

Assessor communications



A summary of email updates shared with assessors

Last updated 24.03.2026

This document is confidential and must not be shared

24 March 2026

Hat and Body Protector check - changes from 1st April

Following consultation with our insurers, from 1 April 2026 onwards we will no longer be asking you to check that hats and body protectors worn by candidates at BHS assessments meet the current standards. The requirements are communicated to candidates through our website and booking process, which are updated whenever standards change.

As ever, should you feel that safety is being compromised, you will always have the option to stop an assessment.

Thank you for your support with this change and please do come back to me with any questions you may have.

10 March 2026

Teams discussion with Julian Monday 23rd March 19:00pm-20:00pm Hat checking, video briefing and pregnancy guidance

Julian is holding the following teams session:

Discussion with Julian – Hat checking, video briefing & pregnancy guidance Monday 23rd March 19:00pm-20:00pm

<https://buytickets.at/thebritishhorsesociety2/2111140>

Please note, the deadline to book is Thursday 19th March. I will be sending the teams meeting link on Friday 20th March to all those attending.

We strongly advise you to attend if possible. Our new procedures re video briefing and hat checking are due to roll out on 1 April.

5 March 2026

Retaining candidate emergency forms

Now that we have started to use the new Candidate Emergency Forms, please can I ask you to keep them securely with your observation sheets until further notice, rather than disposing of them immediately after each assessment. We will be in touch shortly to inform you of the required retention period once this has been confirmed with our insurers.

Thank you for your co-operation!

26 February 2026

New emergency forms in circulation

Please note that new emergency forms are starting to be in circulation. Please destroy any old ones. Thank you so much for your co operation.

19 February 2026

Update on our process for supporting pregnant candidates

Following a recent review of our processes for supporting pregnant candidates during assessments, we've made some important updates that we'd like to share with you.

A candidate can take any assessment during their pregnancy. We'll no longer ask pregnant candidates to provide a fit note before their assessment. Our review confirmed that requesting this document isn't appropriate for the purpose of an assessment.

We will continue to ask candidates to notify us if they're pregnant, and – as usual – we'll share this information with the lead assessor and centre so appropriate planning and support can take place.

The *Emergency Contact Form* has been updated and now includes a self-declaration checklist relating to a candidate's fitness for assessment. All candidates must complete this (or the parent/carer for u18s). If it hasn't been completed, please ask them to do so before the assessment begins. If a candidate doesn't wish to complete the checklist, please contact the Education Team. We'll support the decision to withdraw the candidate if needed, and we're happy to speak with them directly.

Lead assessors should continue to complete a specific risk assessment for the pregnant candidate as part of the 'on the day' risk assessment. Please talk through this with the candidate so there is a shared understanding of any health and safety considerations. Reassure them they can withdraw or postpone the assessment at any time if they have concerns. If, following your discussion and the risk assessment, you've concerns about the candidate continuing, contact the Education Team before the assessment starts. We'll help support a decision.

Support for you

We've updated the assessor guidance to reflect these changes. You'll find the revised guidance and the updated Emergency Contact Form on the Assessor Hub - [Assessor Hub | The British Horse Society](#)

If you have any questions, or if you'd like to talk through any of these changes, please get in touch. We're here to support you.

8 January 2026

Candidate Feedback - Please feel supported !

Candidate Feedback

I would like reinforce a message of support for you all with regards to your feedback to candidates. We have worked very closely with you all, specifically over the last few years to ensure that you are guided as to how feedback should be given to candidates in terms of the appropriate tone and phrasing required.

Please continue to write your feedback according to our guidance and know that you have our full support at all times. All assessment feedback is checked and approved by the Education Department before being released to candidates.

We are currently looking at how to legally prevent the sharing of feedback on social media platforms. In the meantime, please continue to feel confident and assured that you are providing appropriate, balanced and professional feedback, enabling candidates to accurately understand their performance on the day.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries or concerns.

7 January 2026

Assessor Guidance updates

Assessor Guidance has been updated.

It's on the Assessor Hub: <https://www.bhs.org.uk/for-our-coaches-and-centres/resources/assessor-hub/>

Updates as follows:

Change control

All edits are highlighted throughout.

Version Number	Page	Reason for changes made	Date
3.2	26-27	Updates to contents of the lead assessor pack	24.11.2025
	29	Reminder the course plans to be available for candidates to view	
	53	Clarified the actions to take if a candidate is not permitted to continue to Stage 3 Jump	
	69-74	Updated Stage 4 Coach units LO titles to reflect syllabus changes live from 1 January 2026	

	70, 72, 74	Added timings for Stage 4 coaching sessions	
3.1	20	Review to Conflict of Interest process	23.10.2025
	32	Added 'notify candidates of emergency evacuation procedure' to the briefing checklist	
	37	Edit online assessments section, removal of auto record feature.	
3.0	19	Added note to update the 'on the day' risk assessment when specialist equipment is used as part of an agreed Reasonable Adjustment	26.08.2025

19 December 2025

Translator documentation & Skills Record at Stage 4 Coach assessments

Translator Documentation

Please can you ensure that translator documentation is completed whenever candidates are assessed using a translator, including at devolved Stage 1 assessments, or where the assessment takes place in the candidates own language but translation is provided for IQA purposes.

Skills Record – Stage 4 Coach assessments

Please note, although the Skills Record has been edited in line with the changes to the Stage 4 Coach syllabus, we will continue to accept the old version of the Skills Record if this is presented at Stage 4 Coach assessments.

3 December 2025

Requests for access arrangements on the day of assessment

We have recently noted a slight increase in candidates requesting access to fair assessment or reasonable adjustment on the day of assessment, so thought it would be helpful to provide you with the advice below:

1. If a candidate requests access to fair assessment or reasonable adjustment on the assessment day and you have not been informed about this by the BHS Education team, you should thank them for the information, then ask the candidate (or their parent/carer if they are under 18) whether they have informed us and received email confirmation that their request had been approved and will be implemented. If they confirm this to be the case, you must call the BHS Education team for advice on how to proceed.
2. If the candidate (or their parent/carer) states that they have not requested access to fair assessment/reasonable adjustment prior to the assessment day or had email confirmation that this will be implemented, they may say that the BHS Education team have told them to inform you on the assessment day; this will not be the case as we will never advise a candidate to do this. We stop accepting access arrangement requests 10 working days ahead of the assessment so it may be that they submitted their request late and we were unable to process it.
3. If the candidate (or their parent/carer) asks you to review medical or diagnostic information - such as an Education Health Care Plan - on the assessment day, you should inform them that you are not able to do so, as this must be completed prior to the assessment day by the Education Team who can decide what, if any, access arrangements can be implemented.
4. If the candidate (or their parent/carer) asks for questions to be re-worded, broken down or rephrased, a little time to collect their thoughts or empathetic assessment in general, please reassure them that this is part of our standard support for all learners so they do not need to make you aware of their needs or apply for access to fair assessment or reasonable adjustment.
5. If the candidate (or their parent/carer) asks for arrangements other than those listed in point 4, you should inform them that their request cannot be implemented on the assessment day. They may choose to proceed with the assessment without any access arrangements/reasonable adjustments in place, but you should only allow them to do this if safety is not compromised. If you judge that it is not safe for them to proceed without an access arrangement in place, you should inform the candidate of this sensitively and advise them to contact the BHS Education Team to discuss their next steps.

You can find our recently updated guidance on our website regarding our standard support and applying for access arrangements. This ensures you're familiar with the advice that we're giving candidates too:

<https://www.bhs.org.uk/bhs-professional-qualifications-and-careers/assessments/access-arrangements-and-reasonable-adjustments/>.

Thank you for taking the time to review this email and please do come back to us if you have any questions in relation to this guidance.

21 November 2025

Videos from Workforce training day - Compulsory requirement to watch if didn't attend the Workforce training day

The assessor training videos from the Workforce Training day are now on the assessor hub. They can be found in the 'Assessor Training' accordion.

A password is required to view - Workforce2025!

Please see below the link to the videos.

<https://vimeo.com/showcase/11986553>

Those that were unable to attend, please can you watch the videos at your earliest convenience, and at the latest by the end of Friday 5th December.

It is compulsory for assessors who did not attend the training day to watch these videos and complete the below feedback form to log your completion of this activity. Completing this feedback form will also ensure your CPD record is updated.

[CPD Feedback Form](#)

Please let me know if you have any queries or concerns,

20 November 2025

Stage 4 Coach syllabus update - effective from 1st January 2026

A revised Stage 4 Coach syllabus will be live for delivery from 1 January 2026

To ensure the manageability of the Stage 4 Coaching units, we have reviewed the number of demonstration riders required for the coaching sessions.

In each unit, the semi-private session will become an individual (private) coaching session. No other coaching session will be amended. The amends are as follows:

Unit 7: Stage 4 Senior Coaching Eventing

- LO10 the semi-private arena eventing lesson will be an individual lesson

Unit 8: Stage 4 Senior Coaching Dressage

- LO11 the semi-private dressage lesson at Novice lesson will be an individual lesson

Unit 9: Stage 4 Senior Coaching Show Jumping

- LO8 the semi-private lesson using grid work or related fences up to 1m will be an individual lesson

Before we made these changes, we surveyed employers who employ, or who are likely to employ Stage 4 Coaches. This consultation concluded a very large majority of employers are not concerned by the proposed changes to demonstration rider numbers and would continue to employ learners who have achieved the qualification with the proposed revisions. Learners would not be disadvantaged by the proposed changes to assessment.

These changes to the assessment will be live from 1 January 2026. All new and resit candidates will be assessed against the revised syllabus.

The Assessor Hub has been updated to reflect these changes.

Please let us know if you have any queries,

20 November 2025

Recording of BHS Stage 4 and BHSI online assessments

Assessor Communications

Dear Assessor,

Please note that online BHS Stage 4 and BHSI assessments are not set to record unless they are selected for IQA. If this is the case, the Teams meeting will be set to record by a member of the Operations team and there will be a message that pops up to inform you that it is being recorded. In this instance, please can you let the candidates know that recording is taking place for quality assurance purposes.

Where an online assessment is not set to record, there is no need for the assessor to start the recording or inform candidates that the meeting is being recorded. Our assessor guidance will be updated to reflect this change shortly.

Thank you so much for your co-operation.

11 November 2025

Assessor sort Jan-April 2026 & contract/appendices 2026 - deadline 24th November - IMPORTANT !!!!!

Dear Assessor

Contract and Appendices

Please see attached the assessor contractual agreement for the period 1st Jan 2026-31st December 2026, contract appendices, a risk assessment form and the IR35 determination letter. This IR35 will accompany all future contracts and is information for those of you who provide your services through a personal services company, usually your own limited company.

Appendix 1 refers to the Accredited Professional Code of Practice which can be found on the following link and should be adhered to by all Education Contractors and which should be read in conjunction with the contractual agreement – <https://www.bhs.org.uk/media/kbldnoth0/code-of-conduct-for-accredited-professionals-v2-1-07-08-2023.pdf>

Declaration of Interest

You must declare if you are engaged, employed or concerned in any other business, trade, profession or other activity which places you in a Conflict of Interest with the BHS. If you do have a declaration, please can you confirm the information in the comments box when you submit your offers. Please note the Conflict of Interest policy, defining what constitutes a conflict, and all other Education policies can be found on the assessor hub <https://pathways.bhs.org.uk/assessor-documents/>

If you have an interest in a centre, please do not offer to assess there for any level of assessment.

Risk Assessment

Appendix 3 is a risk assessment form which needs to be completed and returned by all assessors annually. If you did not complete and return one at the External Workforce Training day, or complete the form which was emailed recently, please can you complete and return one to Ella Steadman (ella.steadman@bhs.org.uk) by 24th November.

APC membership and insurance cover

As per the Education contract appendices, all assessors are required to have appropriate insurance (including travel insurance – please refer to contract appendix), abide by the BEF and BHS safeguarding policy (including attending a BEF accredited safeguarding course and BHS recognised first aid qualifications).

If you are not on the APC membership with insurance, and/or reside outside of the UK and Northern Ireland (therefore are currently not covered by APC insurance), you are required to submit proof of insurance cover of the level described in the contract appendix. Please can you forward it to ella.steadman@bhs.org.uk by 24th November if you have not already submitted it to us. Documentation must detail the expiry date, that assessing activities are covered, the correct level of cover (at least £5 million public liability) and territorial limits of the policy.

Sort return

Please note, in order to submit your offers to assess, we require confirmation that:

- You have read and agree to the terms and conditions of both the contractual agreement and the IR35
- You have returned your completed risk assessment
- You have provided proof of insurance (if not an APC with insurance/reside outside of UK and Northern Ireland)
- You have declared any conflict of interests and provided details where applicable.
- You have stated whether or not you are able and prepared to ride at stage 4 and BHSI level ride assessments (if applicable)

If you do not submit confirmation of the above and provide documents where necessary, we will be unable to allocate you to any assessments. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries.

Mileage

When submitting your estimated mileage for attending assessments via your sort return, please do ensure that this is as accurate as possible. Your assistance with this enables us to make the best use of charity funds and is very much appreciated.

Observers/probationers

If you already have “observer/probationer status” agreed, please can you indicate this against each assessment offered by typing the letter O or P after your name when offering to observe/probation. Please could you also send a separate email to me listing your request to observe or probation, the stage which you would like to attend and the date and centre of the assessment/s and we will do our best to help your progression. Please do not offer to observe or probation at any new level of assessment if this has not already been agreed by the BHS Education team, as upgrades are now being granted on a business need basis only.

Emergency contact number

As part of our ongoing remit to improve our duty of care provision to our external workforce, we would like to hold an emergency contact number for a family member or close friend of each assessor. Please can I kindly ask you to click on the link below and provide a number for a family member/friend who is happy to be contacted in case of an emergency.

<https://wkf.ms/3zYTiWa>

This person would only be contacted where there is a concern for your welfare or other extreme circumstances. As such, we have a legitimate interest in processing this information during the contractual relationship to maintain accurate and up to date records of who to contact in an emergency situation. We will only retain this information for the duration of the deployment contract or until we are notified that this information is no longer correct. Once the data is no longer needed it will be deleted from our records.

Should there be a change to your emergency contact details, please can you ensure you amend the details via the link which is available on the Assessor Hub, or notify me as soon as possible. Thank you so much. Your co-operation is very much appreciated and will help us to better support and safeguard you in your duties as an assessor.

Assessor hub

For all information pertaining to the assessor role, please refer to the assessor hub
- [Assessor Hub | British Horse Society](#)

I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you so much for your support of the Education Department over the last year – the work you do is very much appreciated. Hopefully together we can continue to build on candidate numbers, strengthen relationships with our existing stakeholders and create new partnerships in the future.

7 November 2025

Conflict of interest - Assessors signing off skills records

A gentle reminder that if you become aware ahead of an assessment you are attending that a candidate is booked for whom you have signed off any part of their skills record, you must notify the Education Department immediately and we will find a replacement assessor where possible. Please do check candidate lists as soon as they arrive by email to assist us with this.

Should you only become aware on the day that a candidate you have signed off is in attendance, you must declare the conflict of interest and where possible, the programme should be amended so you do not directly assess the candidate. A retrospective IQA will be conducted to ensure a fair assessment has taken place, where an IQA is not present on the assessment day.

If you are the only assessor and realise on the day that you have signed off a Skills Record for one of the candidates, you must declare this and contact BHS Education for advice regarding how to proceed.

Thank you for your co-operation.

24 October 2025
Course plan at SJ /XC assessments

Please can I kindly ask that when you assess at an assessment which involves showjumping or cross-country, please can you ensure that a plan of any jumping courses is displayed for candidates to view. Centres have been sent a reminder regarding this and so hopefully there won't be many issues, but your support with ensuring this happens is much appreciated.

25 September 2025
Important information for Stage 4 assessors

Dear Stage 4 assessor,

Please see below important information on Stage 4 VIVAs and results.

Stage 4 VIVAs

Going forward, the office will no longer assign Stage 4 VIVAs on the timetable. Instead, it will be the responsibility of each assessor to select one assessment criterion per learning outcome to sample. There is a section on the observation sheets where you can record which VIVA was chosen. We strongly recommend varying the selected VIVAs between candidates to ensure a broader sampling.

Stage 4 Results

We are now ready to roll out Stage 4 results on SharePoint.

Thank you to everyone who participated in the training and helped pilot this new way of working. You will receive an email with a link to your results folder at the point of closing.

If you encounter any issues, please don't hesitate to contact us — we'll be happy to support you through the process.

26 September 2025
Unexpected candidates / candidates wishing to be assessed for an extra section/s

A gentle reminder that should a candidate that is not on the list turn up at an assessment, under no circumstances should they be accepted. We appreciate it is hard to turn candidates away however we must not risk compromising either the assessment or the assessing team.

If a candidate is booked on for part of an assessment and wishes to be assessed for another section for which there is availability, this may be accommodated, however please consult with the Education Department to gain authorisation to proceed.

Thank you so much for your support and co-operation.

3 September 2025
Change to access arrangements application process - to take effect from 1st October

With reference to my earlier email re the change to the access arrangements application process – this will take effect for applications accepted from 1st October.

Please note, there will be applications in the system which have already been processed so there will be a short period where you will receive notification for some candidates, but others may be attending the assessment without you being aware of similar needs and conditions. Please continue to assess all candidates in an empathetic manner, giving them time to collect their thoughts or rephrasing or breaking down questions as required.

3 September 2025

Change to access arrangements application process

Streamlining Access to Fair Assessment applications

Dear Assessors,

We're writing to share a small but important update to our access to fair assessment guidance that we believe will make things smoother for everyone.

We've noticed a significant increase in access to fair assessment applications requesting things like:

- Rephrasing or repeating questions
- Processing/thinking time
- Empathy and patience

We know that you are already fantastic at providing this support to all candidates.

You're brilliant at recognising nerves, taking a patient and empathetic approach, rephrasing questions, signposting and generally making sure all candidates have every opportunity to show what they know and what they can do. This is standard practice for you, and it's a huge part of what makes our assessments welcoming.

So, to reflect this, we're updating our Access Arrangements webpage to make it clear that if a candidate needs this standard support, there's no need to apply for it. It will be provided automatically.

Here's how our updated guidance will read:

"We believe in making our assessments welcoming for everyone. Our assessors are already trained to help by rephrasing questions, giving you time to think, and generally being patient and understanding. If this standard support suits your needs then you don't need to contact us. If you feel you have a very specific need that goes beyond this standard support, then applying for an access arrangement might be right for you."

Why are we doing this?

You might remember we updated our reasonable adjustments policy in 2022 to separate reasonable adjustments from access to fair assessments. Before that, all applications were processed as reasonable adjustments. A high number of these can unintentionally suggest our qualifications aren't accessible or inclusive by design, which definitely isn't the case!

By splitting these, our data now much more accurately reflects our practice, with only genuine adjustments to assessment processes logged as such. This distinction is really important, especially since awarding organisations only report reasonable adjustment applications to regulators.

Access to fair assessment applications are meant for situations where a candidate doesn't need an *adjustment* but wants you to be aware of their situation.

Reviewing *any* access to fair assessment application takes time and resources. It involves gathering information, sending this to you, and generating a reply back to the applicant. The lead assessor then spends time reading this and sharing with team members as appropriate.

For applications where the request is simply for standard practice (like rephrasing questions), this process isn't the best use of valuable resources or time. If these numbers keep rising, processing these applications will become unmanageable.

Just to give you a sense of the trend:

- 2023: 141 Access to Fair Assessment Applications (and 5 reasonable adjustments)
- 2024: 168 Access to Fair Assessment Applications (and 19 reasonable adjustments)
- 2025 (as of July 17): We've already processed 137 Access to Fair Assessment applications (and 10 reasonable adjustments).

Our rise isn't unique to us; [Ofqual reported](#) a 12.3% rise in approved access arrangements for GCSE, AS, and A level assessments in 2023-2024.

Ultimately, we need to ensure our processes are manageable for everyone involved. This means we'll only be processing applications for genuine, specific needs that go beyond our standard excellent practice.

Will this have a negative impact on candidates?

Assessor Communications

No, we strongly believe that it won't. The access to fair assessment themes described in this communication are standard practice, and assessors will utilise this support whether they've received a notification from us or not. You've also fed back that many candidates don't disclose an access arrangement request to us, and yet our IQA and EQA activity hasn't reported any negative impact on assessment. In fact, our IQA and EQA activity has consistently confirmed that you work in an agile way to ensure all candidates receive a fair assessment.

Will BHS continue to accept access to fair assessment applications?

Yes. If candidates require additional support that goes beyond our usual inclusive practice described in this communication, they're welcome to apply for an access to fair assessment or a reasonable adjustment. You will still continue to be informed in the usual way.

We'll be holding an information session with Julian on Tuesday 23rd September (6:30pm – 8:00pm) to discuss this in more detail and answer any questions you might have. We welcome the opportunity to share this information with you first before changing our processes. To book on to this session please click the below link by the end of Thursday 18th September. The meeting link will be sent on Friday 19th September to all those booked on.

Please see below the guidance on making an assessment decision for candidates who are unable to complete a section

Please let me know if you have any queries or concerns.

Important update: Ensuring fair and consistent assessment decisions

We're reaching out today with some important clarifications regarding assessment decisions. Our aim, as always, is to ensure every assessment is conducted fairly and consistently.

Making an assessment decision when a candidate can't complete a section

We understand that unforeseen circumstances can arise during assessments. When a candidate is unable to complete an assessment section, particularly after an incident such as a rider fall, it is crucial we refer to our Accidents at BHS Assessments Policy.

To summarise some key points from the policy:

- **Ridden Assessment Falls:** For the health and welfare of a candidate, if they fall at any point during their ridden assessment, they aren't permitted to remount. They will be withdrawn from that ridden assessment and any further ridden assessments scheduled for that day.
- If you have already gathered sufficient evidence to make a clear pass or fail judgment against all assessment criteria before a fall, the result can stand. However, if a fall occurs before you've gathered enough evidence, the BHS may offer a free or discounted resit.
- **Non-Fall Incidents:** If an incident occurs that doesn't result in a fall, the decision to continue rests with the candidate (or their parent/carer if under 18). This also applies to continuing with other parts of the assessment.

With these points in mind, it's vital to follow this protocol when making an assessment decision:

- All learning outcomes must be met: Candidates must successfully complete all learning outcomes and assessment criteria in order to achieve a pass
- If a rider falls, you can only award a pass if you've obtained sufficient and valid evidence against all assessment criteria prior to the fall.

We'll explain a couple of examples to help put this into context.

Flat riding example: A learning outcome includes being able to ride horses in an arena. If a fall occurs on the first horse of the assessment it's simply not possible to gather sufficient evidence to achieve a pass.

Stage 2 jumping example: Similarly, Stage 2 jumping candidates are expected to ride two horses over show jumps. If a fall occurs on the second horse and you've already observed sufficient evidence against the syllabus guidance (including reviewing the session and other riding theory) you could potentially make a valid assessment decision. In all cases, please ensure you refer directly to the assessment criteria. You must confirm that all criteria have been met before deciding to pass a candidate who hasn't completed a section. If a candidate hasn't been observed meeting all assessment criteria, the result must be recorded as a fail, regardless of how strong you felt the candidate was generally.

Assessors selecting horses for candidates

This is another area where consistency and perceived fairness are important. It's always the assessor's responsibility to allocate horses and tasks across all parts of the assessment.

To maintain impartiality:

- Please refrain from comments like “I don't mind which horse you take”. This can unintentionally disadvantage candidates, especially when internal candidates are present.
- Horse selection should always appear unbiased and based on objective observations on the day. For example, selecting appropriate size of horse for the rider.
- For riding sections, assessors should clearly allocate the first horse and the change to the second.
- It is fine to consult with the centre representative regarding the horses and their way of going if that helps to inform your decision.
- Assessors must avoid horse allocation appearing to be candidate led, or unduly influenced by the centre representative.
- Likewise, when allocating horses to lunge, please take responsibility for which candidate takes which horse. Do not give any indication they can choose.
- When selecting horses for care sections, please consider the candidate's stature. For example, don't allocate a very tall horse to a shorter candidate who might struggle to reach to put a saddle on.

19 August 2025

Reasonable adjustment/access to fair assessment - candidates using special equipment

Please note that where we have agreed a candidate can use special equipment as part of a reasonable adjustment/access to fair assessment request, we require assessors to record this on the risk assessment.

Assessor guidance on the hub has been updated to reflect this, and it will also be communicated to lead assessors who are allocated to assessments where this is applicable.

Please let me know if you have any concerns or queries.

26 June 2025

Gentle reminders – thank you!

Good Morning, just a few gentle reminders for you today!

- Please could you remember to allocate candidates to horses at all assessments, rather than let them do a 'pick your own' scenario?
- If a candidate falls off and you consider that they have demonstrated sufficient competence to achieve the Learning Outcome, make sure to check that they have still completed ALL the criteria in the relevant part of the syllabus.
- Please could you make sure when checking skills records that the front page is filled in with the candidate's name. If not, please ask the candidate to fill this in on the day.

Please also note, if you were unable to attend either of the Assessor engagement sessions with Tracy Castles this week, the APC session is being held this evening at 7pm and covers the same information. This link was sent out on Tuesday. Please contact me or another member of the Education team if you would like this link sending again.

Thank you so much for your continued support as always.

17 June 2025

Assessor updates

Dear Assessor,

Important Updates: Health & Safety Procedures and Assessment Guidelines - Effective 1 July

We're writing to let you know about some important updates to our health and safety processes and procedures for assessments, as well as some key assessment guidelines. These revisions will be implemented at all assessments from 1 July.

Please take a moment to review the key changes below:

1. Coaching Assessments: Centre Falls Policy

- Action Required: If the assessment centre has a falls policy (e.g., riders are not allowed to remount after a fall), this policy *must* be followed if a demonstration rider falls.
- If No Policy: If the centre *doesn't* have a falls policy, please use your professional discretion to decide if the demonstration rider should continue with the session or assessment after a fall or other accident.

3. Recording at Assessments: Reminder to Candidates & Parents

Assessor Communications

- **Action Required:** During your initial briefing, please remind all candidates, and their accompanying parent/carer/responsible adult, that filming/recording is not permitted. Please also remain vigilant throughout the assessment.

4. Horse Welfare at Assessments: Support Guidance

We've added more prompts and information within the Assessor Guidance to support you when asking for replacement horses and recording this process. This formalises what you already do.

5. Access Arrangements: On-the-Day Requests

- **Action Required:** If a candidate, parent/carer, or the centre discloses an access arrangement or reasonable adjustment requirement on the day, and you were *not* previously informed by BHS Education, you should explain that we cannot accept access arrangement requests on the day of the assessment.
- Do not review any medical information presented (e.g., an Education Health Care Plan). Instead, advise them that you will assess all candidates empathetically, repeat or rephrase questions where needed, and allow a little extra time for information processing where required, within the limits of the day's timetable. Explain that this is standard procedure for all candidates.
- **If candidate is unhappy:** If the candidate is not happy to be assessed without a formal access arrangement, they should be directed to contact the BHS Education office for advice regarding a transfer, and the assessment should not take place.
- **Safety Concerns:** If they do want to go ahead, but you believe it will not be safe for the assessment to proceed, inform the candidate that it's unsafe to assess them that day and direct them to contact the BHS Education office to reschedule. This allows for their needs to be considered and a full risk assessment to take place.

Updated Documents – Please Read

As a result of these updates, the following documents have been revised. It's crucial that you read these before your next assessment after 1 July:

1. Risk assessment
 - Generic risk assessments updated for currency (applies to all assessments).
 - 'On the day' risk assessment updated to include a prompt about asking the centre for their falls policy (coaching assessments only).
2. Candidate Emergency Form/Medical Information form
 - Now includes a prompt for candidates to notify of pregnancy.
 - **Action Required:** You *must* ensure you read all completed forms before proceeding with any assessment. If you receive a new notification on the day, that you are not already aware of, follow the guidelines in the Assessor Guidance.
3. Assessor Guidance
 - Updated sections include pregnant candidates, safeguarding horse welfare, access arrangements, preparing for assessment, and additions to the candidate briefing.
 - All edits are highlighted within this document for ease of reference.
4. Horse Welfare at Assessments Statement: Clarified scope and reference to BHS Guiding Principles. (Also on our website for candidates).
5. Accidents at Assessment Policy: Small revisions regarding demonstration rider accidents. (Also on our website for candidates).
6. Health and Safety at Assessment Statement: Updated with the revisions noted in this email. (Also on our website for candidates).

Where to find the updates:

All updated documents will be available on the [Assessor Hub](#) for you to view. Look out for the section titled: *Policy updates from 1 July 2025*.

Thank you for your continued dedication and for helping us maintain the highest standards of safety and welfare at our assessments.

29 January 2025

Do's and Don't's - assessment feedback/Reminder of GDPR timeline for data retention/Education Team direct line numbers

Assessment feedback support

Please find a summary document on the Assessor Hub detailing Do's and Dont's when writing assessment feedback. This is intended to be used as a quick reference sheet and is designed to be read alongside the BHSQ Essential Guide – we hope it is helpful.

Reminder of GDPR timeline for data retention

Please find a summary document on the Assessor Hub detailing GDPR responsibilities for assessors. It is essential that all assessors remain up to date with this to ensure legal and awarding body compliance.

21 January 2025

Revised syllabus changes from 1st March 2025 (Stage 1 & Stage 3 Ride Jump) & link to the video of Aintree assessor training sessions

Please see below the changes to the Stage 1 and Stage 3 Ride Jump syllabus to take effect from 1st March 2025.

Please also note we have provided a link to the assessor training sessions in the assessor training section on the assessor hub.

Stage 1 – revised syllabus roll out from 1 March 2025

A general review took place last year following consultations with trainers, centres and candidates.

Consultations confirmed the content is still current and requests to simplify the language were taken on board.

- Two assessment criteria have been added to the Stage 1 Care:
 - 4.1 'State a horse's welfare needs' is an addition regarding horse welfare and wellbeing
 - 7.1 'Discuss how correct handling effects the horse' again is a focus on horse wellbeing and in a very simple way, appropriate for Stage 1, is essentially the foundations/basics to introduce learning theory.
- Two assessment criteria have been merged into others:
 - Care: Previous Assessment Criteria 7.5 – Describe how to handle horses safely in the field - has been deleted (included in existing assessment criteria).
 - Ride: Previous Assessment Criteria 3.12 - Show where appropriate, how to use a short whip (75cm/30" or less) – has been deleted and included in 3.2.
- The third column wording has been reviewed and simplified throughout.
- A couple of command verbs have been changed to reflect what actually happens in the assessment.
- Ranges have also been added where appropriate to make it clearer for learners and assessors what/how much content may be assessed on the day.
- The pdf syllabus is a new design; hopefully a bit more engaging and a friendlier format to the current. Also added at the back pages is a short guide to how to read the syllabus which may help trainers.

The delivery of Stage 1 remains unchanged.

Support for you

- You will find the new-look syllabus, plus documents that highlight the changes on the [Assessor Hub](#).
- We provided an update of the Stage 1 at our Assessor Training at Aintree in September. View the video on our [Assessor Hub](#).
- Centre Guidance will be updated to reflect small changes to feed samples required.

Stage 3 Ride Jump – revised syllabus roll out from 1 March 2025

We carried out a review of the Stage 3 Jump unit (Unit 4: Stage 4 Ride Jump). The conclusion of the review is for the heights of fences for show jumping and cross-country to be amended. This brings the Stage 3 jumping in parity with the jumping criteria at other level 3 vocational qualifications and standards currently on the Regulated Qualifications Framework. Parity between standards at the same level is important, as this helps employers to understand the abilities of their workforce more clearly. We surveyed employers who employ, or are likely to employ, grooms or riders qualified to level 3/Stage 3 or equivalent. The results confirmed that the majority of employers surveyed do not require riders to show jump 1m or higher, or jump cross-country fences 90cm or higher in order to employ them at level 3/Stage 3 or equivalent. This data suggests that employers do not require employees at level 3/Stage 3 to jump the heights that are currently in the specification. Therefore, amending the heights of fences to the proposed would not disadvantage successful learners from gaining employment at level 3/Stage 3.

The amends are as follows:

- The height of jumping efforts have been amended for the Stage 3 Riding syllabus as follows:
 - Show Jumping: from 1m to 90cm
 - Cross-country: from 91cm to 80cm

- We have also added guidance within the syllabus to consider the use of the fences for schooling the horse to maintain training. As per the focus for Stage 3 Ride, the jumping is not a competition round but a schooling round to maintain the horse's level of training. This applies to show jumping and cross-country sections.

What has not changed:

- The set up of the assessment remains the same – centres are still required to provide a numbered course.
- The timings of the assessment remain the same.

Support for you

- You will find a draft syllabus on the [Assessor Hub](#) which highlights the changes to the Stage 3 Jump unit.
- We provided an update of the Stage 3 at our Assessor Training at Aintree in September. View the video on our [Assessor Hub](#).
- Assessor Guidance will be updated to reflect changes.
- Centre Guidance will be updated to reflect changes.

5 December 2024

Latest sort confirmed/important information

Black Marker Pens

Please can we ask that you carry a black marker pen with you on assessment days. This is to be used instead of a biro where for example you may need to change a candidate's name or bib number. If you need to purchase one specially – please can you add this as an expense to your next invoice submission and upload a receipt up to the value of £5.

Skills Record check

A gentle reminder to be extra vigilant that the skills records are signed off at the correct level for the assessment taking place.

28.11.2024

Jewellery at assessments

Please can we ask that assessors follow the same dress guidelines as candidates regarding the wearing of jewellery on assessment days.

The current candidate guidance states:

“Jewellery within a practical environment can often cause injury or safety concerns, so for this reason it is advised that no jewellery, apart from a watch, is worn or is covered up during your assessment”

We appreciate that, while you are not directly working with horses in your role as an assessor, there may be instances where you are required step in and assist with practical tasks. As industry professionals, it is also very important to set a good example to candidates from a health and safety perspective and this supports our centres in maintaining standards for their own staff and students.

24.10.2024

Update on the BHS language guide

We have recently updated the BHS language guide on the BHS Website - <https://www.bhs.org.uk/about-us/how-we-operate/our-policies/diversity-equality-and-inclusion-documents/>.

Please note, this information is also available on the assessor hub.

16.10.2024

Stage 5 assessments – Lead Assessor Report Form

Please can I gently remind all assessors that at Stage 5 there is still the requirement for a Lead assessor report form (centre feedback) to be completed for each assessment, including the relevant paperwork if not handed to member of the BHS team on the day – accident forms and risk assessments.

This can be submitted via the usual form found here: <https://wkf.ms/44X96Ch>.

If you have recently led a stage 5 assessment, please can you complete this retrospectively as soon as possible.

27.08.2024

Stage 2 Coach – Completing online feedback.

There seems to be some confusion when completing feedback for Stage 2 Coaching specifically in relation to Learning Outcomes 3 and 4, (Be able to Coach safely and Be able to demonstrate lesson management skills).

When a candidate is recorded as Not Achieved in the drop down menu, all of the Stage 2 Coach outcomes will be listed. Select against each Learning Outcome whether the candidate has achieved or not.

When selecting “Not Achieved” a drop-down box will appear for narrative as to why. As you move further down the list of outcomes, 3 and 4 are at the bottom of the document directly above general comments. A drop-down box is not provided however, as stated in the form, the candidate can only be successful in Learning Outcomes 3 and 4 if all practical outcomes have been achieved. Therefore, these boxes should be marked as Not Yet Competent unless a candidate has achieved all practical outcomes. Any commentary related to these outcomes may be detailed against the unsuccessful practical outcome.

Please also remember the same is the case for Stage 3 Coach Learning Outcomes 2 and 3; Be able to Coach safely and Be able to demonstrate lesson management skills must be marked as Not Achieved if any of the practical outcomes have been recorded Not Achieved.

Centre Reports

There have recently been some mismatches when reporting on centres following assessments. If you are part of a Team, please ensure if there is anything to report back on, the lead is informed before you leave the assessment.

Please could we ask Leads to ensure assessors are asked during the day before the team leave if there has been anything that needs to be reported back to the office.

Please contact Julian Campbell (julian.campbell@bhs.org.uk) if you have any queries regarding any of the above,

25.07.2024

Assessor Guidance Update

Following recent quality assurance activity which suggested a perceived discrepancy between the results sheet/Qualification Specification and Assessor Guidance for Stage 3 Dressage Ride Learning Outcome 2.3, (use exercises to improve the horses’ way of going), please note that the Assessor Guidance has now been edited to read as follows:

Candidates are required to ride horses to maintain the horse’s level of training. The assessor should see evidence of the candidate riding an appropriate warm up plan and making an assessment of the horse’s way of going. From this assessment the candidates should use exercises to develop the way of going from the level seen in the warm up to the horse’s current level of training. Candidates are not expected to improve the way of going beyond the horse’s established level of training.

I hope this clarifies the expectation in relation to this Learning Outcome but if further assistance is needed, please contact julian.campbell@bhs.org.uk who will be able to provide further advice. We have also made the following recent updates to the Assessor Guidance. Please can you ensure that you review these and come back to us with any questions?

Version Number	Page	Reason for changes made	Date
2.6	44	Timings changed for Stage 2 jump to one hour	26.07.2024
	24	Video link added: Best practice for communicating with a translator	

	46-48	Updated Stage 3 Care unit	
	48-52	Updated Stage 3 Ride unit	
	17	Updated the 'sharing information with assessors' section for Access Arrangement applications	

16.07.2024

Amendment to Stage 2 Teach Centre Guidance - Lead rein lesson

Following some recent feedback regarding the difficulty sourcing genuine beginner riders for the lead rein lesson within the Stage 2 Teach assessment, we have taken the decision to reduce the minimum age of volunteer riders in this session only.

With immediate effect, riders may take part in the lead rein session from the age of 4, providing that the centre's own insurance policy and licence conditions cover riders of this age, and the children have sufficiently developed communication and listening skills. Previously, the minimum age of riders for this section was 6 years.

Hopefully, this may enable centres to provide a more realistic scenario for candidates delivering the lead rein lesson as part of the Stage 2 Teach assessment. Revised Centre Guidance is available on the Assessor Hub and will also be circulated to our Assessment Centres. This includes further details about parental supervision/observation during Stage 2 Teach assessments in relation to children who are acting as volunteer riders.

Thank you for keeping up to date with our current policies and please do come back to me if you have any questions in relation to this change.

02.07.2024

Reminder: re the welfare and safety of horse and rider at assessments

Welfare and safety of horse and rider at assessments

Please can I gently remind you that if you have any concerns with the welfare and safety of the horse and/or rider at an assessment, please ensure that appropriate provision is taken to ensure that their well-being is not compromised. If the warm-up time is not felt to be sufficient, please feel free to take extra time to ensure you are happy to proceed. If you feel strongly that an assessment should be discontinued, or a candidate stopped on the grounds of health and safety, we will support you in this decision.

20.06.2024

Important reminders - Lead Assessor Report Form, & Managing Candidate Falls at Assessments

Please see below a few gentle but important reminders:

Lead Assessor Report Form

As per the Assessor contract and appendix, Lead Assessors must electronically submit the Lead Assessor Report Form using the link on the Assessor Hub, together with any applicable accident reports and the risk assessment no later than 48 hours after the assessment date. Please ensure also that the correct documents are being submitted, (the current versions can be found on the hub so please don't use up old stock of paper forms). If in any doubt, please contact the Education Department.

It is the responsibility of the Lead Assessor to submit an accident report form following an accident or near miss to any personnel involved in an assessment, (including for volunteer riders at coaching assessments). A copy of the accident form should be left with the assessment centre.

Managing candidate falls at assessments

As per 7.1 of our Accidents policy, if a candidate has fallen at any time during their ridden assessment they are not permitted to remount. The candidate should be withdrawn from the ridden assessment and any further ridden assessment that day. This is to ensure the health and welfare of the candidate. They may take part in further non-ridden assessments if they wish to do so but if the candidate is under 18, permission must be sought by the assessor from their nominated parent or carer before allowing them to continue.

All our policies can be found on the assessor hub.

Assessor Communications

Please can we ask that assessors do not promise or discuss with candidates their being given a free re-sit following a fail. This decision is for the Education Department to make and to communicate to the candidate after the assessment when the results and reports have been received.

Thank you so much for your continuing support. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries or concerns regarding your assessing role.

11.06.2024

Clarification on the role of Internal and External Quality Assurers at BHS assessments

Now that our internal and external quality assurances processes are fully embedded in our operations, we felt it would be helpful to clarify the roles of Internal and External Quality Assurers at BHS assessments to answer some of your frequently asked questions.

Internal Quality Assurance

BHS Education are responsible for deploying Internal Quality Assurers (IQAs) to assessments. Their attendance may be routine or due to an identified risk and the activity may be in-person on the assessment day or via a virtual Teams meeting arranged retrospectively. On-the day IQA activity may be announced or unannounced. The role of BHS IQAs is to report on some or all of the following:

- how well an assessor adheres to BHS Education Policies and Procedures
- how an assessor adheres to and samples BHS assessment criteria
- an assessor's organisation, customer service and inter-personal skills
- an assessor's presentation and professionalism
- an assessor's questioning technique
- the reliability of an assessor's assessment decisions
- the candidate feedback given by an assessor
- the impartiality of an assessment
- the suitability of the horses, equipment and facilities provided by an approved assessment centre
- the implementation of a specific process, (for example access arrangements or risk assessment)

During an IQA visit, the IQA will observe the assessor working. While IQAs aim to be supportive and helpful, assessors should not ask IQAs for a second opinion on their assessment decisions during the assessment and IQAs will only intervene where safety or welfare may be compromised. Sometimes feedback will be provided by the IQA on the assessment day but following each IQA activity, an IQA Report will be produced and sent to BHS Education. This is shared with the relevant assessors and/or centre and with BHSQ for regulated assessments.

External Quality Assurance

Our regulated awarding body BHSQ are responsible for deploying External Quality Assurers (EQAs) to regulated assessments. Their visits may be announced or unannounced, in-person or they may take place virtually after an assessment.

- The external verifier will have a focus for their activities. This may be very specific or general. As a consequence, external verifiers may carry out different activities over different time periods.
- The external verifier may change their focus depending on what they find.
- They may arrive before the start of the day or part way through. Likewise, they may leave before the end of the day. The visit is not time constrained.
- They may explain to the assessment team what they find or they may wish to discuss this further and so not provide feedback during their activities.
- They always aim to be supportive and helpful.
- They will not generally intervene in assessment. However, if they consider practice is unsafe, or that the welfare of any horse or person is being compromised, they will intervene.

The role of EV and quality assurer (EQA) on the assessment day is to monitor practice during assessment of BHSQ qualifications. This is to decide if assessment is accurate and if candidates and others are safe. It includes monitoring the internal verification of assessment.

The EV/EQA may speak to candidates to understand their experience. It is useful for BHS to explain to candidates that an EV/EQA may visit and that there should be no impact on their experience. This should help alleviate any worry.

Following an EQA in-person or virtual activity, BHSQ will submit a report to BHS Education, including recommendations to be discussed or compulsory actions to be completed by BHS Education. Confirmed results cannot be released to candidates until all IQA and EQA activity is complete so please do respond promptly if requested to attend a retrospective IQA or EQA meeting following an assessment. Please do consider your potential availability to attend any such post-assessment meetings when offering to assess.

What happens next?

Assessor Communications

Recommendations and actions from IQA and EQA reports are considered by BHS Education during regular Quality Improvement meetings and the findings also feed into the risk ratings for assessors and assessment centres. This helps us to identify trends and informs our cycle of continuous quality improvement which aims to enhance the candidate experience and ensure we continue to meet our regulatory requirements. This information also enables us to make necessary adaptations to ensure that BHS qualifications remain fit for purpose.

Thank you very much for engaging with our internal and external quality assurance activities and please do come back to us with any further questions.

30.04.2024

Update on hat standards and clarification on dress code

Dress code clarification

Please note clean jeans are acceptable to wear during care/lunge assessments.

19.04.2024

Clarification on assessment criteria for Stage 2

In order to clarify assessment criteria for Stage 2 please note the following:

Lungeing:

A brief should indicate the horse is being lunged for exercise to include walk, trot and canter as appropriate. Work is inclusive of working both with and without side reins.

Equipment may be either a roller or saddle. Centres do not have to provide saddles for all horses it is acceptable for horses to be in rollers.

When making a judgement it is purely on what is presented. The fact that successful completion allows candidates to Stage 2 Teach **SHOULD NOT INFLUENCE THE DECISION**.

The candidate can either lunge to the required standard or not. The assessment must only be against the published criteria which does not include any reference to Stage 2 Teach or progressing to lunge the horse with a rider.

Please further note in relation to Stage 2 Care:

Criteria 5.1 States: Describe methods used to weigh a horse. The assessment method is listed as observation/discussion. This means that a candidate may show how to take a weight measurement as this maybe the best way for them to describe the criteria.

Showing how to do something with a descriptive element would cover a discussion. Where the candidate is asked to demonstrate this is what must be done. A description does not meet the requirement to demonstrate; but a demonstration may meet a descriptive need.

Further examples are.

8.2 Demonstrate how to administer an oral treatment. The candidate must show how this is done.

10.3 Describe how to remove a shoe. Candidates would often be advantaged by showing what they would do, without removing a shoe.

Stage 2 Jumping

If horses are used to jumping fillers, they may be included within the Stage 2 jumping course but this is not compulsory and centres are encouraged to build a simple course that meets the requirements, comprising of fences which their horses are familiar with jumping. Specifically, this means that the course should be numbered and included 7 fences. It should not include a double but related distances are acceptable. The course should include at least one change of rein and four of the fences should be spreads. The height of the fences should be up to 75cms and safety cups need to be used on the back pole of all spreads.

I hope this clarification is helpful and please do contact julian.campbell@bhs.org.uk with any questions.

13.03.2024

'Near Miss' definition

There has been some confusion as to the definition of a near miss at an assessment and what types of incident need to be reported. Please note the following definitions:

An accident is an unexpected event which results in injury or illness of a person.

Near miss is an unexpected event which does not involve injury or illness to a person or horse.

Assessor Communications

An example of a near miss which could have resulted in an injury but didn't, is a horse standing on a person's foot and making contact with the boot and not the foot. Another example may be a horse becoming loose and wandering into an area where candidates are present, even if it is caught with no incident.

Please note that all accidents and near misses need to be reported using the *Accident and Near Miss Report Form*. This must be passed to the Lead Assessor on the assessment day and submitted to BHS Education via the Lead Assessor Report Form.

Further information can be found in the "Accidents at BHS assessments" policy. All current policies can be found on the [Assessor Hub](#).

Thank you very much for your assistance with this and please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any queries or concerns.

28.2.2024

Assessor update newsletter

We are very grateful to have received so much feedback from the autumn 2023 assessor training days. As promised, we have collected all the information and questions we gathered from you and provide clarification and updates below. We endeavour to take it all on board and where possible use it to improve our processes going forward. Please see the slides used during the training for your information (these will be posted on the Assessor Hub).

The use of tablets for assessors to complete their results/feedback

We are happy to pilot the use of tablets for results and feedback. If you have a tablet and would be willing to take part in a pilot where the use of tablets is tested, then please express this on the below link by the end of 15th March.

<https://r1.dotdigital-pages.com/p/74RT-D82/thank-you-for-your-response>

The length of time it takes to complete results and reports

If you have any suggestions on how to reduce the time taken, any ideas are much appreciated and can be emailed to me – jenny.wall@bhs.org.uk

Skills Record

The use of the skills record will be reviewed at the APCED group meeting. The Stage 4 Skills Record sign off will remain in its current form, however we will look to provide further clarification on the website and candidate communication.

Afternoon briefing

It appears that many assessors find the afternoon briefing challenging. There will be further discussion surrounding briefings with our Awarding Body BHSQ to see if the briefings can be shortened. Further communication and updates to the assessor guidance will follow.

Reasonable Adjustments and Access to fair assessment when there is a change of lead at short notice

An internal process has been implemented to ensure that when there is a change in the lead assessor at short notice, they are notified of any candidates with reasonable adjustments and access to fair assessment.

Good feedback from candidate experience forms

Unfortunately, the candidate experience forms are not frequently filled out by candidates who have had a good experience. We will be looking at different platforms and when to send this out to candidates to try and improve this.

Assessors feeding back on IQAs

We will always welcome feedback on the IQAs. All feedback can be submitted in writing to education@bhs.org.uk. All feedback is read and reviewed for further action. It is the lead's responsibility to introduce the IQA or any other person attending the assessment to the candidates and to each assessor and state why they are there.

Informing assessors of the outcome of the centre feedback form

All feedback provided from the assessors is always read and actioned accordingly. This will then be fed into the risk rating against the centre. The follow up from the Education Team may not always be appropriate to share back to the assessor.

Train the trainer days on coaching

We have started running evening Train the Trainer talks surrounding coaching and have had a huge take up on this. Further talks and courses will be considered. The coaching qualification is under review this year to see if the lessons asked are at the correct level. The use of poles at Stage 4 will be a discussion topic as it is felt that candidates do not do this well enough on an assessment day.

Candidates booking an assessment after multiple fails

We are unable to stop candidates who have had previous multiple fails from booking on to an assessment, however during an assessment if there is a concern on safety or welfare, the assessor should stop the assessment and make the Education Team aware. We will then work with the candidate to ensure they are aware of the importance of training before booking their next attempt.

Improving the clarity of observation sheets

We have worked with a group of assessors to produce new versions of the observation sheets and these will be in circulation going forwards. If you have any feedback regarding the assessment paperwork, please do email education@bhs.org.uk

Condensing of the risk assessment

We are currently reviewing the whole risk assessment document and also trying to make it easier for assessors to upload.

Mapping paperwork to be made electronically

We will be moving the mapping documentation digitally and assessors will be sent the online forms once they have been created.

Clarification of timelines for submitting feedback following IQA

If you are selected for IQA, you will normally be required to submit your feedback for any sampled candidates to the IQA by email before uploading it to our online results platform. Our expectation is that you will submit this feedback to the IQA within 48 hours of the assessment date. The IQA will review your feedback and reply with any suggested edits or development points within 24 hours. You will then need to implement any changes and upload the finalised candidate feedback to the online results platform within 96 hours of the assessment date. On some occasions, the IQA activity may not include a review of feedback or you may be asked to send feedback to the IQA for all candidates you have assessed – where this is the case, the IQA should clarify this with you on the assessment day.

Preparing a horse to travel

The skill being assessed is the safe handling of the horse in preparation for loading. Please refer to page 41 (Stage 2) of the assessor guidance for clarity on the use of bridles – Assessor Guidance is on the Assessor Hub

Stage 2 lungeing candidates

Candidates are able to lunge either in tack or a roller.

Assessor clothing

The branded red coats/gilets do not need to be worn on assessment days, however we do ask that assessors continue to attend in smart and plain clothing and official assessor name badges must be worn throughout the assessment. Provision of lanyards is being investigated and further information on this will follow.

Timetables

The Education Team will prepare a draft timetable to the best of their knowledge 4 weeks prior to the assessment date. It will be sent to the centre and lead assessor so we can be notified if it does not work. At least 3 weeks before the assessment date, the Education Team will email the final version and post the timetables. If it does not work on the run up to the assessment due to candidates pulling out or centre issues, it is the responsibility of the lead assessor to ensure the centre and assessor team have been updated on any amendments. If a candidate's start time must be changed, please notify the Education Team as soon as possible so we can contact them. We only offer a template of the timetable and it is up to the assessors and centres how they manage each section – eg Care A and the order to run the learning outcomes.

Request for book of assessor contact details

Unfortunately we are no longer able to provide assessors with contact details for all assessors due to GDPR. We are only able to provide details of those who you will be working with and you may not ever have a business need to contact certain assessors (eg due to location). We will continue to email the relevant contact details in the closing down email.

Results

Following on from the email on information relayed from BHSQ regarding feedback, we would like to reiterate that you do not need to put a comment next to an achieved learning outcome. Further guidance will be updated in the assessor guidance shortly.

Height of Stage 3 jump fences

The Stage 3 ride is being reviewed in 2024 and further communication will follow. We will also review if the care, lunge, flat and SJ ride can be made available all year round.

Emergency contact details for assessors

Going forwards, the Education Team will ask for emergency contact details for all assessors annually. Further communication will follow.

The use of CCTV

The use of CCTV is for security purposes and is not for reviewing assessments. We will update the candidate terms and conditions to highlight there may be CCTV in operation. All centres should have signage up where CCTV is in use. Please refer to the centre guidance which is available on the assessor hub.

Promotion of smaller centres

We promote all of our assessment centres equally and continually strive to call up waiting lists and previous candidates to book them on to all upcoming assessments.

UK candidates taking assessments in the Republic of Ireland

The Education Team does not discourage candidates to fly over to the ROI for assessments.

Stage 2 and 3 assessments running in devolved format

Unfortunately, the Stage 2 and Stage 3 assessments cannot return to a devolved format due to them being regulated qualifications. We have to follow a strict quality assurance policy and this is challenging when running in a devolved format.

Loose ground poles under fences

The use of Ground poles in a British Horse Society assessment is permitted. However, should the positioning of such poles be considered to either have the potential to be unsafe or have a negative impact on horses and riders then action should be taken by the assessor.

In the case of riding assessments, consultation with the centre representative or in higher level and coaching assessments, questioning and discussion with the candidate to clarify their understanding is required.

Continuation of the exercise should only be permitted when it is considered safe and will further a positive response to riders.

Level of demo riders at Stage 3

Please refer to the centre guidance where all levels of demo riders are detailed per stage. If it is felt that the demo riders given are not to the required standard, please discuss this with the centre.

Face to face standard setting day in Scotland

This is currently on hold, but will be considered next time we run assessor training sessions.

Direct entry

Please refer to the direct entry section of the website - <https://www.bhs.org.uk/careers-recreational-awards/assessments-information/direct-entry-guidance> If you have any further questions relating to direct entry, please email the Education Department – education@bhs.org.uk

Online worming module

New candidates no longer need to complete the online worming module as part of the Stage 3 syllabus, however if they started the Stage 3 Care before 20th February 23, they will need to complete it if they would like to complete the qualification. Please refer them to the Education Team if you have anyone with questions surrounding the online worming module.

Gentle reminders

Accommodation

If requiring accommodation for assessment dates, please can you indicate this on the sort link when offering or in a separate email to jenny.wall@bhs.org.uk

Submitting results

When submitting online results or reports, we require the Assessment ID number which can be found on the candidate results summary. It is a 5 digit number and tends to start with a 4. It is really important this is inputted so our reporting system knows which assessment it relates to when it is submitted.

Ratio of candidate numbers at Stage 3

A reminder that we are now running Stage 3 care, lunge and ride in a 1:4 ratio. If you have any feedback on the running of the day, please email education@bhs.org.uk .

Assessor hub

Please remember that all information pertaining to the assessor role and any updates can be found on the assessor hub. Please remember this link is for assessor use only.

<https://pathways.bhs.org.uk/assessor-documents/>

Falls Policy

A reminder that the falls policy applies to assessments across all levels including devolved Stage 1 assessments. Please refer to the policy and assessor guidance sections on the assessor hub.

Distances

There has been some assessor discussion recently regarding the brief for the class lesson Stage 2 Teach. Please note:

Learning outcome 7 is: Coach an integrated flat work and jumping lesson.

Learning Outcome 7.2: Couch a group. The guidance states, Group lesson as detailed in 7.1, to include • Rider position • Walk, trot, canter and jumping up to 75cm including a double or related distance.

Therefore, as a minimum requirement, candidates must work with two related fences measuring the distance between.

9 January 2024

Clarity on candidate feedback

Following a recent meeting with our awarding body BHSQ, we have been requested to share the following email from Julie Gibson (BHSQ Responsible Officer) with you all. If you need further clarification on this, please do not hesitate to contact me.

“Thank you for your discussion today about the need for clarity in candidate feedback. To summarise we discussed how to ensure a candidate is not in any way misled when they receive their provisional results. In other words, they understand feedback at this point is provisional and does not indicate achievement of a qualification. We were of course in agreement about the importance of this.

I wanted to take this opportunity to explain it is important that assessors make comments about the performance of the candidate in relation to the specific required standards.

For example, when an assessor decides a candidate has achieved, they may state:

“In this learning outcome, you met the required standards because you”...then stating specifically what the candidate did.

Likewise, when an assessor decides a candidate has not met the required standards they may state:

“In this learning outcome, you have not met the required standard because” ...then stating specifically what the candidate did or failed to do or did incorrectly.”

It would be better for assessors not to draw any summative conclusions about assessment in provisional feedback.

For example, stating to candidates they have achieved a qualification. In other words, I would not state: “Well done you have successfully achieved”.

This could be misleading as results could change following internal and external verification”

Thank you as always for all your expertise, experience and enthusiasm and I hope to see many of you during the course of the year.

24 November 2023

Confirmation of Jan-April sort, the latest panic list and other important information

Thank you again to all who offered in the last sort (Jan-April 2024). Your support is very much appreciated. Confirmation has just been emailed to all those who have been selected or who have had a recent change to their schedules.

Selection of BHSI dates/IQA's/observers & probationers

Please note confirmation of selection for the BHSI dates and IQA/observer/probationary allocation will follow shortly.

Change to IQA policy

We have amended our IQA policy for next year. Some IQA's are now going to be announced and therefore confirmed on your schedule. If you are being IQA'd you may need to share some of your candidate feedback with the IQA before uploading it to the results form. Following your IQA you will normally receive an IQA report on your performance on that assessment day. The IQA will go through this full process on the day.

Assessments under previous syllabi

Some assessments are still running in some regions under previous syllabi. All assessments on your schedule which are detailed as “BHS Stages” are under the current syllabi. Assessments under previous syllabi do not have the “BHS” prefix. We try and be clear to highlight the different assessment types at the time of offering them for selection, however if you have been allocated to an assessment you are not comfortable conducting then please let us know immediately.

Declaration of Interest form (DOI)

Please note the Declaration of Interest form must be received once annually for each calendar year. If you have already emailed it to us in respect of 2024 when you offered for the recent sort then you do not need to send it again. You will need to just tick the mandatory field on the panic lists/sorts going forward, to confirm you

have submitted it. If you did not offer for dates in the last sort, then you need to email the DOI form to Amee (amee.cashmore@bhs.org.uk) so that you can offer for this panic list and future sorts/panic lists.

The form can be found attached in the original email or on the Assessor Hub.

Riding at Stage 4 and BHSI riding assessments

As per my email for the Jan-April sort, we now require you to inform us if you are able and prepared to ride at stage 4 and BHSI level ride assessments. Please note that you will be required to state Yes/No/Not Applicable in the mandatory field on the sort to be able to submit offers.

Assessor Training

Thank you to all those who attended one of our two recent assessor training days. I hope you found it enjoyable and informative. We collected a lot of constructive feedback from you and we will be in touch to communicate what we are doing to take this forward. For those who were unable to attend, we will be in touch shortly as to how we can update you.

Change to Stage 2 and Stage 3 candidate:assessor ratios

The recent change to Stage 2 and 3 assessment assessor/candidate ratios was discussed at the recent training days. If you were unable to attend and we have allocated you to these level of assessments (or you intend to offer), then please can you contact me and we will arrange for you to have an update prior to the assessment.

Assessor hub

A little reminder that all information regarding assessor guidance, feedback links, policies and updates can be found on our assessor hub. Please see the link below:

<https://pathways.bhs.org.uk/assessor-documents/>

Teams sessions with Julian

We will be holding a series of Teams sessions with Julian Campbell on hot topics in response to the feedback from the training days. These sessions are not mandatory, but are to provide you with an informal opportunity to chat through any issues, update yourselves, or simply enjoy a discussion with your fellow assessors. I will be communicating the dates of these in the new year.

Finally, I would like to thank you once again for your continued support. If you have any queries or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Jen

3 October 2023

Lead Assessor Report – change to process

The Risk Assessment Form, Centre Feedback and Accident reports can now be submitted following each assessment using one link which you can find below:

<https://wkf.ms/44X96Ch>

Lead assessors will now need to complete this report within 48 hours of each assessment. Please note it will not generate any extra work and will enable you to log in once to submit all 3 documents rather than sending separate emails. This link can also be accessed from the Assessor Hub. Please let me know if you need any support with using the form or uploading documents.

Thank you for your continuing support.

20 September 2023

Message from Michele Carman – Clarification of result terminology

We have recently had a few anomalies with result sheets due to candidates deciding not to complete an assessment, or if they fall off and are not allowed to continue.

For clarity

- If a candidate starts an assessment – even if it's for 1 minute and do not complete for whatever reason, then they are a Fail. However if they fall off towards the end of a session and have demonstrated all of the required parts of the Learning Outcome (LO) successfully, they may Pass.
- If for any reason they do not start a LO, then they are Absent.
- The only time they are Withdrawn is when they are not allowed to progress to the jump section following the flat assessment – ie they are withdrawn by the assessor.

I hope this helps when completing the feedback sheets! Please come back to me if you have any further queries on this.

13 September 2023

Online results – inputting the assessment ID number

Please can we kindly ask if you can fill out the assessment ID number on the online results when you submit them. This Assessment ID number can be found on the top of the main list summary which you should receive within the assessment pack. Thank you

25 July 2023

Safeguarding and good practice whilst driving for business

As part of our duty of care and safeguarding of our external workforce whilst on BHS contracted work, we would like to remind you of safe driving etiquette and introduce a new element of good practice. Please ensure that whilst driving on long journeys you adhere to the rules of the Highway Code and the following common sense guidance:

Driving when you are tired greatly increases your risk of collision. To minimise this risk

- make sure you are fit to drive. Do not begin a journey if you are tired. Get sufficient sleep before embarking on a long journey
- plan your journey to take sufficient breaks. A minimum break of at least 15 minutes after every two hours of driving is recommended
- if you feel sleepy, stop in a safe place. Do not stop in an emergency area or on a hard shoulder of a motorway

We strongly encourage that where possible (when more than one assessor is required) when hiring a car for business purposes that there are at least two named drivers on the insurance. This will reduce risk when hiring a car abroad for assessments in case of illness or any other incident that might affect the primary named driver. The extra cost is minimal and will be reimbursed by the Society.

13 July 2023

Updates to assessor guidance

There are some new updates to the assessor guidance which can be found on the assessor hub. Please can you take time to familiarise yourselves with the following changes:

Change control

Version Number	Page	Reason for changes made	Date
2.3	32-33	Updated guidance for video call assessment	11.07.2023
2.3	5	Updates to contact details for the Education Team	11.07.2023
2.3	7	Added 'Level 2 Foundation Coaching Riders' to the BHSQ list	11.07.2023

Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL) / Direct entry

Please familiarise yourself with our updated RPEL direct entry guidance – particularly if you are asked to provide a reference or assessor endorsement/verification.

We have updated our process for RPEL and you should be informed by a member of the Education Team (usually Janice or Gemma) on what should be included in your reference. This ensures all the required observations are evidenced.

We have also introduced an RPEL route for learners where achieving all, or some, Stage 2 assessments are a barrier for entering our coaching pathway. Learners are able to evidence their skills, knowledge and understanding via alternative methods offering flexibility where required. Similar to our standard RPEL an assessor verification is required.

In any situation where you are asked to provide a reference/endorsement/verification for a direct entry application we ask that you contact the Education Development Team in the first instance. Guidance regarding RPEL is on the Assessor Hub.

Submission of results

When submitting results, it appears for some assessors the autofill feature pre-populates the box for the candidate's name with your own. Please can you take care to ensure you enter the candidate's name in the relevant box – thank you so much!

Health, Safety and Welfare of Candidates, Horses and Others

Assessor Communications

Your priority as an assessor is to look after the health, safety and welfare of yourself, candidates, horses and others during assessment activities, this includes the assessment briefing.

At any point during an assessment should doubt exist as to the health, safety and/or welfare of the candidate, horses, assessor or others, an assessor or assessment centre personnel has the right to stop the candidate at any time.

Consider signposting the candidate to another task or activity if you feel the assessment can continue without compromising health, safety and welfare.

This guidance is on page 10 of the assessor guidance. It is also covered in our 'Accidents at BHS Assessments Policy', 'BHS Health and Safety Policy' and the 'Education Contractor Agreement'. Always refer to the Assessor Hub for the current version. We are also preparing a policy for Horse Welfare at BHS Assessments; further updates to follow when this is live.

Stage 2 Learning Outcome 3 Be able to prepare a horse to travel

One of the updates from the qualification review earlier this year surrounded the 'handling for loading' criteria at Stage 2. Please note the following update, and refer to the specification when assessing.

We have updated the assessment criteria for 3.2 – handle a horse safely in preparation for loading. The emphasis for this criteria are the handling skills and not loading of the horse (this is covered in the Skills Record).

At an assessment, the horse/s are not required to be loaded into a lorry or trailer. The candidate/s must lead a horse (in travel equipment) out from the stable and to a suitable area on the yard, this can be within a group (for time saving purposes) or individually, and then return to the stable. The horse/s are not required to be in a bridle, however you may choose to do this based on your risk assessment.

You should further question the candidate on their understanding of safe handling in different loading scenarios if elements within the assessment guidance are not observed.

As this is handling skills in the scenario of loading, the horse must wear travel equipment (the horse does not have to wear hind travel boots if the centre advises the horse doesn't usually wear these). The horse must not be wearing a saddle.

The centre does not have to provide a vehicle for loading.

The skills of safety checks, loading of horse are covered in the Skills Record and do not need to be repeated. Please refer to the qualification specification for the assessment criteria.

This guidance is on page 41 of the assessor guidance. Always refer to the Assessor Hub for the current version.

19 May 2023

Updates to assessor guidance

There are some new updates to the assessor guidance which can be found on the Assessor Hub. Please can you take time to familiarise yourselves with the following changes:

Version Number	Page	Reason for changes made	Date
2.2	13	Addition of advice re: pregnant candidates	10.05.2023
2.2	20	New section: Translators	10.05.2023
2.2	25-27	Update to Candidate Briefing section	10.05.2023
2.2	30	Update to information following an accident	10.05.2023
2.2	35	RPL and APC Hub updates	10.05.2023

Neck straps

Please note it is at the discretion of the centre as to whether necks straps are fitted to horses used in ridden assessments. A neck strap should be fitted for the lead rein lesson in Stage 2 Coach assessments and a neck strap or breast plate should be fitted to horses used in lunge lessons at coaching assessments.

Candidate ID

When asking for candidate ID, please note it does not have to be their BHS membership card. It can be any form of photographic ID.

Translators

If candidates require translation at an assessment and have not booked a translator, please note that informal translator arrangements must not be made. A declaration must be signed by an official translator who has been authorised by the office and the declaration must be submitted alongside the results. Please consult with the office if you are unsure of how to proceed.

Communication

Please note that where there is a team of assessors allocated at an assessment, it is the responsibility of the lead to ensure that communication with the other assessors takes place very soon after the assessment information is received. This will allow for any queries, conflicts of interest, concerns about the programme etc to be discussed and sorted out in advance of the assessment day to help ensure that candidates have a smooth experience.

Results

There has been some mis-communication from assessors to candidates as to the time period for results to be received. Provisional assessment results will be emailed to the candidate within 15 working days from the assessment, via the email address provided at the time of booking, unless a quality assurance activity raises a concern. Confirmation of their final result will be sent by email following on from any further quality assurance checks that are carried out. Any certificates due will be sent by post shortly after. Candidates are asked to allow up to 28 days for the certificates to be delivered. The Education Team are unable to give out results over the telephone.

Observing at assessments

Please be mindful of how candidates may feel if observed by multiple assessors and try to avoid being present in an area where an assessment is taking place if you are not directly involved in either assessing or quality assuring the assessment. If you are observing an assessment in a pre-arranged official capacity or are acting as an Assessor Mentor, please ensure that the reason for your presence is explained to the candidates.
