



International Pet Education and Training

**Level 2 Equine Groom
Apprenticeship Standard**
Training Provider and
Employer Specification
ST0166

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1. Introduction

This specification serves as a resource for employers and training providers overseeing apprentices enrolled in the ST0166 Level 2 Equine Groom Apprenticeship Standard, specifically focusing on Assessment Plan Version 1.0 It outlines the procedures for engaging with iPET Network as both an End-Point Assessment Organisation (EPAO) and Independent End-Point Assessor (IEPA) for your apprentices.

The journey of your apprentice through the End-Point Assessment (EPA) process will be coordinated through the EPA platform ACE360. For additional information about iPET Network, please refer to our website: <https://www.ipetnetwork.co.uk>

This guide corresponds to Assessment Plan version ST0166/AP02. Comprehensive details about this Assessment Plan can be located on the IfATE website.

EPA will comprehensively evaluate the apprentice's proficiency in line with the knowledge, skills, and behaviours mandated by the Apprenticeship Standard. Grading decisions will adhere to the assessment criteria delineated in the Assessment Plan.

The EPA window for this assessment plan spans 3 months following the completion of the gateway phase.

1.1 Support for Training Providers and Employers

This manual is designed to assist training providers and employers throughout the End-Point Assessment (EPA) process. Furthermore, for any inquiries, feel free to reach out to the EPA Team via email at epao@ipetnetwork.co.uk, and we will gladly provide the necessary support.

2. End Point Assessment Fees

Apprenticeship Standard	Equine Groom
Level	2
iPET Network EPA Fee	£995
Duration	12 months
Resit/Retake Fees	Knowledge Test: £135 Practical Observation: £760 Professional Discussion informed by a Portfolio: £100

Where the EPA components are not completed within the three-month window of the gateway being approved, the EPA process must be started again and this will incur additional EPA fees.

All fees must be paid before the assessment. Providers and employers are advised to carefully review the payment terms and conditions outlined in the invoicing documentation. The EPA invoice will be generated at the point of Gateway submission.

3. Apprenticeship Standard Occupational Summary

Apprentices will be entering a vocational industry, where they can expect to handle a variety of horses in different working environments. They must adhere to safe working practices, be prepared to work in all weather conditions and often in “out of hours” situations. They will be required to have dedication, commitment and the physical and mental toughness to cope with the rigours of the role. Living on site for part or all of the duration of the apprenticeship may be necessary.

The occupation requires competent individuals who are committed to the safety and welfare of the horses in their care. They will use their theoretical knowledge and understanding, practical experience and empathy to maintain the horses’ physical and psychological well-being within a safe working environment. This is a practical, “hands on” occupation where apprentices will work under supervision individually or as part of a diverse team. The Equine Groom is an integral part in the life of the horse, providing essential day-to-day care. They will be involved with feeding, grooming, cleaning equipment, handling, preparing, exercising the horses and carrying out routine yard duties.

The Equine Groom may also be required to assist with the preparation of, transport to and care for horses at competitions, the races, sales, shows and other public appearances, this will depend on which sector of the industry the Equine Groom has chosen, appropriate people skills will be essential.

The apprentice will have the option to select a pathway that is relevant to their role, one of the following pathways will be selected on consultation with the appointment training provider to ensure the KSBs can be demonstrated, the optional pathways are –

- Riding
- Non-Riding
- Racing
- Breeding
- Driving

3.1 Knowledge Skills and Behaviours

Throughout the apprenticeship programme, the apprentice will focus on acquiring the necessary knowledge, skills, and behaviours outlined in the Apprenticeship End Point Assessment Plan. This preparation aims to ready the apprentice for the EPA. The occupational competence required for successful completion of the apprenticeship involves ensuring progression to a level where the apprentice demonstrates proficiency in each KSB, with each having a designated method of assessment.

The apprentice will demonstrate proficiency in the following Core KSBs prior to the gateway:

Annex 1

Ref.	Core Knowledge (CK) to be assessed	Primary & Secondary Methods of Assessment		
	Safe Working Practices			
CK1	Current health, safety and security requirements, policies and procedures including Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).	KT		PDP
CK2	Rules and Codes of Practice and ethics relevant to the workplace.	KT		PDP
	Yard and Field Routines and Duties			
CK3	Routine yard and field duties and horse husbandry.	KT		PDP
CK4	The principles of stabling and grassland care.	KT		PDP
CK5	Policies and procedures for new horse(s) arriving on the yard.	KT		PDP
CK6	How to minimise waste and environmental and sustainable working practices.	KT		PDP
	Horse Anatomy, Physiology and Welfare			
CK7	Equine terminology used to describe horses.	KT		PDP
CK8	Basic anatomy and physiology, including the digestive and skeletal systems.	KT		PDP
CK9	The core principles of horse welfare (including health) and care of the sick horse.	KT		PDP
CK10	The basics of current legal welfare requirements.	KT		PDP
CK11	The importance of routine health care and record keeping including veterinary reports, passports, vaccinations, worming, farriery and dentistry, etc.	KT		PDP
	Horse Handling, Care and Appearance			
CK12	The horses' natural instincts, mental abilities and the principles of how horses behave and learn; the different methods of safe handling in various situations.	KT		PDP
CK13	The core principles of horse care including feeding, watering, grooming and foot care.	KT		PDP
CK14	The basics of trimming, clipping and plaiting.	KT		PDP

	Saddlery and Equipment			
CK15	Common workplace saddlery, equipment and clothing used and how to maintain it.	KT		PDP
CK16	A basic awareness of discipline-specific saddlery and equipment.	KT		PDP
	Travelling Horses			
CK17	Current workplace principles and legal requirements relating to commercial transport of horses.	KT		PDP
	Non-Ridden Exercise			
CK18	A variety of non-ridden exercise procedures used in the different workplaces.	KT		PDP
Ref.	Core Skills (CS) to be assessed	Primary & Secondary Methods of Assessment		
	Safe Working Practices			
CS1	Work safely and efficiently at all times and comply with current health, safety and security policies and procedures (including PPE).		PO	PDP
	Yard and Field Routines and Duties			
CS2	Carry out all yard and field duties to include mucking out, skipping out, tidying and cleaning the yard, watering and feeding.		PO	PDP
CS3	Assess suitability of stabling and grassland environments for horses including checking for hazards, etc.		PO	PDP
CS4	Assist with the arrival of a new horse to the yard, following current yard procedures and measures to prevent and control the spread of disease.		PO	PDP
	Horse Anatomy, Physiology and Welfare			
CS5	Recognise, identify and describe horses including sex, height, type, colours and markings.		PO	PDP
CS6	Identify basic anatomy, to include points of the horse.		PO	PDP
CS7	Recognise signs of good and poor welfare (including ill health) and check for injuries.		PO	PDP
CS8 (*)	Report relevant information and assist with medical treatment and other industry specialists, including Senior Groom, Dentist, Farrier, Veterinary surgeon.		PO	PDP

CS9	Ensure the horses' welfare before and after exercise or travel.		PO	PDP
	Horse Handling, Care and Appearance			
CS10	Handle a variety of horses in the workplace to include tying up, leading, trotting up, turning out and catching in.		PO	PDP
CS11	Recognise different types of feed and hay and check their quality.		PO	PDP
CS12	Groom a horse including checking feet and shoes.		PO	PDP
CS13 (*)	Demonstrate trimming and plaiting.		PO	PDP
	Saddlery and Equipment			
CS14	Fit a variety of common saddlery, equipment and horse clothing.		PO	PDP
CS15	Remove, clean and store common saddlery and equipment.		PO	PDP
CS16	Check the safe and effective working condition of all saddlery, equipment and clothing.		PO	PDP
	Travelling Horses			
CS17	Prepare horse(s) for travel using appropriate clothing and equipment.		PO	PDP
CS18	Assist with loading and unloading before and after travel.		PO	PDP
	Non-Ridden Exercise			
CS19	Prepare for and provide a variety of appropriate non-ridden exercise including an introduction to lungeing.		PO	PDP
Ref.	Core Behaviours (CB) to be assessed	Primary & Secondary Methods of Assessment		
CB1	Safe Working Maintain safe working practices, which must be adhered to at all times with constant situational awareness and adaptability to ensure safety of the horse, themselves and others. Have the ability to work efficiently to meet time deadlines and organisational requirements.		PO	PDP
CB2 (*)	Work Ethic Have a strong work ethic, a willingness to learn. Be respectful, punctual, reliable, trustworthy and diligent and prepared to work irregular hours, in all weathers. Take a pride in their work, showing commitment and loyalty, whilst conducting themselves in a professional manner.		PO	PDP

CB3 (*)	Responsibility Have responsibility for themselves, others and the equines in their care, showing respect, empathy, patience and tolerance in all situations. Work with methods that reduce any risk of injury to horses, themselves or others. Develop the life skills required to live independently.		PO	PDP
CB4 (*)	Team Work Have the ability to work both individually and as part of a diverse team as required, understanding their role and changing priorities when the situation dictates. Show respect to their fellow workers.		PO	PDP
CB5 (*)	Communication Respect the need for confidentiality and adhere to data protection policies. Communicate effectively with colleagues, supervisors, visitors and clients. Show good interpersonal skills and accurately report any concerns, incidents and abnormalities. Know when to ask for advice or guidance. Use social media responsibly.		PO	PDP
Route Specific Knowledge (K) and Skills (S) to be assessed (The Apprentice will select one of the five specialised routes)				
Ref.	Breeding Specific Knowledge to be assessed	Primary & Secondary Methods of Assessment		
BK1	Principles of equine reproduction to include the initial mating decisions, the importance of teasing, monitoring pregnancy and weaning.	KT		PDP
BK2	Specific principles of care and welfare including health related to maintaining breeding equines and offspring.	KT		PDP
BK3	Methods, equipment and technology currently used to breed and register equines.	KT		PDP
BK4	The basics of preparing equines for commercial or private sale.	KT		PDP
BK5	The main diseases relating to breeding equines and the relevant industry Codes of Practice.	KT		PDP
BK6	Problems that may happen with covering stallions, foaling mares and young stock throughout their early years.	KT		PDP
Ref.	Breeding Specific Skills to be assessed	Primary & Secondary Methods of Assessment		
BS1 (*) part	Demonstrate basic safe competence in handling equines used for breeding purposes including leading a mare through the stocks, catching a mare and foal or youngstock from grass/ or stable with due consideration for H&S, restraining a foal during mare inspection or cover and (assisting with teasing and covering*)		PO	PDP
BS2 (*)	Observe the onset of, and assist if required, foaling of an equine and following on procedures.		PO	PDP

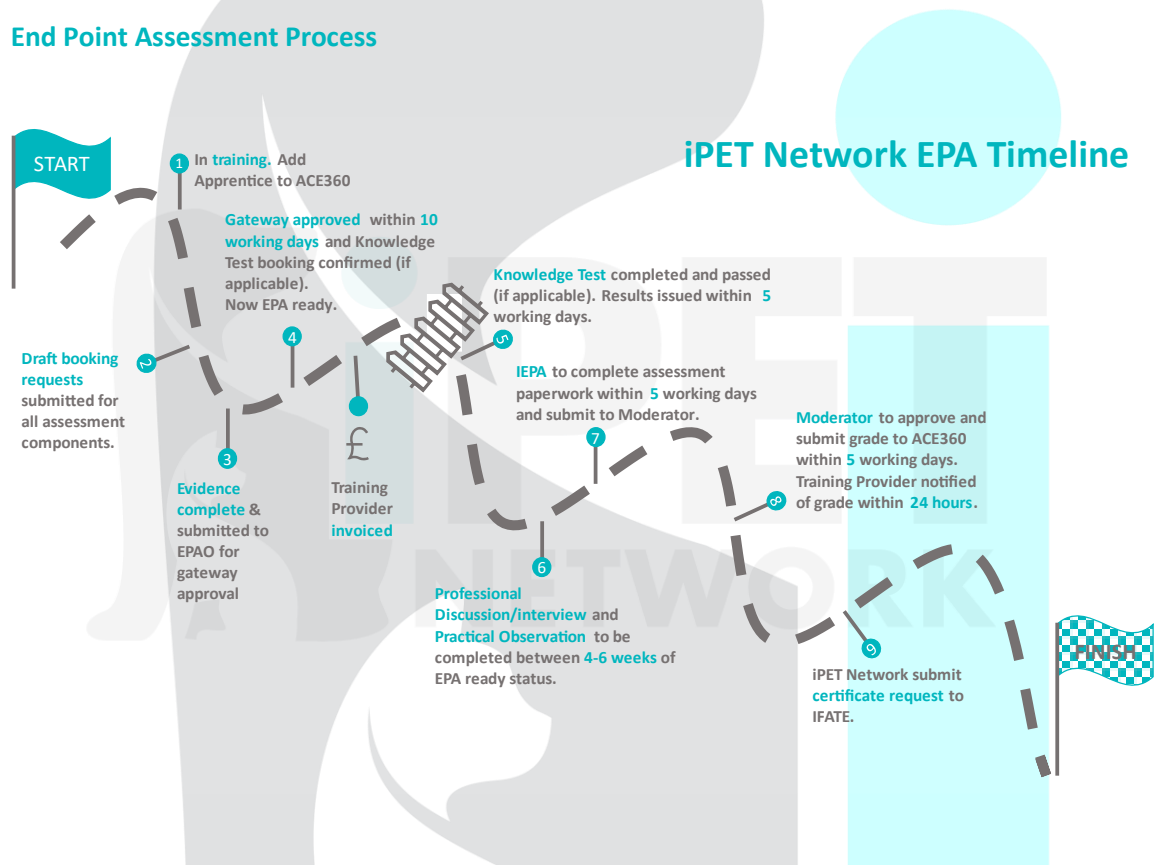
BS3 (*)	Demonstrate an awareness of reproductive status including the interpretation of teasing results and the specialist care of breeding equines at all stages of the reproductive cycle and the preparation of a mare for routine reproductive veterinary inspection.		PO	PDP
BS4 (*)	Recognise the importance of; and participate in, the maintenance of disease control within an equine breeding population.		PO	PDP
BS5 (*)	Assist with the work of breeding industry specialists using equipment, machinery and technology appropriately as directed.		PO	PDP
BS6	Assist with the preparation and show of equines of varying ages, as directed, for commercial and/or private sale including standing a horse up correctly for inspection as per the requirements of the breed/ sale.		PO	PDP
Ref.	Driving Specific Knowledge to be assessed	Primary & Secondary Methods of Assessment		
DK1	All parts of a single set of harness.		KT	PDP
DK2	The correct single harness to use with two and four wheeled vehicles with independent shafts.		KT	PDP
DK3	Correct fit of single harness to two and four wheeled vehicles.		KT	PDP
DK4	The procedures for harnessing up and putting to with an assistant and safe areas to do so.		KT	PDP
DK5	The basic principles of cleaning leather and composite leather harness.		KT	PDP
DK6	Cleaning of wooden and metal vehicles, safe storage of two and four wheeled vehicles.		KT	PDP
DK7	The core principles of long reining for exercise and the equipment used.		KT	PDP
DK8	Basic understanding of the guidelines for driving a horse and carriage on the public highway.		KT	PDP
Ref.	Driving Specific Skills to be assessed	Primary & Secondary Methods of Assessment		
DS1	Harness up and put to with an assistant a single turnout in both a two and four wheeled vehicle.		PO	PDP
DS2 (*)	Act as a groom/ backstepper in exercising/show/trials (select one discipline).		PO	PDP
DS3	Exercise horses/ponies in a non driving environment, to be able to lunge or long rein in an enclosed area, in a circle for exercise purposes.		PO	PDP
DS4	Drive a quiet pleasure single turnout in an enclosed area demonstrating safe rein handling, turns to the left and right, in the walk and trot. To be able to halt. Mount and dismount in a safe manner. Demonstrate safe use of the whip.		PO	PDP

DS5	Take horse out of vehicle with assistance and unharness horse in a safe manner.		PO	PDP
Ref.	Racing Specific Knowledge to be assessed		Primary & Secondary Methods of Assessment	
RAK1	The Thoroughbred racehorse as a high performance equine athlete and the specific exercise regimes used in the racing industry to prepare and train horses to race.	KT		PDP
RAK2	The specific routines for working in a racing yard and taking horses racing including how to care for horses prior to and after strenuous work and racecourse performance.	KT		PDP
RAK3	The regulatory requirements for adhering to industry policy and practice, including security procedures in the yard, at the races and at public sales venues.	KT		PDP
RAK4	Technical racing terms and vocabulary, the racing industry structure and key organisations.	KT		PDP
RAK5	The industry protocol for taking a horse racing and how to lead up a Thoroughbred racehorse at the races.	KT		PDP
Ref.	Racing Specific Skills to be assessed		Primary & Secondary Methods of Assessment	
RAS1	Handle Thoroughbred racehorses in and out of full training. Fit a variety of specialist racing equipment and tack.		PO	PDP
RAS2 (*) part	Carry out the specific routines required in a racing yard and (in taking horses racing*), complying with industry regulatory requirements, policy and practice.		PO	PDP
RAS3	Provide exercise regimes to racehorses as directed and effectively care for horses prior to and after strenuous work and racecourse performance.		PO	PDP
RAS4 (*)	Prepare and lead up a Thoroughbred racehorse at the races in accordance with industry practice and the Rules of Racing. Provide after race care including compliance with industry regulations and post-race dope testing procedures.		PO	PDP
In addition to the above specialist Racing knowledge and skills, Equine Groom Apprentices taking the Racing Route will be required to select one of two racing pathways as follows:-				

RAS5 (i)	i)Racing Exercise Groom- Provide ridden exercise regimes to Thoroughbred racehorses according to instructions, safely and in control, with a good, secure and balanced position, in line with yard and industry practice. Support the work of the Racing Yard Based Grooms. Maintain industry weight requirements and be sufficiently fit to ride for up to six hours a day.		PO	PDP
RAS5 (ii) (*) part	ii)Racing Yard Based Groom - Provide non-ridden exercise regimes to Thoroughbred racehorses safely and according to instruction. (Support the work of the Racing Exercise Grooms. Contribute to yard based industry record keeping, operate equipment, machinery and technology appropriately to assist with the effective organisation and maintenance of the commercial racing business premises*.)		PO	PDP
Ref.	Riding Specific Knowledge to be assessed	Primary & Secondary Methods of Assessment		
RIK1	The fundamental importance of adopting a correct riding position.	KT		PDP
RIK2	Different riding styles appropriate to different disciplines and situations.	KT		PDP
RIK3	School rules and regulations.	KT		PDP
RIK4	Riding terminology including paces/ aids/ school figures.	KT		PDP
RIK5	How to ride in the open with consideration for weather, hazards and varied terrain.	KT		PDP
RIK6	The use of pole work to include distances of trot poles and basic principles of jumping.	KT		PDP
RIK7	The Highway and Country Code and safe protocol for riding on the road and public places.	KT		PDP
RIK8	The importance of riding according to instruction.	KT		PDP
RIK9	An awareness of customer needs and how this can influence customer care.	KT		PDP
Ref.	Riding Specific Skills to be assessed	Primary & Secondary Methods of Assessment		
RIS1	Adopt an appropriate basic riding position.		PO	PDP
RIS2	Ride an experienced/schooled horse according to instruction, independently and as part of a group in an enclosed area.		PO	PDP
RIS3	Ride in a balanced, secure position showing control in walk, trot and canter, working with and without stirrups whilst demonstrating movements i.e. circles, turns, etc.		PO	PDP

RIS4	Ride in the open, in a forward seat according to instruction with control, security and balance.		PO	PDP
RIS5	Ride with a balanced, secure, forward seat over ground poles at trot to enable progression to ride, where practical, over a short course of fences with control, security and balance.		PO	PDP
RIS6	Ride on the road or in public places according to laid down procedures, Highway and Country Codes. Open & close a gate whilst mounted.		PO	PDP
RIS7	Negotiate everyday obstacles/hazards with control, security and balance.		PO	PDP
RIS8	Ride a quiet horse whilst leading another quiet horse or pony.		PO	PDP
Ref.	Non Riding Specific K & S to be assessed		Primary & Secondary Methods of Assessment	
NRK1	The importance of stock rotation and maintenance and storage of supplies and equipment.	KT		PDP
NRK2	What is involved in maintaining an establishment and how this can be organised.	KT		PDP
NRK3	An awareness of customer needs and how this can influence customer care.	KT		PDP
NRK4	Appropriate office duties including answering the telephone, processing information and basic IT system and skills used in the workplace.	KT		PDP
NRK5	The benefits and practice of lungeing and the equipment involved.	KT		PDP
Ref.	Non Riding Specific Skills to be assessed		Primary & Secondary Methods of Assessment	
NRS1	Assist with storage of supplies and stock rotation.		PO	PDP
NRS2 (*)	Contribute to the organisation and maintenance of establishment.		PO	PDP
NRS3 (*)	Engage with customers and identify their needs.		PO	PDP
NRS4	Assist with appropriate office duties including answering the telephone, processing information and use workplace IT systems.		PO	PDP
NRS5 (*)	Contribute to yard based records including passports, vaccinations, worming, farriery, dentistry etc.		PO	PDP
NRS6 (*) part	(Assist and support Riding Grooms*) and provide non-ridden exercise regimes.		PO	PDP
NRS7	Prepare for and lunge a horse for exercise in an enclosed area according to instruction.		PO	PDP

4. End Point Assessment Process



5. Gateway

The gateway milestone is reached when the employer, training provider, and apprentice collectively confirm that the apprentice has showcased the requisite knowledge, skills, and behaviours (KSBs) expected of a proficient Equine Groom, as outlined in the Occupational Standard End Point Assessment Plan.

The commencement of the End-Point Assessment (EPA) process should only occur once the apprentice's employer is content that the EPA requirements have been fulfilled and can be substantiated to an End-point Assessment Organisation (EPAO). Additionally, the employer should ensure that the apprentice consistently operates at, or above, the proficiency level specified in the Apprenticeship Standard ST0166. Employers may consider seeking guidance from or consulting with the training provider for additional insights.

5.1 Gateway Requirements

To pass through Gateway in preparation for the EPA the apprentice must produce evidence that they have:

- completed a minimum of 12 months of on programme-training
- undertaken a minimum of 6 hours per week off-the-job training. Part-time apprentices' OTJ training hours may vary but should make up at least 20% of their working hours. OTJ training should take place during your regular working hours. (Dependent on apprenticeship start date. Refer to the apprenticeship funding rules for further details.)
- collated a portfolio of evidence.
- achieved Level 1 English and mathematics.
- The training provider will select the relevant pathway the apprentice has worked towards when registering the apprentice on the EPA management platform.

5.2 Portfolio Submission

As part of the Gateway process, the apprentice will need to present a portfolio of evidence. The recommended approach to ensuring that progress is tracked throughout the apprenticeship is to use an Equine Groom Skills Passport as a learning record. There is a mandatory Portfolio (that is separate to the Skills Passport) that the Apprentice will, during the course of their apprenticeship, create and maintain in order to provide supporting evidence that will be needed to supplement the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours observed by the Independent Assessor at the End-Point Assessment.

In the Portfolio the Apprentice will document evidence collected from written work, small projects, progress review information, earlier workplace observations, videos, photographs and customer comments. The portfolio will contain core and route specific evidence, which will vary according to the route taken.

Requirements for the portfolio are set out below:

Portfolio of Evidence Requirements:

- apprentices must compile a portfolio of evidence during the on-programme period of the apprenticeship
- it must contain evidence related to the KSBs that will be assessed by the Professional Discussion
- the portfolio of evidence will be agreed dictated by the EPAO, as a minimum the Skills and Behaviours marked with an asterisk (*) in Annex 1 in the End Point Assessment Plan will be a minimum requirement for the portfolio
- evidence must be mapped against the KSBs assessed in the interview
- evidence sources may include:
 - written work and small projects
 - progress reviews
 - workplace observations

- videos and photographs
- customer service comments

This is not a definitive list; other evidence sources are possible.

- the portfolio of evidence must be submitted to the EPAO at the gateway one month before the agreed EPA date, for apprentices taking the riding pathway, the portfolio must state if they are jumping in the End Point Assessment.

The assessment does not involve a direct evaluation of the portfolio; instead, it serves as a foundation for the professional discussion and will not receive a mark from the EPAO. The IEPA will examine the showcase portfolio before the interview but will not offer portfolio feedback following the review.

To facilitate answering questions during the interview, your apprentice must have a readily accessible portfolio for reference. Consequently, it is crucial to meticulously organise the portfolio to provide clear support for their assessment.

5.3 Uploading Gateway Evidence

The training provider is responsible for enrolling the apprentice for the End-Point Assessment (EPA) via ACE360 with iPET Network. Complete details of the apprentice are essential for registration, encompassing the apprentice's full name, email address and contact telephone number, Unique Learner Number, employer particulars, as well as the start and end dates of the apprenticeship.

The training provider will upload all of the required gateway evidence, including a gateway declaration form, to ACE360.

5.4 Independent End Point Assessor Allocation

Upon approval of the gateway submission, we will designate one of our Independent End-Point Assessors (IEPAs) to conduct the End-Point Assessment (EPA) for your apprentice. Subsequently, we will validate the EPA booking details through the ACE360 platform.

6. End Point Assessment Components

The End Point Assessment components for the Level 2 Equine Groom apprenticeship standard consist of the following:

- Knowledge test
- Practical observation
- Professional discussion informed by a portfolio

The assessment methods will be taken in the above order.

6.1 Knowledge Test

- 60 minutes
- Any suitable location as per iPET Network's **Remote Invigilation Policy**
- Graded Fail / Pass / Distinction

The knowledge test is a controlled assessment comprising a set of multiple-choice questions. It will include a total of 50 multiple-choice questions, with each question presenting four options, only one of which is correct. Each correctly answered question earns one mark, while incorrect or unanswered questions receive a zero mark.

These questions are formulated based on the knowledge descriptors aligned with the Apprenticeship Standard for this assessment.

The apprentice must take the knowledge test in a suitably controlled environment that is a quiet space and free from distractions and influence. Access to reference books or materials is not allowed.

The knowledge test is taken online and remotely invigilated using Rogo. Remote invigilation software also allows for the test to be taken at other locations that suit the apprentice. Paper copies are also available on demand.

The Knowledge Test will be carried out prior to the Practical Observation and Professional Discussion, the IEPA will review the Knowledge Test results when preparing for the Professional Discussion. The apprentice must achieve a minimum of 70% in order to proceed to the Practical Observation and Professional Discussion informed by the Portfolio.

It is important that the requirements for taking the knowledge test including the room / desk layout and pre-test checks are met. Where these requirements are not met the test could be voided.

6.2 Practical Observation

- 5 hours
- Conducted in the workplace or simulated working environment.
- Graded Fail / Pass / Distinction

The Practical Observation will take place once the apprentice has successfully achieved the Knowledge Test. The IEPA will observe the apprentice for a duration 5 hours carrying out their day-to-day role in the workplace while they engage in tasks that allow them to showcase their practical skills to meet the KSBs within a standard.

The practical assessment serves as a platform for the apprentice to demonstrate the KSBs outlined in the apprenticeship standard within a realistic work environment. This provides an opportunity for the apprentice to integrate and apply their acquired knowledge. Furthermore, the assessment evaluates the apprentice's ability to safely execute operational tasks using their KSBs. The apprentice will carry out this practical assessment in the workplace to mirror a typical working day.

The Assessor will observe the synoptic application of the Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours contained in the Standard and will use questions and answers where necessary to provide further evidence for anything that the assessor feels needs clarification. It is expected that this will cover the majority of the Standard as set out in Annex 1, however it may not be practical to cover every area due to seasonal or other reasons (e.g. foaling is not occurring at the time, there is no racing or transport activity on that day). Any Skill that cannot potentially be observed in the Practical Observation is marked with an * in Annex 1 in the End Point Assessment Plan must be evidenced in the Portfolio to inform the Professional Discussion, allowing a cumulative approach and the opportunity for the Apprentice to demonstrate full competency. Any skill not marked with an * in Annex 1 must be observed in the Practical Observation.

6.3 Professional Discussion Informed by a Portfolio

- 60-75 minutes
- Conducted in the workplace or simulated working environment following the Practical Observation
- Graded Fail / Pass / Distinction

The Professional Discussion is a structured interview between the Apprentice and the EPAO's Assessor. It takes place after the Knowledge Test and Practical Observation and will explore evidence for areas of the Knowledge, Skills and behaviours from the Standard that have not been assessed in the Knowledge Test or Practical Observation or areas that require further clarification. This will include areas of the Standard that have not been observed due to seasonal or other reasons such as foaling and trimming and will provide the opportunity for the Apprentice to use the evidence from their Portfolio to illustrate their professional competence.

The Professional Discussion must be conducted by the same EPAO Assessor that has reviewed the results of the Knowledge Test, the Portfolio and carried out the Practical Observation.

7. Preparation for End Point Assessment

Being aware of what to anticipate in each assessment can boost the apprentice's confidence when facing an EPA. As the training provider or employer, you possess knowledge about your apprentice and are in an ideal position to assist and guide them in their preparation for the end-point assessment.

7.1 Preparing the Apprentice for the Knowledge Test

Fully utilise sample papers or assessments to enable the apprentice to practice answering multiple-choice questions at the suitable level.

Ensure you are well-informed about the software requirements and access to the IT platform ROGO. Familiarise yourself with the *Examination and Invigilation End Point Assessment Policy*.

Check that the apprentice will be taking the test in a suitable environment.

7.2 Preparing the Apprentice for the Practical Observation

Regular assessments by the apprentice's work-based supervisor are crucial to verify that the apprentice consistently performs tasks up to the required standard. These checks serve to prevent the development of detrimental habits that could jeopardise the apprentice's success in the EPA.

To enhance readiness for the assessment, the apprentice should practice designated tasks in controlled settings with an assessor, adhering to specified time constraints. This practice helps familiarise the apprentice with the tasks and contributes to reducing stress on the assessment day.

In anticipation of the assessment, the employer must ensure that the apprentice has access to the necessary facilities and equipment as outlined in the assessment plan. If the IEPA determines that the facilities and/or equipment are insufficient for the apprentice to complete the assessment, they reserve the right to cancel the EPA. Therefore, meeting all requirements is crucial. Any concerns before the assessment day should be directed to the EPA Team for advice.

It is also advisable to inform the apprentice about the considerations they should take into account when selecting a dog to work with during the assessment.

7.3 Preparing the Apprentice for the Professional Discussion Informed by a Portfolio of Evidence

Before reaching the gateway, the apprentice should have fulfilled all the requirements outlined in the apprenticeship standard, ensuring they possess the necessary knowledge, skills, and behaviours to effectively respond to questions during this assessment.

Within a 60-75 minute timeframe, the apprentice is tasked with answering all the questions. It is advisable to provide support by engaging in mock question sessions beforehand, allowing them to practice delivering concise responses. It's also beneficial for them to practice answering questions from individuals they may be less familiar with. The key to feeling at ease in an assessment environment is through consistent practice.

It is essential to confirm that the apprentice is acquainted with the structure of their portfolio and the mapping of each Knowledge, Skills, and Behaviours (KSB). This familiarity enables them to effortlessly locate relevant evidence when responding to questions.

8. What to Expect on the Day of End Point Assessment

Please be aware that as part of iPET Network's quality assurance procedures, there might be the presence of a Lead Independent End Point Assessor or Internal Quality Assurer for one or more components of your apprentice's End Point Assessment. In such instances, there is no need for concern; their role will be discreet, and they will neither speak nor participate in the assessment of your apprentice in any manner.

The apprentice must attend adequately prepared for their End-Point Assessment (EPA). It is the responsibility of the employer and training provider to clearly communicate the specifics of when and where the assessments will occur to the apprentice. Providing the apprentice with access to pertinent support resources and opportunities to ask questions will ensure they have a clear understanding of what to anticipate on the assessment day.

8.1 Authenticating the Apprentice's Identification

At the commencement of each assessment component, the apprentice's photographic identification, such as a current passport or driving license, will be verified to ensure authenticity and compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations 2018 (GDPR). In the event that the apprentice does not possess these forms of photographic ID, please contact iPET Network ahead of the scheduled End Point Assessment date.

8.2 Apprentice Instruction and Conduct

Mobile devices must be turned off and left outside the designated room/area for the assessment, except when used to access the portfolio during the interview.

Apprentices are prohibited from possessing unauthorised materials or equipment, such as notes and bags, as their presence will be regarded as a breach of assessment rules.

Compliance with instructions for each assessment, including adhering to exam conditions outlined in the assessment plan, is expected from apprentices. Failure to comply may result in the assessment being halted or deemed invalid.

Given the controlled environment of the assessments, the Independent End-Point Assessor (IEPA) will oversee the supervision of apprentices during breaks to uphold the security of the assessment.

8.3 Unexpected Situation or Emergencies

In an emergency, such as the fire alarm sounding, the assessment will be paused and the apprentice will be given the chance to answer the remaining questions or complete the practical tasks when the assessment is able to restart (this may not be on the same day, depending on the nature of the emergency). Any questions asked up to that point will be marked and the apprentice will not be able to return to those questions.

When the assessment resumes, the apprentice will be allowed the remaining time to complete the remaining questions or practical tasks.

If the apprentice feels unwell at any time during the assessment, the Independent End Point Assessor should be notified immediately.

If the apprentice is unable to continue with the apprenticeship assessment the Independent End Point Assessor will pause the assessment and notify iPET Network.

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9. Independent End Point Assessors (IEPAs)

IEPAs are recruited and trained to conduct and mark the End Point Assessment. All IEPAs will hold a minimum of 5 years recent industry experience to include the occupational route they are approved to assess, they will also hold or work towards an assessor qualification and they will hold experience at a higher level than the role being assessed.

All IEPAs will participate in standardisation activities at least annually.

10. End Point Assessment Marking and Results

The observation and professional discussion underpinned by a portfolio have pre-determined standardised grading criteria as set out in the Assessment Plan. The IEPA can use only these grading criteria to make their judgement.

The multiple-choice test will be automatically marked by iPET Network's secure online e-assessment platform.

All elements of the EPA are subject to internal quality assurance once the assessments have been completed.

10.1 Overall Grading

This apprenticeship includes fail, pass, and distinction grades. To achieve a pass grade, apprentices will competently perform their role, demonstrating the application of the KSBs against the standard.

A final grade will be awarded as per the criteria in Table 1.

Table 1

Overall Grade	Knowledge Test	Practical Observation	Professional Discussion (informed by portfolio)
Distinction	90%	Distinction	Distinction
Pass	70%	Pass	Pass
Fail	The apprentice has not achieved a minimum of 70% in the Knowledge Test or a pass in the Practical Observation or Professional Discussion		

The final grade decision, subject to Internal Quality Assurance, it is recommended by the IEPA using the grading criteria above and guidance and documentation provided by iPET Network. Once internal quality assurance processes have been completed iPET Network will confirm the final grade.

10.2 Publishing Results

Once iPET Network has received the results of each element of the EPA and internal quality assurance processes have been followed, results will be provided to the training provider to disseminate to the employer and apprentice. Results are provided within 10 working days to the training provider following the apprentice's completion of each component of the EPA.

For successful apprentices:

- Confirmation of the element grade i.e. Pass or Distinction will be entered onto ACE 360 for each component of the EPA.

For unsuccessful apprentices:

- For the element that the apprentice has been unsuccessful in a Fail grade will be entered on ACE 360 and feedback will be uploaded to assist the apprentice in preparing for a resit or retake. For the observation with questions and the interview underpinned by portfolio this will consist of assessor feedback on the areas not achieved and for the multiple choice test this will consist of a breakdown of how many questions were passed or failed against each of the 6 knowledge test criteria

11. Re-sits and Re-takes

If an apprentice does not succeed in one or more assessment methods, they may have the opportunity to re-sit or re-take. The timescales for a re-sit or re-take is agreed between the employer and EPAO. A re-sit is typically taken within 2 months of the EPA outcome notification. The timescale for a re-take is dependent on how much re-training is required and is typically taken within 4 months of the EPA outcome notification.

The EPAO's Assessor will make the decision on the grade to be awarded to the apprentice based on their performance in the assessment methods used. It is possible for an Apprentice to achieve a Distinction if they have previously failed one or more of the Assessment methods on their first attempt but have met the higher set of assessment criteria when reassessed. No one is permitted to pass the End-Point Assessment and then retake in an attempt to gain a Distinction. In the event of an appeal against the grade awarded, the End-Point Assessment Organisation will carry out a further review of the evidence to confirm or modify the grade in line with their standard procedures. The EPAO's Assessor will fail an apprentice that displays any lack of awareness of health and safety that they consider to be dangerous to themselves, the horse or others. The Equestrian industry does not currently have a body that offers professional recognition, however, the apprentice will be awarded with an apprenticeship certificate indicating the level achieved.

12. Certification

iPET Network will apply for the Apprenticeship Certificate on the day of disclosing the apprentice's overall result in the End-point Assessment. The DFE will then dispatch the Apprenticeship Certificate to the employer of the apprentice via recorded delivery. This process may take an additional 20 days from the date of application by iPET Network.

13. End Point Assessment Cancellation

There may be instances where it becomes necessary to cancel or reschedule an EPA booking. Depending on the time remaining between the cancellation and the scheduled EPA event, relevant fees for cancellation or amendment may apply. Please refer to the ***End Point Assessment Lead Training Provider / Employer Centre Pack***.

14. End Point Assessment Enquiry or Appeal

The apprentice has the right to make an assessment appeal for part or all of their end-point assessment; please refer to the iPET Network ***EPA Enquiries and Appeals Policy***. Appeals must be submitted using the iPET Network ***Appeals Form***.

Document Control

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