



MANDATORY EVALUATIONS

The A/B Testing Procedures make 3 references to “Mandatory Evaluations” as follows:

PART 1 GENERAL INFORMATION

J. DUTIES OF OFFICIALS

II. Regional Testing Chair

8. Regional B and B2 tests

- e) Set up a mandatory evaluation **by a national examiner** for all combinations of your **B, B2 and A** candidates, preferably **at least 8 weeks** ahead. **Examiner must not be a member of that candidate's test panel or the candidate's coach.** Review the document **CPC Mandatory Evaluation Evaluation available on the national website.**

9. National HA/SA and 'RA' tests

- f) **Set up a mandatory evaluation by a national examiner for all combinations of your HA/SA and RA candidates, preferably at least 8 weeks ahead. Examiner must not be a member of the test panel.** Review the document **CPC Mandatory Evaluation available on the national website.**

PART 1 GENERAL INFORMATION

M. QUALIFICATIONS

1b. Attend a mandatory evaluation prior to all practical phases of the national level B, B2, and 'A' tests.

Currently there is no further mention of such “mandatory evaluations” in the procedures. As a result, this document has been composed in an effort to clarify for all Regions the objectives and suggested procedures to follow with respect to “mandatory evaluations”, in order to establish some consistency across the country as to how they are conducted.

BACKGROUND

Since all 'B', 'B2', 'SA', 'HA', and 'RA' Tests are organized and operated at the Regional and/or National level rather than the Branch level, often candidates find the experience to be considerably different from their preceding 'D' and 'C' level tests. There are other reasons why these tests may provide a unique experience for candidates:

- 1) Considerable distance to travel;
- 2) Tests may be several days in length;
- 3) Additional skills are evaluated, such as lungeing and teaching;
- 4) Greater competency is required for each skill, since the test is broken out into a higher number of phases each requiring its own passing grade;
- 5) A second horse may be required to complete all aspects of the test;
- 6) A significant amount of equipment and preparation is required by the candidate; thus requiring a high level of organizational ability;
- 7) Overall, the maturity level of candidates is expected to be quite high.

For these and other reasons, tests at the 'B', 'B2', 'SA', 'HA', and 'RA' levels tend to be quite stressful and candidates have not in the past always come away with a positive experience. It was decided that an evaluation process would assist with relieving some of this stress and thus providing candidates with a more positive experience, whether or not they successfully meet the standard on test day.

OBJECTIVES

- 1) To assist 'B', 'B2', 'SA', 'HA', and 'RA' candidates in the successful completion of their practical tests, by providing them with reasonable expectations as to: a) the test requirements; and b) whether or not the candidate currently meets the standard.
- 2) To assist 'B', 'B2', 'SA', 'HA', and 'RA' candidates in the successful completion of their practical tests, by providing them with a positive learning experience whereby they receive constructive criticism of their performance and suggested methods by which improvements can be made in order to meet the standard on the day of the test.
- 3) As a result of #'s 1 and 2 above, improve the overall "meets the standard" (pass) / "does not meet the standard" (fail) ratio of attempted 'B', 'B2', 'SA', 'HA', and 'RA' tests across all Regions.

WHO SHALL CONDUCT THE EVALUATION

Evaluations shall be conducted by a National examiner approved to test at the required level(s). A panel of examiners is not required unless the number of candidates warrants it (this should be discussed between the Regional Test Chair and the examiner conducting the evaluation – the examiner should know what he or she can or cannot get done in a day).

It is highly recommended that the examiner conducting the evaluation have the following additional qualifications:

- 1) Have considerable testing experience at the level(s) being evaluated;
- 2) Have considerable coaching experience at the level(s) being evaluated.
- 3) Have considerable experience (riding, coaching, examining) in all phases being evaluated.

There are several reasons for these recommendations:

- 1) Since one of the objectives of the evaluation is to provide candidates with reasonable expectations of the test requirements, the examiner must have sufficient testing experience to confidently conduct a "mock" examination similar to that the candidates will see at their actual test. A new or junior examiner may have difficulty with this requirement (note, however, that this is an excellent opportunity for a new or junior examiner to assist a more experienced examiner and gain valuable knowledge and experience).
- 2) Examiners who have participated in many examinations will have a better understanding of what is considered to meet or not meet the standard, and will be better equipped to communicate this information to the candidates (again, an excellent opportunity for a new or junior examiner to assist and learn).
- 3) Since there is only one examiner conducting the evaluation, he or she will be required to keep to a very strict schedule in order to complete all phases being evaluated. This can be very difficult for a brand new Junior 'B' examiner, even under the guidance of a panel of experienced examiners, never mind when working independently.
- 4) Again, since there is only one examiner conducting the evaluation, he or she must have confidence in all phases being evaluated, as there is no panel of experience to fall back on (for example, a panel may be made up of one examiner with an extensive dressage background, another with an extensive hunter/jumper background, and a third with an

extensive eventing background; and each examiner then “leads” in the area in which he/she excels – an individual examiner does not have the luxury of asking the expert in a field in which they have little or outdated experience).

- 5) Examiners with coaching experience at the level being tested will be better able to offer suggestions as to how to realistically and effectively improve the candidates’ performance between the evaluation and the test.

THE DAY OF THE EVALUATION

Regional Test Chairs are reminded that the evaluation will be useful only if the candidate has the opportunity to implement what he or she has learned. In order to do this, the evaluation should ideally take place at least one month prior to the date of the test.

Examiners conducting evaluations are reminded that the evaluation is supposed to be a positive learning experience for candidates. At the start of the day, be sure to let the candidates know that *this is not a test*, but an opportunity for them to learn a) whether they currently meet the standard for the level being tested; b) the areas in which they are strong; c) the areas in which they are weak; and d) what they can do between now and test day to improve those weak areas. *It is imperative that examiners maintain an air of approachability, and conduct the evaluation with a constant invitation to ask questions.*

Examiners are encouraged to provide input and make suggestions / corrections on an ongoing basis throughout the evaluation, rather than saving all comments for the end of the day. *The evaluation is primarily a learning experience for candidates.*

Facility Requirements (dependent on skills being evaluated)

- 20 x 60 metre dressage ring
- Ring / arena suitable for stadium course of 8 obstacles
- Sufficient poles and standards to create stadium course of 8 obstacles
- Sufficient poles and standards to create gymnastic required for level
- Ground crew to assist with jump building
- Cross country area and obstacles suitable for level
- Adequate numbers and levels of students and horses for teaching phase, if needed
- Area suitable for lunging (preferably more than one horse)
- Facility should be as central as possible to facilitate ease of transportation for candidates

Important to note:

This is only an evaluation. As such, a facility that provides all of the above may not be available, and it should be understood that unlike a test situation, an evaluation could be completed under less than ideal conditions.

Examiners conducting the evaluation may need to be flexible and use their imagination! Candidates should, however, be given the opportunity wherever possible to be evaluated for all phases of their examinations.

Regional Test Chairs are reminded that it may be appropriate to conduct the evaluation over more than one day (remember, there is no reason why teaching, lungeing, and horsemanship skills can’t be evaluated using an indoor arena in the middle of winter – in fact, if the arena is big enough, the same can be said for riding on the flat and gymnastics/stadium jumping).

Candidate Requirements

- 1) Formal attire (e.g. Jackets) is not required; however, candidates may wish to wear (or at least bring) their formal testing attire for the purpose of gaining the examiner's opinion as to its appropriateness. Note that medical armbands must be worn at all times during the evaluation. Also note that candidates must dress safely and appropriately at all times during the evaluation, including hair tied back safely and proper footwear at all times. Dressing appropriately for the weather is very important.
- 2) Candidates are required to bring the horse(s) they expect to use the day of their test, whenever possible. In the case where the candidate is using 2 horses, he/she should have a groom accompany them to facilitate the efficient exchange of horses. Candidates should expect that their horse will be ridden by another candidate for the Alternate Horse evaluation.
- 3) Candidates are expected to bring all equipment they need to complete their test. This includes tack for the riding phases, all required bandages, first aid kit, teaching kit, lungeing equipment, and any other equipment they might need on the day of the test.
- 4) Candidates are expected to bring an open mind. The examiner is there to help understand the test requirements and whether the candidate currently meets the standard. If the candidate comes to the evaluation with the assumption that he or she needs no assistance and is not open to constructive criticism, the evaluation is worthless.

Evaluation Requirements

The following skills are to be evaluated (unless the candidate has already completed certain phases of their test and will not be re-testing those phases) in as similar a format to the actual test day as possible:

- 1) Riding on the Flat, including demonstration of Flat Ride and Alternate Horse
 - 2) Riding Over Fences, including Gymnastics, Stadium, Cross Country, and Alternate Horse (Alternate Horse is optional – see discussion below)
 - 3) Lungeing (also lungeing a rider when applicable)
 - 4) Teaching, including teaching to lunge (when applicable)
 - 5) Bandaging (all bandages required for level)
 - 6) Conformation
 - 7) Any Horsemanship topics of particular interest to the candidates, if time permits
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- 1) Riding on the Flat – Candidates should be asked to warm up their horses as per the time frames given in the Testing Procedures for each level, and then asked to critique their warm-up. Candidates should demonstrate their Flat Ride (tests can be read). Finally, candidates should demonstrate a ride on an Alternate Horse.
 - 2) Riding Over Fences – Examiners should begin with Gymnastics, progressively building toward a grid suitable for the level. Candidates should then demonstrate riding a course of appropriate difficulty for the level, with obstacles at the appropriate height and spread for the level. It is very important that the examiner set the course at the appropriate height and level for the candidates. NEVER set obstacle dimensions greater than required by the Testing Procedures. ALWAYS set obstacle dimensions as per the Testing Procedures (for example, if 1/3 of the fences are to be at maximum height for the test, be sure to set the heights accordingly – bring your measuring tape!). Candidates need to know what to expect on the day of the test. Proceed with Cross Country, again asking the candidates to demonstrate all aspects of the test for their level ONLY.

Riding Over Fences, Alternate Horse – often candidates arrive at the evaluation under-prepared for their over fences phase. In particular, their horses may be unfit for the rigors of a test day or the candidates may simply have had little opportunity to practice at the test level (especially if it is at or near the beginning of the season and candidates have not had access to indoor riding over the winter). As such, examiners may elect (at their discretion) to omit the Alternate Horse demonstration following the Stadium Jumping if he or she feels it is not safe to proceed. Some reasons for declining to evaluate this skill include, but are not limited to: a) horses are too tired / unfit to continue jumping; b) candidates are not riding at the required level on their own horse, and may therefore cause problems for another candidate's horse; or c) horses are not able to perform at the required level. It MUST be explained to the candidates that under no circumstances will the demonstration of this skill be omitted at the actual test, unless an individual candidate / horse is unsafe to proceed (which would likely result in a fail for that candidate).

Candidates are responsible for bringing a horse to the test that is capable of completing all aspects of the test, and is fit enough to make it through the day.

- 3) Lungeing – Candidates should come prepared with all equipment necessary to demonstrate the skills for their level. Horses should be outfitted with equipment that fits properly, including cavessons, boots, surcingles or any other equipment used by the candidate.
- 4) Teaching – Candidates should be given their teaching topics ahead of time so they can bring a prepared written lesson plan for evaluation.
- 5) Bandaging – Candidates are responsible for bringing their own bandages as required for their level, including any specialty / first aid bandages. Examiners should give input as to whether the materials are appropriate for the bandage being applied.
- 6) Conformation – Candidates should be asked to evaluate a horse's (other than their own) conformation as per the requirements for their level.
- 7) Other Horsemanship topics of concern / interest – Bandaging and Conformation are specifically addressed at the evaluation because they are topics that cannot be learned exclusively through book learning (you really need a horse!). If candidates have other areas of weakness or where they have questions, they should advise the Regional Examiner at least a week in advance of the evaluation so the examiner can be notified and be properly prepared to handle these areas. Candidates should keep in mind that the Written Test is its own evaluation, which should provide candidates with a good understanding of areas needing work. Much of this work can be done at home without the assistance of an examiner.

CONCLUSION

It is the examiner's responsibility to ensure that at the end of the evaluation, each candidate completely understands:

- 1) Whether or not he or she currently "meets the standard" for each phase in which he or she is to be tested;
- 2) Areas requiring improvement (whether those improvements are needed in order to pass the test or simply improve a passing mark);
- 3) Ways in which the candidate can attempt to improve weak areas;
- 4) Resources that can be accessed to assist with improving weak areas;
- 5) Whether or not the time frame (between the evaluation and the test) is realistic in order to

make the necessary improvements.

It is important that the examiner NOT do any of the following:

- 1) Advise a candidate his or her mount is unsuitable for testing (instead, focus on the skills the horse has not learned / is not yet capable of), unless the animal does not meet eligibility requirements (such as: 3-year old, stallion, lame or sick, etc.);
- 2) Advise a candidate that they will pass / fail on the day of the test (instead, advise "if today was your test day, I believe you would have passed / failed the following sections...").

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