

BHS GUIDE TO

Working with Horses



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GUIDE TO CAREERS WITH HORSES

Training for a Career with Horses

Interest in working with horses as a career, in riding for pleasure, in competition and in the various activities associated with horses, is increasing. Many thousands of people enjoy a fulfilling career with horses, either directly, as coaches/teachers, grooms, stable staff, yard managers, ride leaders, or indirectly in journalism, merchandising, research and related industries.

Working with horses is a way of life, leaving little time for other interests, hobbies or sports. The enjoyment of this life is part of the reward for the hard work which includes the daily routine of working on a yard on cold winter days. Mucking out, cleaning tack, grooming and sweeping are a major part of the work, as well as the more glamorous aspects of a day away at a competition.

The British Horse Society's advice to all young people who aspire to work within the equine industry is that they should first complete their general education as far as possible and not cut short their time at school. An all-round education is an asset in any walk of life; you will find that GCSE's and 'A' Levels or their equivalent are just as important in the equine industry as they are in any other sphere, not as a requirement for good horsemanship but as proof of aptitude, diligence and determination. Basic educational qualifications are also necessary to enter many horse-related careers.

It is important to make an assessment of your preferences and abilities when choosing the direction for your career with horses. Many people thinking of this type of career may love horses, but would they make good coaches/teachers? Some excellent riders find it difficult to coach/teach others. There are those who have no ambitions to coach/teach or ride, but love horses and find satisfaction in caring for them as grooms.

Whatever the preference, a thorough basic training is essential and the following is offered as a guide to the options open for those seeking a career with horses.

The following pages contain information about careers within the equine industry and how The British Horse Society qualifications can prepare you for employment.

In whichever part of the equine industry you choose to work you will find it interesting and rewarding. Good luck!



Starting off

Whatever career you decide to embark on, qualifications will enable you to get a better job. Hands-on experience and a real love of horses are the other necessary ingredients which will give you the motivation to work whatever the weather and whatever the hour. Working with horses is a practical based job and employers hold a high regard for practically based vocational qualifications as you are not only assessed on your knowledge, but also your skills 'on the job'.

We recommend that a basic qualification be taken whichever career path you choose to go down. The BHS Stage 1, 2 or the EQL Level 2 Work Based Diploma (WBD) or Scottish Vocational Qualifications are recommended to begin your professional journey. You can start Stage 1 at 14 years old, and Stage 2 and the WBD/SVQ at 16 years of age. They will prepare you well for almost any career with horses.

The next stage will then depend on your own particular leanings or career aspirations. Specialist career books are available from the BHS Bookshop at www.britishhorse.com, or you can call the friendly team of experts on 02476 840513.

Who are EQL?

Equestrian Qualifications GB Limited (EQL) is a subsidiary of the BHS and stands alone in its remit to award equestrian qualifications. EQL is an awarding body recognised by Ofqual and the Scottish Qualifications Authority and, as such, must comply with a range of conditions including robust assurance for developing and awarding qualifications. Most of our professional qualifications are Ofqual regulated and are on the National Framework.

Why BHS Qualifications?

The British Horse Society offer vocational qualifications written against professional industry standards and this is one of the most widely respected examinations systems in the world. A recent survey carried out by Lantra* reported that BHS examinations are those chosen by a majority of employers. All of the Society's exams follow an established, robust and high quality method of exploring candidates' equitation, teaching/coaching and stable management skills, catering for every level from novice owners and beginners through to international experts.

The BHS Stage exams comprise units and small qualifications, enabling you to

*Lantra is the Sector Skills Council for Land Based Industries.

A study into the Business & Skills Requirements of the UK Equine Industry – January 2011

personalise your learning. It is possible to sit all the units leading to a qualification in one day, but candidates may prefer to 'pick and mix' units. It is even possible just to sit the Horse Knowledge and Care exams if riding isn't your thing.

BHS exams are held throughout the majority of the year at approved centres and there are currently more than 84 of these worldwide. Finding a suitable exam centre for you should not be a problem.

The BHS Exams team will be happy to guide you through the exams structure. Visit our website, www.bhs.org.uk, or call 02476 840508. Advice, guidelines and a syllabus are available for every level, so you can be confident in the knowledge of what you will be asked to do and also be sure you're making the right choice in taking BHS exams.

Work-based Diplomas and Scottish Vocational Qualifications

Work based diplomas (WBDs) replaced National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) in England, Wales and Northern Ireland from January 2011. Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQs) are available in Scotland. Assessment takes place either in the workplace or at an approved assessment location on a continuous basis. These qualifications have been developed by the equine industry from the equine National Occupational Standards.

Achieving a work-based qualification is completely different from taking a BHS Stage exam. Qualifications based in the workplace are ideal if you are looking for employment or progression in the equine industry and prefer to be assessed on a continuous basis at their place of work or training.

The qualifications are available at Levels 1 and 2 in Horse Care and Level 3 in Horse Care and Management. Level 1 you can take from 14 years of age, Level 2 and Level 3 from 16 years of age. They are made up of a number of mandatory and optional units at Levels 2 and 3. Candidates will be awarded the full qualification when they have been assessed and verified as being at the required standard. Unit certification is available for candidates who prefer to complete individual units or are unable to complete the full award. These qualifications can also be used for direct entry into BHS Stage Exams.

The full standards required for WBDs and SVQs and further information can be found on the EQL website: www.equestrian-qualifications.org.uk. Alternatively, please call the Examinations team on 02476 840508.

Apprenticeships

An apprenticeship is a unique learning opportunity where you can earn while you learn. It is not a qualification in its own right, but is a package of learning and

qualifications combined with practical work experience gained through employment in your chosen industry. It provides a mixture of hands on experience with an employer combined with off-the-job learning to provide you with the skills and knowledge you need for the career of your choice.

There are many apprenticeship opportunities within the equine industry, and many offer BHS Stage exams and/or WBDs as part of the framework. They are available to learners 16 years of age or above and usually offered at three different levels which take between one to three years to complete, depending upon the industry and the level offered.

Further information is available from the National Apprenticeship Service which supports, funds and co-ordinates the delivery of Apprenticeships throughout England: www.apprenticeships.org.uk.

The Lantra CourseFinder also provides information on what courses and training is available across England and Wales: www.lantracoursefinder.co.uk.



How to train for BHS Examinations

Careful consideration should be given to the method of training for BHS examinations. This will probably be governed by your age, time, availability and financial circumstances. The aim should be to acquire as good a basic training as possible in riding and/or horse management up to the level of the examination for which you wish to pass.

It is not obligatory to attend a course of training to take the BHS examinations, but formal training at a BHS Approved Riding Centre or Where to Train Centre is strongly recommended. BHS Approved Centres pride themselves on maintaining the highest possible standards. They are regularly inspected to check they meet our requirements for safety, horse welfare and tuition, ensuring compliance and giving you peace of mind.

Our Where to Train centres undergo an additional, training-specific inspection to ensure that the training provided for career students meets the standard they have been approved to deliver.

A full list of BHS Approved Centres can be found on our website, www.bhs.org.uk, or you can call the Approvals team on 02476 840509 who can advise you on your nearest centre.

You may wish to purchase reading material or DVDs to assist with your learning. We have a dedicated equestrian bookshop with the full range of official BHS training guides and further recommended reading. You can visit the BHS Bookshop website, www.britishhorse.com, or call them for advice on 02476 840513.

Of course, you can enter for, and take your exams quite independently, provided you are confident you meet the standard required in the syllabus. Further information and guidelines for any of our exams, including a syllabus for each level, is available from our website, www.bhs.org.uk. Alternatively, you can contact our friendly team of experts on 02476 840508.



CAREERS IN HORSE CARE

A groom will care for the horse in sickness and in health, whether on a stud caring for brood mares and foals or in an international showjumper's yard and travelling the world. The opportunities are endless and each groom usually finds a niche that suits them. Grooms must demonstrate knowledge and practical ability in many areas. For example, the management and handling of horses, horse health, anatomy and physiology, feeding, fittening, saddlery, shoeing, stable design, grassland management, and the highest levels of turnout. A groom must show themselves as competent, confident and dedicated. Although riding is normally required, there are opportunities for those who only wish to undertake the horse care aspects. The ability to tow or drive a horsebox is a definite advantage as most grooms will be required to do so. A HGV licence may be required for this.

Opportunities for employment for grooms are available in a variety of yards: Dressage, Driving, Eventing, Equine Rescue, Hunting, Polo, Showing, Showjumping, Studs, Veterinary establishments, Livery and so on.

Assistant Groom

Often a groom can be responsible for horses worth many thousands of pounds and their owners are, naturally, unwilling to entrust them to unskilled or untrained staff. The minimum acceptable level of qualification for entry into employment as an assistant groom is the BHS Stage 2 Care (EQL Level 2 Diploma in Horse Knowledge and Care). Alternatively, you may wish to undertake the EQL Level 2 WBD Diploma or SVQ in Horse Care. Candidates who hold either of these qualifications will be able to safely and competently apply skills and knowledge relating to the care of the horse through a range of well defined tasks under limited supervision. BHS Stage 2 Care and EQL Level 2 WBD or SVQ can be taken from 16 years of age.

If you would like to offer riding also, you would require BHS Stage 2 Riding (EQL Level 2 Diploma in BHS Riding Horses) or have taken the riding option on a Level 2 Work Based Diploma/SVQ.

Groom

To be employed as a groom you will be required to hold the BHS Stage 3 Care (EQL Level 3 Diploma in Horse Knowledge and Care), or the equivalent level of WBD or SVQ. This will enable you to manage your work safely and efficiently, applying skills and knowledge relating to the care and management of horses through a range of tasks under minimal supervision.

A groom may also be required to school and exercise the horses under their care.

A minimum of the BHS Stage 3 Riding (EQL Level 3 Diploma in BHS Riding Horses) would be required. The riding exams require you to ride a range of horses in a variety of circumstances showing a balanced, independent seat, feel for the horse, and an appreciation for any weaknesses. It will also give you the skills to utilise a plan of work including transitions and exercises to maintain the horse's way of going. Dressage, showjumping and cross-country jumping are assessed during the exam so you will be have a basic preparation for the three Olympic disciplines.

BHS Register of Grooms

The BHS Register of Grooms began after we discovered an increasing number of people were falsely claiming to hold BHS qualifications. We felt this was misleading to the general public and unfair on those that have worked hard to gain genuine certification. Employers are encouraged to use only those grooms who are qualified and therefore have the knowledge and experience to support them and their horses. The minimum qualification to be able to join the BHS Register of Grooms is the BHS Stage 3 Care (EQL Level 3 Diploma in Horse Knowledge and Care).

Upon joining the Register you will gain numerous benefits which include, amongst others, free publicity in **British Horse** magazine, the equestrian press and our other mailings, optional public liability insurance, free inclusion on our website and free ID cards.

To find more information regarding the Register of Grooms please contact the BHS Training team who will be happy to help. Visit the website, www.bhs.org.uk, or call 02476 840510.

CAREERS IN YARD MANAGEMENT

Head Groom

Equine Yard Manager

Riding Centre Manager

Stud Manager

A manager is responsible for the efficient day-to-day running of the yard or centre with duties including managing staff, care of the horses, all aspects of health and safety and dealing with clients. They may also be required to plan and implement a horse's training plan, manage a horse's care routine including keeping records of vaccinations, worming, farriery and so on, financial book keeping and record keeping, buy and sell horses, maintain grassland and many other managerial tasks.

Depending on the type of establishment you work at you may also organise shows and events, liaise with clients and owners, transport horses and assist with marketing and promoting the establishment.

To become a yard manager the minimum of the BHS Stage 4 Care (EQL Level 4 Diploma in BHS Horse Knowledge, Care and Management) would be required. In some cases, the BHS Stage 4 Riding (EQL Level 4 Diploma in BHS Riding and Training Horses) would also be useful. These qualifications will allow you to work alone and unsupervised and take full responsibility for managing an equestrian business. You will understand the insurance requirements, accident and incident reporting, relevant health and safety legislation, yard security and yard and stable construction and design. In addition, you will be able to develop a plan to maintain yard facilities and develop annual grassland maintenance programmes. The riding exam will confirm your riding competence in addition to developing a horse's progressive way of going and evaluating the work undertaken.

The BHS Stage 4 Care qualification will also allow progression onto the BHS' most senior horse care exam, the BHS Stable Manager's Certificate. This will provide you with the skills to be a competent manager, able to supervise and train staff and students. On completion of this qualification you will have shown you are able to take complete responsibility to run a private, commercial or competition yard or riding establishment.



CAREERS IN COACHING

Coach/Riding Instructor

Coaching can be a very rewarding and fulfilling career. The British Horse Society offers a range of high quality coaching/teaching qualifications encouraging development and progression. The BHS' breadth of Instructors' Certificates not only confirms your skills as a coach/teacher, but acknowledges you have achieved an industry standard qualification in horse care and riding, too. They are internationally recognised, so if you choose to take your coaching/teaching qualifications with us, you know you will be able to spread your wings and work overseas.

BHS Preliminary Teaching of Horse Riding

The first qualification offered by the BHS for coaches is the BHS PTT (EQL Level 3 Certificate in BHS Preliminary Teaching of Horse Riding). This exam will test your skills and knowledge through practical and theory assessment. You will also be able to register and gain the UKCC Level 2 (UKCC Endorsed) Certificate in Coaching by completing a portfolio of evidence. To enter onto the BHS PTT exam you must hold a minimum of the BHS Stage 2 Care and BHS Stage 2 Riding (EQL Level 2 Diploma in BHS Horse Knowledge and Care and the EQL Level 2 Diploma in BHS Riding Horses) unless you have special dispensation. On completion of this exam you will be able to work in a commercial riding establishment or private yard or as a freelance coach/teacher.

BHS Assistant Instructor's Certificate (BHSAI)

The BHSAI certificate will be awarded when you have successfully achieved BHS Stage 3 Care, BHS Stage 3 Riding, BHS PTT (EQL Level 3 Diploma in Horse Knowledge and Care, EQL Level 3 Diploma in BHS Riding Horses and EQL Level 3 Certificate in BHS Preliminary Teaching of Horse Riding) and completed a Coaching Portfolio.

A BHSAI will have many opportunities to teach and run small yards, as it is one of the most widely recognised equestrian qualifications in the world. You will have an understanding of equitation and coaching theory and a sound level of practical experience.

The BHSAI has recognised comparability with other teaching qualifications across many countries, thus enabling freedom to teach abroad. You can apply for an International Group for Equestrian Qualifications (IGEIQ) Passport, administered in the UK by the BHS Training team. The passport confirms and recognises the holders' qualifications, enabling recognition and acceptance in IGEIQ member countries (subject to national legal requirements).

BHS Intermediate Instructor Certificate (BHSII)

The BHSII Certificate will be awarded once you have achieved the BHS Stage 4 Care, BHS Stage 4 Riding and BHS Intermediate Teaching Test (EQL Level 4 Diploma in BHS Horse Knowledge, Care and Management, EQL Level 4 Diploma in BHS Riding and Training Horses and the EQL Level 5 Diploma in BHS Intermediate Teaching of Horse Riding).

This requires a higher standard of horsemanship and coaching/teaching and is aimed at producing an equine coach/teacher who can work without supervision. You will have experience teaching a wide variety of clients and training horses. You will be able to give safe and competent lessons from beginner to BD Elementary, BS Discovery and BE100 and show genuine improvement of horse and rider. This level of qualification may lead to a managerial position within a riding school or centre.

BHS Instructor's Certificate (BHSI)

The BHSI Certificate is awarded when you have achieved the BHS Stable Manager Certificate, BHS Senior Equitation Certificate and BHS Senior Coach Certificate. A BHSI is an established coach across all three original Olympic disciplines, capable of fulfilling a senior role within an equestrian business.

Fellow of The British Horse Society (FBHS)

The Fellowship is the final step on the equestrian qualification ladder in the UK and is the highest teaching qualification within the BHS system. A Fellow will be working full time in the equestrian industry and already be training horses and riders to a high level and have sound training and management principles. From the day you start with horses the Fellowship should be your ambition, your goal, the jewel in your equestrian crown. Only by dedication, hard work, open-mindedness, fairness and a willingness to never stop learning, will you pass this extremely prestigious examination.

The BHS Register of Instructors

The Register of Instructors is an exclusive register to allow horse owners and riders find a qualified instructor who is proud of their qualifications, and dedicated to promoting welfare through education. The minimum requirement to join the Register is the BHS PTT (EQL Level 3 Certificate in BHS Preliminary Teaching of Horse Riding). By joining the Register you will become part of a group of credible professionals, who hold internationally recognised qualifications. Apart from these obvious reasons to join you will also gain benefits which include, amongst others, free publicity in **British Horse** magazine, the equestrian press and our other mailings, optional public liability insurance, free inclusion on our website, and free ID cards.

To find more information regarding the Register of Instructors please contact the BHS Training team who will be happy to help. Visit the website www.bhs.org.uk or call 02476 840510.





CAREERS IN EQUINE TOURISM

The equestrian tourism sector is a growing area with many career opportunities. The governing bodies of equestrian tourism in England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland have worked closely together to develop qualifications for those working in this area. The Equestrian Tourism (ET) qualifications provide industry relevant, recognised standards at three levels: EQL Level 2 Diploma For The Ride Leader, EQL Level 3 Diploma For The Ride Leader, and Equestrian Tourism Centre Manager. The last two are internationally recognised by FITE – Fédération Internationale de Tourisme Equestre.

These qualifications are increasingly seen as necessary for anyone wishing to work at a riding holiday centre. As with all activity holidays, it is important that the staff who run the riding and trekking holidays are suitably qualified.

EQL Level 2 Diploma for the Ride Leader

This qualification is designed if you want to work either full or part time in the equine industry. You will be competent to take out a two-hour ride or hack, or to assist a Ride Leader with a group of riders. You will be workmanlike, safe and possess good communication skills to enable you to help first-time or nervous riders on hacks and on the yard. You have to be at least 16 years of age to take this qualification.

EQL Level 3 Diploma for the Ride Leader

This qualification is suitable for those aged 18 or above, who want a more senior role. You will be a confident individual who is able to take sole charge of a group of first-time or experienced riders. You will be very aware of safety issues and have sound knowledge of caring for clients both on a ride and on the yard.

Equine Tourism Centre Manager

The Centre Manager is responsible for clients, tourist organisation and employees. You are responsible for operating a riding holiday centre, either as manager or owner, from both the practical and financial aspect. The BHS Equestrian Tourism Centre Manager qualification will suitably prepare you for this role.

To find more information regarding the ET qualifications please contact the BHS Approvals team, who will be happy to help. Visit the website, www.bhs.org.uk, or call 02476 840509.

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