

Unit 20: Riding Horses on the Flat

Unit code:	A/601/0359
QCF Level 3:	BTEC National
Credit value:	10
Guided learning hours:	60

● Aim and purpose

This unit aims to provide learners with an understanding of the principles of riding horses on the flat and how these can be applied in practice. This unit is primarily aimed at learners within a centre-based setting looking to progress into the sector or further education and training.

● Unit introduction

The unit begins by considering the correct position when riding on the flat. Learners will have opportunities to develop their position and effectiveness and are encouraged to reflect on their performance and suggest areas for improvement.

Learners will develop skills in working horses on the flat and using training exercises to improve flatwork. They will develop their ability to ride a variety of horses on the flat to maintain and improve their way of going, to acceptable industry standards. They will be able to assess a horse's strengths and weaknesses, select and use suitable exercises and assess their effectiveness.

Learners will consider how to assess a horse's level of training and plan exercises for improvement. The levels of training required for preliminary and novice dressage will be investigated.

Throughout the unit learners will be made aware of safety issues relating to the horse, rider and environment. This will enable learners to develop safe working practices and develop a confident approach in preparation for employment in the horse industry.

● Learning outcomes

On completion of this unit a learner should:

- 1 Be able to demonstrate a correct riding position on the flat
- 2 Be able to work a horse on the flat
- 3 Be able to use training exercises to improve flatwork
- 4 Know how to assess a horse on the flat.

Unit content

1 Be able to demonstrate a correct riding position on the flat

Riding position: correct flatwork position, head, shoulders, back, waist, hips, legs, feet, arms and hands; correct posture; independent seat; balance and security; walk, trot and canter (with and without stirrups); transitions; safety considerations; influence of rider position on both horse and rider; monitoring improvement

Application of aids: correct application; changes in pace and direction of movement; natural aids – voice, legs, seat, hands; weight aids; artificial aids – schooling whip, spurs

2 Be able to work a horse on the flat

Technique: coordinated aids; rhythm; balance; straightness; impulsion; suppleness; effective control of pace and speed; accurate and correct riding of school figures and movements; basic lateral work; variety of horses with different levels of training and ability

Strengths and areas for improvement: identify strengths and weaknesses in horse's way of going eg straight, regular rhythm, crooked, lacking impulsion, unbalanced

Contact: use of the reins and bit; holding the rein; individual use of hands; consistent; sympathetic

3 Be able to use training exercises to improve flatwork

Training exercises: school figures and movements, circles, serpentines, shallow loops; transitions, direct and indirect; lateral work, shoulder-in, leg yield, half pirouettes; variances within the gaits

Improving the horse: retaining and improving horse's level of training; variety of horses

4 Know how to assess a horse on the flat

Assessing the horse: evaluation of the horse; identification of level of training; setting achievable aims

Planning: requirements eg preparing for dressage tests, reschooling or improving suppleness; appropriate training exercises; reviewing progress

Preliminary and novice dressage: school figures used; paces and rhythm; way of going; balance and impulsion; preparation and training of the horse

Assessment and grading criteria

In order to pass this unit, the evidence that the learner presents for assessment needs to demonstrate that they can meet all the learning outcomes for the unit. The assessment criteria for a pass grade describe the level of achievement required to pass this unit.

Assessment and grading criteria		
To achieve a pass grade the evidence must show that the learner is able to:	To achieve a merit grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass criteria, the learner is able to:	To achieve a distinction grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass and merit criteria, the learner is able to:
P1 demonstrate a correct riding position in all three paces [RL, TW]	M1 demonstrate and discuss improved an flatwork riding position on selected horses	D1 evaluate flatwork riding position for effectiveness and impact on the horse, making appropriate recommendations for improvement
P2 apply natural and artificial aids correctly [RL]		
P3 work the horse on the flat to demonstrate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ rhythm ◇ balance ◇ straightness ◇ impulsion ◇ suppleness [RL]	M2 outline the horse's way of going and identify strengths and weaknesses in its performance	
P4 ride with effective contact when riding a horse on the flat [RL]		
P5 carry out training exercises to improve flatwork: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ school figures and movements ◇ transitions ◇ lateral work [EP SM]		
P6 assess the effectiveness of training exercises [CT]	D2 demonstrate improvements in the flatwork training of selected horses.	

P7 describe how to assess a horse's level of training [IE]	M4 explain the levels of training required for horses to perform in preliminary and novice dressage.	
P8 plan training exercises to improve a horse. [IE]		

PLTS: This summary references where applicable, in the square brackets, the elements of the personal, learning and thinking skills applicable in the pass criteria. It identifies opportunities for learners to demonstrate effective application of the referenced elements of the skills.

Key	IE – independent enquirers CT – creative thinkers	RL – reflective learners TW – team workers	SM – self-managers EP – effective participators
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Essential guidance for tutors

Delivery

Delivery of this unit will involve practical assessments, written assessment, visits to suitable collections and will link to work experience placements.

Delivery of this unit should be mainly practical, but may include some classroom- based work to give learners the necessary underpinning knowledge. Practical sessions should be used to allow learners to develop and apply their skills and give them an opportunity to develop this underpinning knowledge further. Learners are expected to ride a variety of horses which will give them a robust flatwork foundation to build on. Regular and constructive feedback to learners is essential to enable them to develop their skills.

Learning outcome 1 requires learners to demonstrate a correct riding position on the flat. This is likely to be delivered through demonstration, discussion and taught practical sessions. Learners will need to develop an understanding of the importance of the rider's position and its effect on the horse's way of going. Learners should be encouraged to reflect on their performance and suggest areas for improvement.

Learning outcome 2 requires learners to work horses on the flat, demonstrating rhythm, balance, straightness, impulsion and suppleness in the horse. This is likely to be delivered through taught practical sessions aimed at increasing the rider's understanding of the horse's way of going. Learners should be able to describe strengths and weaknesses in horse performance.

Learning outcome 3 covers the use of training exercises to improve flatwork. This is likely to be delivered through demonstration, discussion and taught practical sessions. Learners should have the opportunity to ride a variety of horses at different stages and levels of training. Appropriate visits and competitive experience could add relevance to the subject for learners, for example dressage clinics, competitions and visits to training yards.

Learning outcome 4 investigates how to assess a horse's level of training and plan exercises to improve a horse's performance. This is likely to be delivered through theory and practical sessions and independent learner research. Learners are expected to identify the differences in the level of training required for preliminary and novice dressage. Visits to dressage competitions could add relevance to the subject for learners.

Outline learning plan

The outline learning plan has been included in this unit as guidance and can be used in conjunction with the programme of suggested assignments.

The outline learning plan gives **an indication of the volume of learning it would take the average learner** to achieve the learning outcomes. It is **indicative and is one way of achieving the credit value**.

Learning time should address all learning (including assessment) relevant to the learning outcomes, regardless of where, when and how the learning has taken place.

Topic and suggested assignments/activities and/assessment

Assignment 1: Riding Horses on the Flat (P1, P2, P3, P4, M2)

Assignment 2: Reflective Journal (M1, D1)

Tutor introduces the assignments.

Theory sessions: the correct position, natural and artificial aids.

Topic and suggested assignments/activities and/assessment

Practical demonstration: the correct position for riding on the flat, application of the aids, influence of rider position on horse.

Practical application: working horses on the flat.

Theory session: reflect on own performance and identify areas for improvement.

Practical application and assessment: working horses on the flat.

Individual support: reflective journal.

Independent study: completing reflective journal.

Assignment 3: Improve a Horse's Flatwork (P5, P6, M3, D2)

Tutor introduces the assignment.

Theory sessions: training exercises to improve flatwork, their use and effectiveness.

Practical demonstration: lateral work and variances within the gaits.

Practical application and assessment: carry out training exercises to improve flatwork.

Assignment 4: Planning Exercises to Improve a Horse's Training (P7, P8, M4)

Tutor introduces the assignment.

Theory sessions: assessing the horse; levels of training required for preliminary and novice dressage.

Independent study: preparing a written report and a training plan for a named horse.

Review of unit.

Unit review.

Assessment

Learners need to demonstrate their skills in, and knowledge and understanding of, riding horses on the flat. Most of the unit will be assessed practically through observation of learners' ability to ride and train horses on the flat.

For P1, learners must demonstrate a correct flatwork position at walk, trot and canter. Learners are expected to demonstrate safe techniques and a balanced, independent seat when riding horses on the flat. Experienced horses should be selected and tutors should identify the horses or agree them through discussion with learners.

For P2, learners are required to apply natural and artificial aids correctly. Whilst learners must understand the reasons for using spurs they are not expected to use them. This is likely to be linked to P1.

For P3, learners must work horses on the flat. Experienced horses should be selected and tutors should identify the horses or agree them through discussion with learners. Learners are expected to demonstrate an understanding of rhythm, balance, straightness, impulsion and suppleness, and adjust their riding accordingly.

For P4, learners must ride with effective contact when working horses on the flat. This could be linked to P1 and P2.

For P5, learners are required to carry out training exercises to improve flatwork. This should include school figures and movements, transitions and lateral work. Learners are expected to select suitable exercises to improve the performance of the horse. Tutors should identify the horses and objectives or agree these through discussion with learners.

For P6, learners are required to assess the effectiveness of training exercises. This is likely to be linked to P5. Learners should assess the impact of the exercises on the horse's way of going and level of training.

For P7, learners are required to describe how to assess a horse's level of training. Evidence could be a written report, presentation, or through discussion.

For P8, learners must plan training exercises to improve a horse. Tutors should identify the horses or agree them through discussion with learners. Where possible, to ensure assessment is fair the size and complexity of the task should be the same for all learners. Learner work should demonstrate an understanding of the horse's current level of training and the appropriate exercises to improve the horse.

For M1, learners must demonstrate and discuss an improved flatwork riding position on selected horses on the flat. Tutors should identify the horses or agree them through discussion with learners. Learners should ride on the flat with security and balance in the correct position, with correct application of aids on a variety of horses. Learners need to monitor and describe improvements in their flatwork position which could be evidenced through a log, diary or reflective journal. The use of video cameras would be an effective method of recording and monitoring progress.

For M2, learners are required to outline the horse's way of going and identify strengths and weaknesses in its performance. This is likely to be linked to P3. Tutors should identify the horses or agree them through discussion with learners.

For M3, learners must explain the use of training exercises in improving flatwork for selected horses. Where possible, to ensure assessment is fair the size and complexity of the task should be the same for all learners. Learner work should demonstrate an understanding of the use of a range of different exercises in improving the flatwork of a horse. This is likely to be linked to P5.

For M4, learners must explain the levels of training required for horses to perform in preliminary and novice dressage. Learners should explain the requirements for each level such as gait, rhythm, balance and impulsion, and how these relate to the preparation and training of the horse.

For D1, learners are required to evaluate their flatwork riding position for effectiveness and impact on the horse and make recommendations for improvement. Learners need to evaluate their performance over an agreed period of time. This could be evidenced through a diary or reflective journal.

For D2, learners are required to demonstrate improvements in the flatwork training of selected horses. Learners will be expected to improve their horses through the progressive build up of a logical pattern of selected exercises. Tutors should identify the horses or agree them through discussion with learners. To achieve this learners should demonstrate the ability to improve the flatwork training of a range of horses. Where possible, to ensure assessment is fair the size and complexity of the task should be the same for all learners.

Programme of suggested assignments

The following table shows a programme of suggested assignments that cover the pass, merit and distinction criteria in the grading grid. This is for guidance and it is recommended that centres either write their own assignments or adapt any Edexcel assignments to meet local needs and resources.

Criteria covered	Assignment title	Scenario	Assessment method
P1, P2, P3, P4, M2	Riding Horses on the Flat	<p>Whilst participating in riding sessions you will be assessed on your ability to maintain a correct position at walk, trot and canter, to correctly apply natural and artificial aids and to maintain an effective contact. You will be required to work horses to demonstrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rhythm • balance • straightness • impulsion • suppleness. <p>You will be asked to outline the horse's way of going and identify strengths and weaknesses in its performance.</p>	<p>Practical observation and assessment.</p> <p>Question and answer session.</p>
M1, D1	Reflective Journal	You are required to monitor and describe improvements in your flatwork position over a period of 10 weeks. Reflections should be made on a weekly basis. Your reflections should include an evaluation of your flatwork riding position in terms of effectiveness and impact on the horse and make recommendations for improvement	<p>Written journal/ diary.</p> <p>Photographic/ video evidence.</p>
P5, P6, M3, D2	Improve a Horse's Flatwork	You are required to carry out training exercises to improve flatwork in a range of horses. You must explain the use of the exercises and assess their effectiveness. Through applying your knowledge and skills you should demonstrate improvements in the flatwork training of selected horses.	<p>Practical observation and assessment.</p> <p>Question and answer session.</p>
P7, P8, M4	Planning Exercises to Improve a Horse's Training	Produce a written report which describes how to assess a horse's level of training. Explain the levels of training required for horses to perform in preliminary and novice dressage then produce a plan of training exercises to improve a named horse.	<p>Written report.</p> <p>Training plan.</p>

Links to National Occupational Standards, other BTEC units, other BTEC qualifications and other relevant units and qualifications

This unit forms part of the BTEC Land-based sector suite. This unit has particular links with:

Level 2	Level 3
Introduction to Riding Horses on the Flat	316.1 Ride schooled horses to maintain training
	Riding Horses over Fences

Essential resources

Learners will need access to an enclosed riding surface and outdoor area appropriate for teaching flatwork at preliminary and novice level. Resources should include a suitable range of experienced flatwork horses for teaching riders to level 3, and the associated tack and equipment.

Tutors delivering the unit should be competent and experienced equestrian teachers. Ideally, they should have recent industrial experience within the equestrian training industry and show evidence of regular technical updating.

Employer engagement and vocational contexts

Good relationships with local work providers/competition yards will be extremely useful and may provide opportunities for learners to see training techniques used in practice.

Indicative reading for learners

Textbooks

British Horse Society – *The Manual of Equitation: The Training of Horse and Rider 4th Edition* (Kenilworth Press, 2006) ISBN 1872119336

Cave M – *The Course Companion for BHS Stages III and IV* (J A Allen, 1995) ISBN 0851316565

Harris C – *Fundamentals of Riding: Theory and Practice* (J A Allen, 1999) ISBN 0851316514

Hester C and Faurie B – *Down to Earth Dressage: How to Train your Horse – and enjoy it!* (Kenilworth Press, 2006) ISBN 1872119204

Kidd J – *Dressage Essentials* (John Wiley & Sons, 1999) ISBN 1582450013

Loch S – *The Classical Seat: The Key to Great Riding* (D J Murphy, 2009) ISBN 0955629829

Loch S – *Invisible Riding: The Secret of Balance for You and Your Horse* (Horse and Rider Magazine, 2003) ISBN 0951370774

Moffett H – *Enlightened Equitation: Riding in True Harmony with Your Horse* (David & Charles Ltd, 2002) ISBN 0715315005

Venamore S – *The Right Track* (J A Allen, 2007) ISBN 0851319424

Wanless M – *Ride with Your Mind ESSENTIALS: Innovative Learning Strategies for Basic Riding Skills* (Kenilworth Press, 2006) ISBN 1872119522

DVDs

Training Program Volume 4 – *The Scales of Training* (Preliminary and Novice Level) – Schooling For Every Horse & Rider by Claire Lilley – DVD

Enjoying Dressage With Richard Davison – DVD

Balance & Bodywork for the Horse & Rider by Sylvia Loch – DVD

Magazines

Horse and Hound

Websites

www.britishdressage.co.uk

British Dressage

Delivery of personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS)

The following table identifies the PLTS opportunities that have been included within the assessment criteria of this unit:

Skill	When learners are ...
Independent enquirers	describing how to assess a horse's level of training planning training exercises to improve a horse's performance
Creative thinkers	assessing the effectiveness of training exercises
Reflective learners	demonstrating a correct riding position responding to changes in the horse's way of going and adjusting their riding accordingly correctly applying aids to achieve the required response maintaining an effective contact when riding
Team workers	responding to feedback from others
Self-managers	carrying out training exercises to improve a horse's flatwork planning training sessions, organising time and prioritising actions
Effective participators	carrying out training exercises and breaking these down into manageable steps.

Although PLTS opportunities are identified within this unit as an inherent part of the assessment criteria, there are further opportunities to develop a range of PLTS through various approaches to teaching and learning.

Skill	When learners are ...
Independent enquirers	investigating preliminary and novice dressage
Creative thinkers	explaining the use of training exercises
Reflective learners	demonstrating and discussing an improved flatwork position evaluating their riding position in terms of effectiveness and impact on horse identifying strengths and weaknesses in a horse's way of going
Self-managers	improving the flatwork of a range of horses.

● Functional Skills – Level 2

Skill	When learners are ...
ICT – Find and select information	
Select and use a variety of sources of information independently for a complex task	Using the internet to research information on flatwork training
ICT – Develop, present and communicate information	
Enter, develop and format information independently to suit its meaning and purpose including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • text and tables • images • numbers • records. 	producing a written report producing a training plan incorporating photographic evidence into a reflective journal
English	
Speaking and listening – make a range of contributions to discussions and make effective presentations in a wide range of contexts	answering questions and presenting information relating to the horse's way of going
Reading – compare, select, read and understand texts and use them to gather information, ideas, arguments and opinions	researching information on training exercises and preliminary and novice dressage
Writing – write documents, including extended writing pieces, communicating information, ideas and opinions, effectively and persuasively	producing a written report producing a training plan keeping a reflective journal