

Coaching courses Frequently Asked Questions

What do I need to have before I start on an Equestrian coaching pathway?

We would recommend any prospective equestrian coach gain significant experience and engage in recognised certificated programmes to give the basics in horse care and management. There are a range of options for this, including the [Pony Club tests](#), [BHS Care and Lunge components of the Grooms pathway](#), [ABRS range of tests, rosettes and awards](#), WBD / SVQ / City and Guilds qualifications in Horse care (e.g. [City and Guilds qualification](#)) ; racing industry qualifications (see [here](#)) available through colleges and other education providers. These courses and tests will give the grounding in horse care and safety to ensure you can assure the coaching practices you develop through the pathway are as safe as they can be, looking after the welfare of the horse as well as the participant.

What are the differences between the British Horse Society (BHS) qualifications and Equestrian Coaching Certificate pathway endorsed by UK Coaching Certificate (UKCC)?

- The BHS pathway provides a rounded programme of assessment encompassing riding, horse care and management along with teaching and training practices. This pathway is assessment only and has no taught element delivered directly by the BHS Head Office although BHS Approved Riding Centres and Accredited Professional Coaches do offer training. You can therefore choose your own method of learning, whether that be from text books, practical experience or class-based learning. BHS would actively encourage you to gain as much practical experience as you can while progressing through the stages combined with text books and taught courses which are available via colleges, at equestrian centres and are offered by freelance coaches. The cost of any taught courses are not covered by the fees, which are for the assessments only.
- The Equestrian Coaching Certificate pathway endorsed by UKCC is a standardised approach across equestrian disciplines and focuses on the coaching craft in the context of equestrianism. It usually contains a course with a taught element (the course element is mandatory in Scotland if the candidate is applying for help with funding the qualification) – both in the classroom and practically alongside of the development of a coach portfolio based on clients you are coaching – and an assessment which looks at the your coaching skills (whilst coaching elements from the technical syllabus at each level) and also requires the submission of a portfolio. It does not assess knowledge or expertise in relation to horse care and welfare albeit demonstration of an appreciation of equine health and welfare is necessary as a requirement to register for these qualifications either demonstrated through experience or previous qualifications (e.g. BHS Stage 1 Care and Management, Pony Club B Test). These qualifications also have discipline specific pathways which focus on the skills and technical requirements for a competition coach within that specific discipline (from grassroots to higher levels of competition) so you can easily specialise.
- The RDA (Riding for the Disabled Association) have completed a review and re-working of their coaching pathway. Their new pathway aligns with UKCC endorsed pathway but is not endorsed itself part of it.

What are the modules and pathways within the BHS framework? How do they fit together?

To qualify as a coach in complete horsemanship at each stage you have to complete all of the modules. However, if you want to specialise in riding or horse care and management, you can complete the modules for that pathway. The BHS has produced a very useful diagram that shows how the various modules fit together – see [here](#).

Please contact the [BHS](#) for further guidance.

What will I get for doing the courses? What will they enable me to do?

The table below gives an overview of the nature of each stage and level of the different pathways. The table draws parallels between the technical content at each stage and what they ‘qualify’ you to do, there are differences between the academic level of the courses. The information in red shows the academic level the content relates to. You can find more information on the academic levels [here](#)

The BEF have colour coded the table to match with the three levels of ‘Coach Practitioner’ membership of CIMSPA – the Chartered Institute of the Management of Sport and Physical Activity. This allows us to show qualifications from different pathways together, but is not a comparison of technical content.

	Coaching assistant practitioner
	Coach practitioner
	Coach advanced practitioner

NB: CIMSPA does not currently list all of the Equestrian Coaching Qualifications we have available.

	BHS Pathway	Equestrian pathway endorsed by UKCC	Riding for the Disabled Association Pathway
CIMSPA Coaching Assistant Practitioner	<p>Stage 2 Complete Horsemanship</p> <p>Provides an in-depth foundation knowledge and understanding of equine care and management, lunging, riding on the flat and over fences and the initial principles of teaching and coaching, and will enable coaches to work independently but managed by a senior coach with a higher level qualification.</p> <p>This career certificate demonstrates you have the foundation skills to work in the industry as an assistant groom or work rider competently caring for and riding horses with limited supervision.</p>	<p>Level 1</p> <p>This is a general qualification providing an introduction to the basic principles of equestrian coaching. It is open to those who are able to meet the minimum entry requirements, please visit the relevant member body website below for more information or contact the relevant coaching coordinator.</p> <p>Level 1 coaches are considered to be Assistant Coaches and can coach under the direct supervision of Level 2, 3 or 4 coaches.</p>	<p>Coach in Training</p> <p>Once a prospective coach has an RDA Green Card they can then access two theory modules in Disability Awareness and Equine Knowledge, along with practical modules in Mounting and Dismounting, and Preparing and Assisting RDA sessions.</p> <p>These are followed by a practical exercise called a Pre-Coach Training Session after which candidates will receive their RDA coaching passport and be able to assist better qualified coaches in delivering sessions.</p>

		<p>Level 1 is offered in general riding, carriage driving, racing, western and polocrosse (there is no Level 1 qualification in the other equestrian disciplines and so you can take direct entry into these at Level 2 if you meet the entry requirements or complete one of the Level 1 qualifications and meet any additional entry requirements for the Level 2).</p> <p>Academic level: 1</p>	
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<p>CIMSPA Coach Practitioner</p>	<p>Stage 3 Coach in Complete Horsemanship</p> <p>Demonstrates your ability to work in the industry as a coach.</p> <p>You will have demonstrated the practical skills and knowledge to work in a commercial establishment, club environment or as a freelance coach. A Stage 3 Coach in Complete Horsemanship supports the development of a horse's way of going, is able to provide initial dressage guidance and flatwork coaching, and help riders work over grids, small courses and cross-country fences.</p>	<p>Level 2:</p> <p>This is available in general riding or discipline specific. The general riding coaching qualifications enables coaches to deliver sessions in a range of environments while the specific qualification is focused on coaching for specific disciplines such as dressage, showjumping, eventing, racing (riders and jockeys), western, driving, polocrosse, and endurance.</p> <p>Level 2 Coaches are qualified to coach independently without supervision, and to supervise Level 1 coaches.</p> <p>Academic level: 2</p>	<p>Coach Certificate</p> <p>Coaches progressing to this level will access two further theory modules (Pre-assessment checklist, and Safeguarding), and three practical modules in Coaching, Horsecare and Knowledge, and Therapy / Medical considerations.</p> <p>Practical Assessment takes the form of one RDA Group Session and / or one RDA Individual session, and one equine assessment.</p> <p>On the successful completion of these the coach will be able to coach independently.</p>
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<p>CIMSPA Coach Advanced Practitioner</p>	<p>Stage 4 Senior Coach in Complete Horsemanship</p> <p>Celebrates your development in coaching both horses and riders in the equestrian industry with considerable knowledge in care and management, riding and teaching. You may be a freelance coach or looking to develop as a trainer across any discipline.</p> <p>A Stage 4 Senior Coach in Complete</p>	<p>Level 3</p> <p>Coaches can also be general riding or discipline specific and requires a greater depth of technical knowledge and more developed coaching skills. Level 3 coaches are able to plan and implement a longer term coaching strategy and effectively evaluate their own coaching practice.</p> <p>Academic level: 3</p>	<p>Advanced Coach Certificate</p> <p>Coaches progressing to the advanced level will access three practical modules in Coaching, Coach the coach, and Horse and Rider biomechanics.</p> <p>Coaches would need to attend all three modules, two of which will be 2 days (not necessarily consecutive days) making five modular training days. Between the modules coaches are directed</p>
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<p>Horsemanship, will showcase appropriate coaching styles to develop riders and train horses to British Dressage Elementary, British Showjumping Discovery and British Eventing 100.</p>		<p>towards various pieces of research within each module and continue to seek out other opportunities for learning that will support their journey. Coaches would then need to wait for a suitable assessment day which is provided nationally and organised centrally.</p>
<p>Stage 5 Performance Coach in Complete Horsemanship</p> <p>Will be an established coach across all three Olympic disciplines, capable of fulfilling a senior role in an equestrian business.</p> <p>A Stage 5 Performance Coach in Complete Horsemanship will have a broad knowledge in all aspects of business management and horse care, including maintaining horse health, care of competition horses and the breeding and management of young horses.</p>	<p>Level 4</p> <p>The British Equestrian Federation and British Rowing work with the University of Gloucestershire to deliver the UKCC Level 4 Coaching Qualification, the course is a bespoke programme developed specifically for both sports.</p> <p>The UKCC level 4 qualification is for 'high performing' coaches and it involves an advanced syllabus of professional academic education (Postgraduate Diploma) for coaches with considerable experience alongside practical coaching sessions; it is not exclusive to coaches working in a 'high performance' environment.</p>	<p>Assessment will take the form of one coaching session, one coach the coach session and one equine assessment (lunging or ridden).</p> <p>These coaches will become the leaders and mentors for other coaches progressing through the pathway</p>
<p>Fellowship</p> <p>Experts in equitation and horsemanship, BHS Fellows are renowned throughout the global equine industry as an ambassador for the equestrian profession and a thought leader in the sector.</p> <p>A Fellow is often the person that people go to for advice, knowledge, expertise and support during their career – as a Fellow you will be an inspiration for many. A Fellow is an admired trainer of horses and riders from grass roots level up to world class competition riders.</p> <p>To gain the Fellowship, you will have a commitment to equine welfare and the continued development of training practices, both for horses and riders, continuously researching and developing your skills – a Fellow does not stand</p>	<p>UKCC Level 4 coaches will be visionary and knowledgeable decision makers who display exceptional skills, behaviours and the highest professional and ethical standards. They will advance their own and others' development; lead cutting-edge programmes, or a specialist part of a programme; and make a positive impact on sport performance and behaviour. Level 4 coaches will be able to take all forms of research and translate it into their coaching practice.</p> <p>Academic level: 7</p>	

	<p>still in the industry.</p> <p>You will lead others and most importantly, use your enthusiasm to share your knowledge and inspire and influence the next generation of coaches to continue the legacy you will have established.</p>		
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It looks like a big step between Level 3 and 4 on the UKCC Endorsed Pathway. Is there anything else I can do as a level 3 coach to further my learning?

Though not strictly part of the UKCC endorsed Equestrian Coaching Pathway there are a number of continuous professional development programmes available to Level 3 coaches that can help bridge the learning gap to the Level 4 programme.

For example, the National Development Programme in Coaching Excellence is aimed at Level 3 coaches working with adult and young people who participate in equestrian sport for competitive recreation motives. Coaches wanting to join this programme will be ambitious in improving their own performance and will already have success in getting more people participating in equestrian sport and retaining them in the sport by creating enjoyable coaching environments. This is an excellent cross discipline programme for any Level 3 coach regardless of whether they want to progress to Level 4. See [here](#) for more information.

The Youth Pathway Coaching Programme is a new programme from the British Equestrian Federation, funded by Sport England, that has been created in collaboration with the equestrian Olympic and Paralympic disciplines and is designed to develop coaches currently working within the Youth Pathways, by giving them more insight into the holistic approach to athlete development that nurtures potential from a young age. See [here](#) for more information.

Alternatively, BHS Stages 4 and 5 will provide additional learning opportunities and if you are a coach in Scotland, SportScotland has a range of CPD and Training and opportunities please [click here](#) for more information.

Which organisations deliver which levels of the UKCC Endorsed Qualifications in Equestrian?

Level	General Riding	Discipline Specific
1	Association of British Riding Schools, horsescotland and The Pony Club	UK Polocrosse, British Reining (Western Riding), British Horseracing Authority
2	Association of British Riding Schools, horsescotland and The Pony Club	British Dressage, British Showjumping, British Eventing, British Endurance, British Carriage Driving, British Reining (Western Riding), UK Polocrosse, British Horseracing Authority
3	Association of British Riding Schools, horsescotland and The Pony Club	British Dressage, British Showjumping, British Eventing, British Endurance, British Carriage Driving, British Reining (Western Riding), UK Polocrosse, British Horseracing Authority
4	British Equestrian Federation in collaboration with the University of Gloucestershire	

How much do they cost?

The costs of courses change on a regular basis so you are advised to contact the relevant member body for the current cost for the course you want to take.

Is there a minimum age for each of the pathways?

Yes, for the UKCC endorsed pathway you must be at least 14 years old to register and 16 years old to be assessed for Level 1, and at least 16 years old to register and 18 years old to be assessed for Level 2.

For the RDA pathway you must be at least 16 to register for the 'Coach in Training' and at least 17 to register for the Coach Certificate and Advanced Coach Certificate.

For the British Horse Society pathway, you must be at least 14 years old for Stage 1, at least 16 years old for Stage 2, at least 18 years old for Stage 3 (though you can take the stage 3 Ride, Care and Lunge awards at age 17), at least 18 years old for Stage 4, and at least 22 years old for Stage 5. Stage 5 is undergoing a redevelopment so this may change. Please check with the BHS for any changes as they come into place.

How long do they take to complete?

UKCC Endorsed pathway

- Level 1: 3 course dates over a 6-12 week period followed by an assessment day approximately 4 weeks after the final course dates.
- Level 2: 4 course dates over a 10 - 16 week period followed by an assessment date approximately 4weeks later after the final course date.
- Level 3: 6 course dates plus an assessment day spread over 1 year.
- Level 4: Minimum 2 years.

There are some variations to these timescales, so please contact the relevant organisation for the precise details.

The RDA Pathway is modular in format so timescales depend on how quickly coaches can access the training in their region. As a general guide RDA advise that moving from Coach in Training up to Coach Certificate level takes between 6 and 18 months. RDA ask that coaches have been at 'Coach' status for at least a year before applying to go forward to the advanced coach modules. Progressing from Coach Certificate to Advanced Coach Certificate takes between 18 and 24 months including 12 months at 'Coach' status.

The BHS Pathway is not a taught course so the timescales depend on how long you need to learn and practice the material before you go for the assessment. Contact the BHS for further guidance.

Can I get funding to help with the costs?

- If you are in Scotland you can apply for a subsidy of up to 70% of the cost of the UKCC endorsed qualification. Contact horsescotland for more information.
- If you are in England, some county sports partnerships offer a coach bursary scheme. Find out which county sport partnership you are in [here](#) and then contact them to find out if funding is available.
- Our partners at UK Coaching have produced top tips for a successful funding application. Watch the video [here](#).
- BHS has a [scholarship scheme](#) to support candidates towards BHS Stage 3 Coach in Complete Horsemanship, BHS Stage 4 Coach in Complete Horsemanship and BHS Stage 5 in Complete Horsemanship. Please see [here](#) for more information.
- Scholarships are available from the [Jeffress Scholarship Trust](#). The Jeffress Scholarship Trust considers awarding scholarships to dedicated coaches, disabled or non-disabled, working in the equine industry, either full or part time/self-employed. The bursary is for training to improve existing coaching prowess.
- The RDA pathway is funded by the RDA so there are no fees for coaches to pay.

When and where are they running?

- For the current dates of courses and booking information, please contact the organisations delivering the course you want to take. For example, if you are looking for a General Riding level 2, contact the Pony Club or the Association of British Riding Schools. If you're in Scotland, contact horsescotland. Similarly, if you want to coach with the RDA, contact them for dates and locations.

Can I transfer from the BHS pathway to the Equestrian Coaching Certificate Pathway endorsed by UKCC and vice versa?

- You can transfer from the BHS pathway to Equestrian Coaching Certificate pathway and vice versa. Your prior learning will be recognised and credited. Please contact the relevant member body to discuss further.
- If you want to transfer from the Equestrian Coaching Certificate pathway to the BHS pathway you may have to be assessed by the BHS in both riding and horse care and management at the relevant level. However, you should be recognised for the coaching element in the Coaching Certificate by not having to be assessed in all of the 'Teach' elements at the relevant BHS level. Please contact the BHS to discuss your experience and prior learning, they can advise you about what stage you can transfer to.
- Similarly, if you have equestrian teaching or coaching qualifications, you may not need to complete the equivalent coaching module within the RDA pathway, but will need to complete the other modules for each level. Contact RDA for further guidance.

I've heard UKCC is going. What's the point of doing a UKCC Course? Will my UKCC qualification no longer be valid?

- The BEF recently published a statement of clarification on this (see [here](#)). In essence, the UKCC endorsement has provided a standardised approach to expectations and levels across sports. The qualifications themselves are owned by the BEF and its member bodies and are not planned to change and therefore the UKCC endorsed qualifications remain valid and valued in the equestrian industry. We are now working with the Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity (CIMSPA) on proposals around new Professional Standards for coaches. S