factor of being right or wrong, e.g. 'Is this horse a dark bay?' Yes/no. If this was asked as an 'open question' 'What can you tell me about this horse's colour?' The answer might be, 'It's a dark brown colour on its body with a black mane and tail and black legs from the knee down. This shows how much more the candidate knows about the colour.
- Avoid saying 'and what else?' to the candidate when they have answered quite well. Often that means you are looking for one specific point that the candidate has missed and they then become anxious and worry about the one thing they could not answer.

- Avoid asking several questions on top of each other without allowing the candidate thinking time or time to answer, e.g. 'Describe the colour of this horse, do you think it is in good condition and tell me about it's conformation.' Ask one thing at a time!
- If you have difficulty in thinking up questions that will search the candidate's knowledge, then try putting WHY-WHAT-WHICH- WHEN-WHERE in front of the question.

### **QUESTIONING SKILL CHECK LIST:**

- Do you ask questions that your participants can answer confidently and easily?
- Do you allow your participants time to think?
- If there is no answer forthcoming, are you able to lead them into an answer that makes them feel able to stay involved?
- Do you make questions short and clear?
- Do you use body language (eye contact, smiling, nodding) to encourage answers?
- Do you use the participant's names; it is much more involved and personal.
- Do you always acknowledge responses?
- Do you avoid allowing a participant to feel inadequate against the rest of the group?
- Are you able to distribute the questions evenly around a group without allowing one or two to take over the session?
- Do you avoid closed questions? Yes/No answers.
- Do your participants leave the session feeling confident and encouraged that you have helped them to give of their best?

Most of the above are 'closed' questions the response should be 'yes'. They are examples of when a closed question has a valid use.

### **PRACTICAL SESSIONS IN EXAMINATIONS OR ASSESSMENTS**

- These sessions should be well planned and use an area where candidates can work easily with calm horses that will stay relaxed about having a number of people working in the stable and around them.
- Candidates should be briefed clearly on what is expected of them and then allowed to 'get on with the job' then be questioned after the task is completed, e.g. 'Go into the stable and fit a dressage saddle and double bridle to the horse.'
- The task should be observed and completed in a realistic time span which is appropriate to the job. Questions can then be asked to support the practical skill, e.g. 'Show me how you made sure the bridle fits the horse?' 'How would you check this saddle for safety?'
- Candidates can safely work in pairs but should be given specific individual tasks, e.g. one fit the saddle; one fit the bridle then swaps over to discuss each other's work.
- Candidates should ideally all complete the same practical tasks, e.g. grooming/fitting tack/fitting boots and bandages/ fitting rugs.)
- Safety and good handling of the horses is of the highest priority.

### **GIVING FEEDBACK:**

- Feedback is essential to assist the candidate in planning their further training.
- Feedback is essential for motivation and development of the participants.
- Feedback indicates to the candidate where their strengths and weaknesses are.

- Feedback should be given clearly and constructively, so that the participant is in no doubt as to where they need to improve or develop, to achieve the standard if they have not been successful.
- Verbal or written feedback should be honest and forthcoming and should highlight the good aspects first and then clearly identify the weaknesses.
- Feedback should confirm the participant's understanding of what the standard is and if they did not achieve it, why not.

### **KEEPING NOTES AND WRITING REPORTS:**

- Keeping notes on each candidate is essential and it is very important that you keep clear and concise notes that are identifiable to each person.
- Ideally each candidate should have a number so that there can be no confusion.
- Keep your notes private, so that each candidate cannot read them over your shoulder if you are in close proximity. They may read something that confuses them or makes them think they are not doing very well and this could have a bad effect on the rest of their day.
- Make sure that you are clear about which horses they rode so that if you make a comment, e.g. "she rode a grey horse" you are quite sure that she did ride a grey horse!
- In writing reports that the candidates will read to help them for their future, it is essential that you make the main points clear as to where the strengths and especially the weak areas lay, e.g.

*She rode both horses with a plan but was not effective enough to influence them and ensure that she maintained rhythm and balance. She now needs more depth of position so that her aids can be more coordinated for more effect. OR:*

*In stable management, while showing some knowledge he was not confident enough in his handling of the horses and sometimes this made an unsafe situation (door open and loose horse while fitting tack).*

The candidate must be quite clear from the report they receive as to where they need to improve to achieve the standard on another occasion.

### **SUMMING UP YOUR ROLE AS AN EXAMINER:**

- You are a guardian of the standard. Your role is to examine/assess and pass candidates who achieve the standard and fail those who do not achieve the standard.
- It is usually easy to decide on the passes and fails when the individuals are clearly above the standard or below it.
- It is more difficult to decide on the candidates who are near the standard but may have some areas above standard and some areas below.
- Then it is your role to balance the strengths and weaknesses and come to a decision as to whether to award the qualification or not.
- The following questions may help you to make the 'right' decision.
  1. If I was going to employ this person, e.g. as a Level 1 instructor in my establishment, would they be competent to carry out most of the tasks required of a Level 1 instructor with a small amount of supervision and support from a more senior member of staff? (If Yes – then Pass.)

2. If I was employing this person, would they appear to be open to learning from those more experienced and easy to take on advice to improve their confidence and competence? (If Yes – Pass.)
3. If I was employing this person, would I consider that they were worthy to call themselves a qualified instructor (e.g. at Level 1) or would I look at them and wonder how they managed to pass the exam? (If worthy then – Pass)
4. If I looked at their work through the day (of the exam) and I kept hoping that they would show me a little more competence but generally I felt that they were at the standard. (then – Pass)
5. If I looked at their work through the exam day and kept worrying about the mistakes they were making and their general lack of competence then generally they are probably not at the standard. (then – Fail)
6. Make quite sure that if your feeling is towards the candidate not being up to standard then you must make sure that your reasons for failing are clear and that you can give the person sound information as to where they must improve to achieve the standard on another occasion.

EVERY CANDIDATE MUST FEEL THAT WITH THE NECESSARY TRAINING AND GUIDANCE THEY CAN ACHIEVE THE STANDARD OF AN EXAM OR ACCEPT FOR THEMSELVES THAT IT IS NOT WITHIN THEIR ABILITY.

IT IS NOT ACHIEVING THE STANDARD THAT FAILS THEM; THEY MUST NEVER FEEL THAT IT IS THE EXAMINERS WHO FAIL THEM.