
GUIDELINES FOR DRESSAGE JUDGES AT HRCVAV EVENTS

LEVEL 5

Minimum Standard:

This level of competition is for combinations who are very inexperienced, to enable them to enjoy competition against combinations of a similar ability.

When *commencing* at this level, combinations:

- may at times balance on the reins or the horse's neck - especially during transitions
- may show an unsteady seat and position (ie, either leaning forward or back, legs too far forward or too far back, hands unsteady)
- may show ineffective, obvious and/or uncoordinated use of the aids
- may not be able to ride a straight centre line or stay straight on the track
- may not be able to recognise correct diagonal at trot or leading leg at canter
- may not be able to perform a square halt either front or back

Level Requirements

- Execute changes of pace - halt, walk, trot and canter
- Hold immobility at halt for 3 seconds
- Execute canter depart from a corner
- Ride circles 20 m at trot
- Transitions should be within 3 strides of the marker
- Transitions into and out of halt through the walk

ULTIMATE GOAL FOR LEVEL 5 COMPETITORS

- Horse should be going forward willingly and calmly
- Rider would be beginning to show a steadier seat overall throughout the test, although may at times balance on the neck or reins
- Would be starting to show an attempt at riding straight on the centre line and on the track, and especially through transitions
- Should be able to recognise correct diagonal at trot and canter lead
- Attempt to ride a reasonably accurate 20 m circle at trot
- Should be aware of the placement of the markers and have a slightly more advanced idea of ringcraft
- Transitions would be attempted within two strides of the marker

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LEVEL 4

Minimum Standard:

The main aim of this Level is to show a horse going forward willingly and calmly with a rider who can attempt correction of incorrect diagonals and leading legs.

When *commencing* at this level, combinations:

- should show more balance than Level 5 although may still at times use the reins or neck for balance
- may be unbalanced during transitions, or transitions may be unsteady and not at the marker
- paces may be unsteady in rhythm

Expectations

- The horse will be going forward willingly and calmly
- Transitions should be within two strides of the marker
- Halt should be square in front but not necessarily behind
- Corners should be ridden on a 15m diameter curve
- Should be able to ride correct diagonal, or correct when wrong
- Should attempt to correct an incorrect leading leg at canter
- Should be able to ride a reasonably accurate 20 m circle at trot or canter
- Should attempt to ride accurately on the track
- Transitions into and out of the halt will be through the walk

Level Requirements

- Hold immobility for 4 seconds
- Execute canter depart from a corner with correct lead
- Ride nearly correct circles, 20 m at trot and canter
- Halt should be square in front but not necessarily behind

ULTIMATE GOAL FOR LEVEL 4 COMPETITORS

- Rider will show a steadier seat and will not rely on the reins for balance
- Transitions will be smoother and more balanced and closer to the marker
- Rider should be able to ride correct 20 metre circles at trot and canter
- Rider should ride accurately on the track and ride straight lines

GUIDELINES FOR DRESSAGE JUDGES AT HRCVAV EVENTS LEVEL 3

Minimum Standard:

The rider will be sitting reasonably independently in the saddle with the horse steadier in its paces and rhythm than Level 4 and have an understanding of ringcraft.

When *commencing* at this level, combinations:

- will be starting to show acceptance of the bridle, but the horse will not be working consistently from behind, and will be showing an intermittent contact, usually through corners and on circles
- should be working in a more consistent outline - however the horse **should NOT be overbent or 'pulled' into an outline** (as this will be heavily penalised)
- the rider should have a good understanding of ringcraft

Expectations

- should be going forward *willingly and calmly* with NO resistance
- should show transitions clearer and closer to the marker - within one stride of the marker
- should attempt to ride corners on a 10m diameter curve
- halt should be square in front
- may perform transitions into and out of halt through walk (2 walk strides maximum)
- should attempt a reasonably steady sitting trot
- should attempt to show correct bend and flexion on circles and corners

Level Requirements

- Hold immobility for 4 seconds
- Ride straight lines
- Ride correct circles, 15m at trot and 20m at canter
- Ride serpentines of 3 loops at trot
- Show some lengthened strides at trot

ULTIMATE GOAL FOR LEVEL 3 COMPETITORS

- Rider will show a reasonably independent, steady correct seat with correct use of the aids. Sitting trot when required (or chosen) will be fairly steady and relaxed and should follow the movement of the horse
- Transitions will be clear and smooth and at the marker in most cases, although there may still be some loss of balance through transitions
- Correct bend and flexion would be shown at times on circles and corners
- Horse should be reasonably straight
- Halt should be square in front and attentive
- Horse will be working with some consistency from behind into a steady contact

GUIDELINES FOR DRESSAGE JUDGES AT HRCVAV EVENTS

LEVEL 2

Minimum Standard:

The rider has a independent seat with the correct use of the aids when required to influence the horse.

When *commencing* at this level, combinations:

- should be able to show a clear lengthening of stride in trot and canter
- should show the horse attempting to work from behind into a steady contact showing a willing acceptance of the bridle
- should show transitions at the markers clearly showing the change of pace; transitions should be forward, smooth and flowing
- correct bend and flexion would be shown at times on circles and corners

Expectations

- All transitions should be smooth and at the marker
- The halt should be square front and back, the horse should be immobile and attentive to the rider
- Corners should be ridden on a 10 m diameter curve
- Execute change of canter lead through trot (3 to 5 trot strides)
- Maintain effective sitting trot
- Paces and rhythm should be regular and balanced

Level Requirements

- Show lengthened strides in trot and canter
- Execute transitions in and out of halt direct from trot (*no* walk strides)
- Halt immobile and attentive for 5 seconds
- Canter showing correct depart on a straight line and canter depart from walk
- Ride straight and accurately on the centre line
- Ride correct circles, 10m at trot and 15m at canter
- Ride serpentines of 3 loops at trot
- Ride canter loop of 5 meters without change of lead
- Correct bend and flexion will be shown at all times

ULTIMATE GOAL FOR LEVEL 2 COMPETITORS

- The horse will be in a correct frame, with a light, soft contact and supple poll, showing engagement, impulsion and lightness.
- Rider will display a high degree of ringcraft
- Will be able to maintain lengthened strides at trot and canter from marker to marker, showing a definite lengthening of the frame and outline. Showing balanced and clear transitions to and from working paces
- Lengthened paces will be performed in such a way that medium paces will be a natural progression for the combination
- The horse will be starting to show moments of collection and should be starting to take more weight on the hindquarters
- The combination of horse and rider will be in harmony and appear to enjoy their work
- The horse should be straight at all times

GUIDELINES FOR DRESSAGE JUDGES AT HRCVAV EVENTS

LEVEL 1

Minimum Standard:

The horse is on the bit at all times, showing impulsion and submission. The rider should have a deep, independent seat with correct use of the aids to influence the horse. Horse and rider should appear in harmony at all times.

When *commencing* at this level, combinations:

- may not be able to maintain consistent collected paces when required
- should be able to attempt medium paces without loss of rhythm or balance

Expectations

- All transitions should be performed fluently, at the marker, with the horse balanced and engaged
- Corners should be ridden on a 8m diameter curve

Level Requirements

- Show medium and collected paces at trot and canter
- Execute simple changes (with three to five strides of walk)
- Execute canter depart from walk
- Execute rein back
- Ride counter-canter
- Ride circles 10m at trot and canter
- Execute shoulder-in and travers
- Ride serpentines - 3 and 4 loop at trot; 3 loop at canter

ULTIMATE GOAL FOR LEVEL 1 COMPETITORS

- The horse should be on the bit at all times, showing collection, impulsion and submission.
- All movements should be obtained without the apparent effort of the rider.
- Medium paces will be obtained from marker to marker with correct engagement and impulsion, and downward transitions to working or collected paces will be smooth, effortless and balanced. The horse should give the impression that extended paces will come easily and naturally.
- The horse will be starting to show a high level of engagement with the hindquarters taking more weight to lighten the forehand and raise the poll.
- The horse will be straight at all times when required, especially through simple changes and on the centre line

GUIDELINES FOR DRESSAGE JUDGES AT HRCVAV EVENTS

LEVEL A

Minimum Standard:

As for Level 1. Horse and rider should be in harmony, with the rider able to influence the horse via the correct use of the aids. The movements should be obtained without the apparent effort of the rider. The horse should give the impression of impulsion and lightness achieved by active, engaged hindquarters.

Expectations

- As for Level 1
- A higher degree of collection is expected

Level Requirements

- As for Level 1
- Show extended paces
- Show collected walk
- Perform half pirouette at walk
- Execute flying changes
- Execute half pass
- Ride circles 8 m at trot
- Ride half circles 8m at canter

ULTIMATE GOAL FOR ADVANCED LEVEL COMPETITORS

Horse and rider will perform all the movements showing quality of paces, with a high level of collection and the ability to perform extended paces when required. The performance should appear light, harmonious and effortless. The horse will at all times show a high degree of engagement of the hindquarters allowing the forehand to be light and mobile with the poll the highest point.

Flying changes should be clean, clear and straight, with no swing through the body and the horse should not be late behind.

The combination should give the impression that they could go on to achieve higher training.