

RDA



HANDBOOK FOR ACCESSIBILITY MARK CENTRES,  
COACHES & EXAMINERS

RDA



accessibility mark

inclusive equestrian sport

# Proficiency Tests

## Riding & Horse Care

### Grades 1, 2, 3, 4

January  
2018



# RDA PROFICIENCY TESTS



## Handbook for Accessibility Mark Centres, Coaches and Examiners

### Why offer the RDA Proficiency tests in your Centre?

The RDA Proficiency tests form a key part of the wider RDA Education '**Learning through Horses, Learning for Life**' programme, offering a valuable opportunity to recognise and reward achievement, at all levels of ability.

The RDA Proficiency test programme has been carefully designed to be as accessible as possible, encouraging participants on each step of the way. From Grades 1 to 4, the tests gradually increase in difficulty, providing an attainable challenge within the scope of the individuals' capabilities.

Offering RDA Proficiency tests in your Accessibility Mark Centre can be a real motivator for all involved—not only for those working towards and actually taking the tests, but also for volunteers and staff taking part in the sessions. Setting goals with riders can form the basis for simple lesson plans, whether over a half term, a year or beyond, and can really help to engage and focus participants in their activities each week. Syllabus cards can also be taken home, or back to care or education centres, so that participants can share their knowledge and experiences with family, teachers, friends and carers (who can also help them to practice!)

Did you know that GRADES 1 & 2 RIDING and HORSE CARE can be tested within the candidates' on centre, without needing an external examiner?

All resources, including certificates, pin badges and new-style iron-on patches are available for a small charge directly from RDA National Office.

The test syllabuses can form quick, simple and enjoyable lesson plans for your sessions

Why not use the RDA Endeavour Award as a confidence-building 'stepping stone' to work towards the RDA Proficiency tests?

# Information for Centres



## Things to consider before you begin

### Plan ahead!

Make sure you have adequate **certificates**, pin **badges** or **iron-on patches** in advance of the test. All resources are available for a small charge directly from RDA National Office. You can either complete and return the Order form within this pack or simply pick up the phone to order what you need.

Please contact Marisa Bretherton-Mackay at RDA National Office for information on resources available in **alternative formats**, such as test certificates with **Braille** overlays.

## Organising and booking the test

### Who can test the candidates?

Role	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4
Group/Centre AM Coach*	✓	✓		
Group Coach from other RDA Group	✓	✓	✓	
Accessibility Support Officer (ASO)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Regional Chairman	✓	✓		
County Chairman	✓	✓		
RDAC/ RDASC	✓	✓	✓	✓

\*Grades 1 and 2 can be examined within the centre, by a coach that has attended the Accessibility Mark Training but not by the candidates usual coach. Grade 1 can, however, under *exceptional* circumstances, be tested by the same coach who teaches the riders, but do try to avoid this where possible, as it can be a confidence boost for the candidates to really show off what they know to others, who aren't their usual coach. **ALL examiners must have attended the Accessibility Mark centre training and have the minimum level of coach qualification before taking on the role.**

## Arranging the test

- Book the date and time for the tests well in advance; making sure that all of the candidates are feeling confident, ready to take their tests, and have been completely prepared. Allow enough time for each candidate to be tested fairly, in a relaxed, unhurried environment. As a rule, roughly eight Grade 1, or six Grade 2 candidates can be tested within one hour, although each group will be different, depending on the needs of the individuals.
- If using an external examiner, send them the venue details and a copy of the **Proficiency Test Registration Form**, with the names and details all of the candidates to be tested, in plenty of time for the test. Your ASO may be able to tie in an examination with their renewal visit to save you costs.
- **Expenses:** Examiners' travel expenses, where applicable, should be reimbursed by the host centre. This should be discussed and agreed with them before any test arrangements are made.
- **Things you'll need:** Make sure you've all of the equipment and supporting resources to hand, ready for the test session. Check that everything is clean and in good working order, where appropriate.
- **Awards:** Check levels of badges/patches and certificates, and re-order as necessary.
- Resources available

Syllabus Cards—ensure current date! Relunched in Sept 2016

# Information for Coaches

## Prepare your candidates

Make sure you think about when in the year you plan to enter your candidates for their tests, and prepare them in plenty of time, to ensure that they are happy and confident by the date of the test. It's important to ensure that you are working to current versions of the syllabuses. All syllabus cards are available for a small cost, directly from RDA National Office.

## Complete the RDA Proficiency Test Registration Form, giving details of all candidates to be tested:

- Full names (any names or nicknames/names known by)
- Age
- How long they have been attending the centre
- Disability if known (e.g. spinal injury, visual impairment, learning difficulties, epilepsy)
- Whether they are to be tested on Riding, Horse Care or both, and at which grade

## Things to consider:

### Equipment

If you are asked to provide any equipment for the test (such as bridles, grooming kit etc. for Horse Care) make sure that it is clean, appropriate, in good working order and meets current RDA standards for health and safety.

### Horses and ponies

Be sure that any equines to be used in the tests are capable of performing all movements needed, that they are fit and are well-presented for the test, and have been suitably tacked up and warmed up for the session.

### Helpers

Make sure that any session helpers have been well-prepared and trained in advance. Working with the candidates, they should aim to encourage them to be able to answer questions independently, perform movements on their own and to feel confident in demonstrating their skills

### Putting candidates at ease

On the day of the test itself, take time to introduce the examiner to the candidates (if they've not met them previously). Reassure them and give them time to relax, adjust and prepare themselves. Above all, it should be an enjoyable, positive and rewarding experience for everyone involved! Ensure that all candidates are comfortably and smartly dressed for the test.

# Information for Examiners

## Marking sheets and test paperwork

Use the marking sheets provided in this pack and take time to familiarise yourself with the syllabuses and standards expected at each grade.

Before the test, make sure you have the following information to hand, which should be passed on to you in advance by the test centre:

- The test date, time and venue
- Details of the candidates' known names, ages, disabilities, how long they have been attending the Accessibility Mark Centre and any communication difficulties, or other issues that may need to be taken into consideration when examining them
- The grades to be tested on the day, and which sections the candidates will be tested on— Riding, Horse Care, or both

## Take time to introduce yourself, and get to know your test candidates

Arrive in plenty of time on the day and take time to meet and introduce yourself to the candidates, in a relaxed and friendly way, before the test starts. Use this time to make an quick assessment of them and make a note of any possible limiting factors that you will need to be sensitive to, when working with them during the tests.

It is recommended that you keep to the number of riders registered for the tests (don't allow late additions to the list, as it could mean that the candidates aren't as well-prepared and this could prove difficult or uncomfortable for them, as well as the others taking their tests). As a rule, approximately eight candidates can be tested at Grade 1 within an hour, and six at Grade 2, although this will of course vary and you should allow for this on the day, taking more time if appropriate.

## Equipment

Check that any equipment or supporting resources are available to hand before you start the tests.

## Consider different ways of approaching the questions

Don't be afraid to use your imagination and creativity in your communication with the candidates, offering different options for giving answers, depending on their individual needs. For example, written papers, choices and alternatives as prompts, physical demonstrations or asking them to point to pictures of tasks being done correctly are ways in which you can help the candidates feel comfortable in conveying their answers. There really is no right or wrong way and it may mean patiently, clearly and calmly posing questions in several different ways, approaching the questions from different angles, before they feel confident in giving you their response. Using an interpreter or familiar person to relay the questions can really help in certain circumstances, as the candidates may respond more confidently to them.



# Information for Examiners

## **Continued:**

### **Medical considerations**

- Take time to discuss the candidates' specific medical conditions with the coach/ therapist/carer/ teacher well before test, where possible.
- You will be testing the candidates' ability, so make sure you bear in mind the effort they have made in responding to the questions or when doing physical demonstrations.
- Look at the ways in which candidates manage their own disability and any limitations they may face. Bear this in mind when marking.
- Be aware that mental tension can cause confusion and increase muscle tone, which can intensify the effects of a disability. Candidates should be able to relax and enjoy themselves, so do what you can to put them at ease and lighten the atmosphere to make it a pleasurable experience and give them the chance to be the best they can be on the day. They will have worked hard towards the tests and it's their opportunity to shine and really show off what they *can* do...as that is what counts!

### **Candidates with learning difficulties**

- Think of creative and imaginative ways to present the tests to the candidates
- Be patient! Make sure that the candidates understand each question. Allowing time for them to respond, and be prepared to re-phrase, repeat, break down the questions or look at different approaches to appeal to them, as necessary.
- It's fine to ask an interpreter or simply someone who is familiar to the candidate, to pose questions on your behalf, when prompted by you. Sometimes simple shyness or unfamiliarity can affect confidence and put them at a disadvantage. Bear in mind, though, that some candidates may respond more positively to new faces, as it gives them the change to really show off what they know and impress someone new!



# Training and Courses for Proficiency Test Examiners



**ALL examiners must have attended training before taking on the role.**

## Who can examine, and to what grade?

Role	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4
Group Coach at home group*	✓	✓		
Group Coach from other RDA Group	✓	✓	✓	
Accessibility Support Officer (ASO)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Regional Chairman	✓	✓		
County Chairman	✓	✓		
RDAC/ RDASC	✓	✓	✓	✓

\*Grades 1 and 2 can be examined within the centre, by a coach that has attended the Accessibility Mark Training but not by the candidates usual coach. Grade 1 can, however, under *exceptional* circumstances, be tested by the same coach who teaches the riders, but do try to avoid this where possible, as it can be a confidence boost for the candidates to really show off what they know to others, who aren't their usual coach. **ALL examiners must have attended the Accessibility Mark centre training and have the minimum level of coach qualification before taking on the role.**

**Grades 1 and 2:** RDAGCs and above, along with suitably-qualified RDA Regional or County Chairmen, can be nominated as examiners by their County Coach and will then need to be approved by the Regional Committee.

**Grade 3:** Qualified RDAGCs and above<sup>†</sup> who have been nominated by their Regional Coach, and approved by the Regional Committee.

**Grade 4:** Qualified RDACs and RDASCs, who have been nominated by their Regional Coach and approved by the Regional Committee.

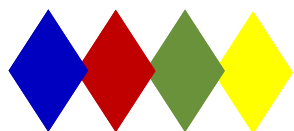
**Accessibility Support Officers (ASO's)** are all qualified RDACs or above and are approved to examine Proficiency tests at all levels. It is possible for a centre to include a Proficiency Test Examination with the centre renewal visit at no additional cost to the centre.

## Where is training held, and who can organise it?

All examiners for **Grades 1—4\*\*** should aim to attend RDA Proficiency test training at least once every **four** years, to make sure they're up to date with all of the current standards and syllabuses. This is also a great opportunity to meet with others involved in delivering and examining the tests, and to share ideas, experience and good practice.

Training days up to Grade 4, if needed, should be co-ordinated within the regions. Courses for Grades 1 and 2 only can be held more locally, at county level.

**\*\*Courses for Bronze, Silver and Gold are co-ordinated by RDA UK. Please contact RDA National Office for more information on the advanced tests.**



# CANDIDATE REGISTRATION FORM

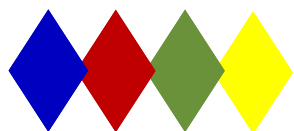
RDA Proficiency Tests: Grades 1-4. To be completed by the Accessibility Mark Centre, in advance of the test

Centre	
Coach	
Test Date	
Time	
Venue	
<b>GRADE(S) OF TEST</b>	

Candidate Name	Age	Date joined Centre	Disability Notes*	Riding ✓	Horse Care ✓

\*Make a note of any relevant factors that may need to be taken into consideration for the individual candidate on the day of the test, including possible communication difficulties.





# PROFICIENCY TEST SHEET

## GRADE 1

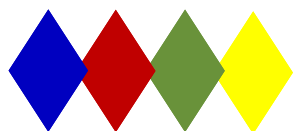
Accessibility Mark Centre: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Examiner: \_\_\_\_\_

### RIDING

SYLLABUS ITEM	MAX. MARK	CANDIDATES' INITIALS							
Sit happily and maintain a balanced position at HALT, in WALK and during CHANGES OF REIN (with help, if needed)	3								
Hold the reins, or make an attempt to hold the reins	1								
Demonstrate a simple exercise that has been learned	1								
TOTAL MARK ( Max. 5)									
PERCENTAGE %									
PASS / FAIL (Pass 60%)									

Overall percentage = (total mark ÷ 5) x 100



# PROFICIENCY TEST SHEET

## GRADE 1

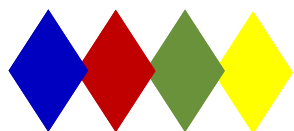
Accessibility Mark Centre: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Examiner: \_\_\_\_\_

### HORSE CARE (SYLLABUS A)

SYLLABUS ITEM	MAX. MARK	CANDIDATES' INITIALS							
Show that you know these parts of a horse or pony									
EYES	1								
EARS	1								
MOUTH	1								
NECK	1								
LEG	1								
Show that you know these parts of a saddle and bridle									
REINS	1								
BIT	1								
GIRTH	1								
STIRRUPS	1								
Show how to approach a horse or pony correctly and safely	1								
TOTAL MARK ( Max. 10)									
PERCENTAGE %									
PASS / FAIL (Pass 60%)									

Overall percentage = (total mark ÷ 10) x 100



# PROFICIENCY TEST SHEET

## GRADE 1

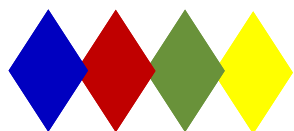
Accessibility Mark Centre: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Examiner: \_\_\_\_\_

### HORSE CARE (SYLLABUS B)

SYLLABUS ITEM	MAX. MARK	CANDIDATES' INITIALS							
Show that you know what a horse or pony eats	2								
Show that you know what a horse or pony drinks	1								
Show that you know where a horse or pony lives	2								
TOTAL MARK ( Max. 5)									
PERCENTAGE %									
PASS / FAIL (Pass 60%)									

Overall percentage = (total mark ÷ 5) x 100



# PROFICIENCY TEST SHEET

## GRADE 2

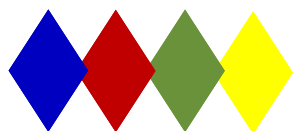
Accessibility Mark Centre: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Examiner: \_\_\_\_\_

### RIDING

SYLLABUS ITEM	MAX. MARK	CANDIDATES' INITIALS							
Maintain a correct position in walk, and demonstrate your ability to steer by riding through a line of bending cones	2								
Halt between two poles on the ground, with help if needed	2								
Demonstrate a range of movements or exercises	4								
Show that you know how to run up the stirrup irons	2								
TOTAL MARK ( Max. 10)									
PERCENTAGE %									
PASS / FAIL (Pass 60%)									

Overall percentage = (total mark ÷ 10) x 100



# PROFICIENCY TEST SHEET

## GRADE 2

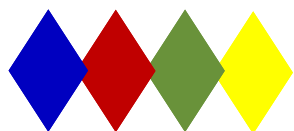
Accessibility Mark Centre: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Examiner: \_\_\_\_\_

## HORSE CARE

SYLLABUS ITEM	MAX. MARK	CANDIDATES' INITIALS							
Show that you know these parts of a horse or pony: Grade 1 plus									
<b>MANE</b>	1								
<b>TAIL</b>	1								
<b>HOOF</b>	1								
<b>WITHERS</b>	1								
<b>SHOULDERS</b>	1								
<b>FORELOCK</b>	1								
<b>KNEE</b>	1								
<b>BACK</b>	1								
<b>GRADE 1 (RECALL)</b>	1								
Show that you know these parts of a saddle and bridle: Grade 1 plus									
<b>NOSEBAND</b>	1								
<b>CHEEKPIECE</b>	1								
<b>HEADPIECE</b>	1								
<b>STIRRUP LEATHERS</b>	1								
<b>CANTLE</b>	1								
<b>POMMEL</b>	1								
<b>GRADE 1 (RECALL)</b>	1								
Show you know these horse/pony colours: <b>BAY, CHESTNUT, GREY, PIEBALD, SKEWBALD</b>	5								
Show that you know these basic markings: <b>BLAZE, SNIP, STAR, SOCK</b>	4								
Name these parts of a grooming kit: <b>DANDY BRUSH, BODY BRUSH, METAL CURRY COMB, PLASTIC CURRY COMB, HOOF PICK</b>	5								
<b>TOTAL MARK ( Max. 30)</b>									
<b>PERCENTAGE %</b>									
<b>PASS / FAIL (Pass 60%)</b>									

Overall percentage = (total mark ÷ 30) x 100



# PROFICIENCY TEST SHEET

## GRADE 3

Accessibility Mark Centre: \_\_\_\_\_

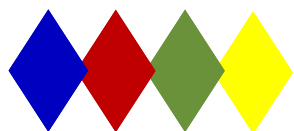
Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Examiner: \_\_\_\_\_

## RIDING

SYLLABUS ITEM	MAX. MARK	CANDIDATES' INITIALS							
Ride unaided in an enclosed space, showing control of your pony or horse	2								
Demonstrate changes of rein	2								
Demonstrate exercises whilst in walk and on lead rein	2								
Maintain your position at trot (rising or sitting) on a lead rein, with help if needed	2								
Walk a 20m circle, unaided, or trot over a pole on the ground, showing a forward position, with help if needed	2								
TOTAL MARK ( Max. 10)									
PERCENTAGE %									
PASS / FAIL (Pass 60%)									

Overall percentage = (total mark ÷ 30) x 100





# PROFICIENCY TEST SHEET

## GRADE 3

Accessibility Mark Centre: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Examiner: \_\_\_\_\_

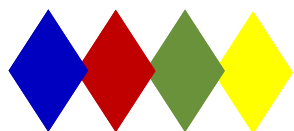
### HORSE CARE

SYLLABUS ITEM	MAX. MARK	CANDIDATES' INITIALS							
Show that you know these parts of a horse or pony: Grades 1 and 2 plus									
<b>FROG</b>	1								
<b>WALL OF HOOF</b>	1								
<b>SOLE</b>	1								
<b>CREST</b>	1								
<b>FLANK</b>	1								
<b>ELBOW</b>	1								
<b>FETLOCK</b>	1								
<b>MUZZLE</b>	1								
<b>DOCK</b>	1								
<b>GRADE 1 &amp; 2 (RECALL)</b>	1								
Show that you know these parts of a saddle and bridle: Grades 1 and 2 plus									
<b>SADDLE FLAP</b>	1								
<b>SKIRT</b>	1								
<b>GIRTH STRAPS</b>	1								
<b>BROWBAND</b>	1								
<b>THROAT LASH</b>	1								
<b>GRADE 1 &amp; 2 (RECALL)</b>	1								
Show basic knowledge of the needs of a horse or pony: <b>WATERING, FEEDING and GROOMING</b>	3								
Show that you know these items: <b>HEAD COLLAR, HAYNET, LEAD ROPE and RUG</b>	4								
Name these parts of a grooming kit: Grades 1 and 2, plus									
<b>RUBBER CURRY COMB</b>	1								
<b>SPONGE</b>	1								
<b>GRADE 1 &amp; 2 (RECALL)</b>	1								
Show that you know how to correctly and safely pick up and pick out a horse's or pony's hoof	2								

Continued overleaf →

SYLLABUS ITEM	MAX. MARK	CANDIDATES' INITIALS							
Show that you know how to run up the stirrup irons after dismounting, and that you know how to correctly and safely lead a horse or pony	2								
TOTAL MARK ( Max. 30)									
PERCENTAGE %									
PASS / FAIL (Pass 60%)									

Overall percentage = (total mark ÷ 30) x 100



# PROFICIENCY TEST SHEET

## GRADE 4

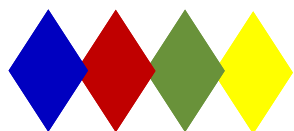
Accessibility Mark Centre: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Examiner: \_\_\_\_\_

### RIDING

SYLLABUS ITEM	MAX. MARK	CANDIDATES' INITIALS							
Ride independently in an enclosed space and show a practical seat at halt, in walk and trot; attempting to apply the correct aids, as far as your disability allows	5								
Demonstrate control in walk and trot	2								
Ride a figure of eight in trot, in trot over poles placed on the ground in the arena, in rising trot or in the light seat position	3								
<b>TOTAL MARK ( Max. 10)</b>									
<b>PERCENTAGE %</b>									
<b>PASS / FAIL (Pass 60%)</b>									

Overall percentage = (total mark ÷ 10) x 100



# PROFICIENCY TEST SHEET

## GRADE 4

Accessibility Mark Centre: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Examiner: \_\_\_\_\_

## HORSE CARE

SYLLABUS ITEM	MAX. MARK	CANDIDATES' INITIALS							
Show that you have a basic understanding of a horse/pony's behaviour and demonstrate this on approaching and handling a horse or pony	3								
Show that you know the basic food for a stable-kept horse or pony:									
<b>HAY</b>	1								
<b>NUTS</b>	1								
<b>COARSE MIX</b>	1								
<b>CHAFF</b>	1								
Show that you know how to groom a stable-kept horse or pony, and can identify additional grooming kit items needed:	1								
<b>WATER BRUSH</b>	1								
<b>STABLE RUBBER</b>	1								
<b>TAIL BANDAGE</b>	1								
Show that you know the different types of bedding:									
<b>STRAW</b>	1								
<b>SHAVINGS</b>	1								
<b>PAPER</b>	1								
Show that you know these pieces of mucking out equipment:									
<b>WHEELBARROW</b>	1								
<b>FORK</b>	1								
<b>SHAVINGS FORK</b>	1								
<b>BROOM</b>	1								
<b>SHOVEL</b>	1								
Show that you know the reason for taking a horse or pony to the farrier	1								

Continued overleaf →

SYLLABUS ITEM	MAX. MARK	CANDIDATES' INITIALS							
Show that you know how to take care of a saddle and bridle, and can demonstrate or explain how to tack up, with help if needed	2								
Show that you know how to catch a horse or pony, lead in hand and that you know how to tie up correctly	3								
Be able to identify the following parts of a horse or pony: Grades 1, 2 & 3 plus:									
STIFLE	1								
CHESTNUT	1								
ERGOT	1								
CHIN GROOVE	1								
POINT OF THE HIP	1								
TOTAL MARK ( Max. 30)									
PERCENTAGE %									
PASS / FAIL (Pass 60%)									

Overall percentage = (total mark ÷ 30) x 100

# Where next?



If candidates have successfully completed and have enjoyed their RDA Proficiency tests, why not consider some of the other rewarding activities that RDA can offer?

- ◆ **Bronze, Silver and Gold RDA Proficiency tests:** Offering a more challenging, advanced pathway for riders who have completed Grades 1-4! Available for both Riding and Horse Care



A raft of attractive and engaging, activity-based programmes in workbook format, which can be completed alongside the RDA Proficiency tests. The finished projects, completed with worksheets, photographs, drawings, writing or even filmed evidence, are something special to keep and can be shown off to schools, colleges family and friends. They are something to really be proud of! [www.asdan.org.uk](http://www.asdan.org.uk)

- ◆ **The RDA Endeavour Award:** The RDA Endeavour Award can not only provide a flexible, gentle introduction into achievement on a national level in RDA, even for non-equestrian activities, but also can be used as a confidence-boosting award in between proficiency test grades. With no set timescale and **no syllabus**, how you award it is entirely up to you!

## What can I do to find out more?

For more information or advice on the RDA Proficiency tests or any of the recognition and reward programmes in RDA, please contact:

**Marisa Bretherton-Mackay** (RDA National Office): 01926 405973 (direct line) or email [marisa@rda.org.uk](mailto:marisa@rda.org.uk)

**Jo Hayward** (Accessibility Mark Co-Ordinator): 01926 476300 (direct line) or email [jhayward@rda.org.uk](mailto:jhayward@rda.org.uk)