

Careers



The British Grooms Association was created to provide a national organisation for grooms of all disciplines. It is the only association of its kind in the world and aims to bring together those who work in this sector of the equine industry and to increase national and international recognition of grooms and the work that they do. The BGA welcomes membership from all grooms who work in the UK, whatever nationality and British grooms that are working abroad.

Working as a groom is a challenging, busy and rewarding occupation. A good groom is highly talented at their job and they need to be; looking after horses requires dedication, attention to detail and an awful lot of hard work. Grooms who work with competition or racehorses will get many opportunities to travel both in the UK and abroad. This can lead to a very exciting job if you are part of a professional team, there is no greater buzz than seeing the horse that you love and care for winning a race or a medal. As a groom you can also work in a stud with stallions and mares, which is really exciting in the spring time when the foals are born.

The BGA has representatives who work tirelessly to promote the organisation. Based in Shropshire, local groom Becki Smilie is an Area Representative and we find out how she feels the BGA benefits her work and her role as a groom.

"I have been a groom since completing a youth training scheme at the age of 16. I took a year-long college course to gain an advanced national certificate in Equine Management and was a groom for a couple of breaking and dealing yards. I worked and trained under Sarah Skelton for four and a half years and has previously worked at Marie Edgar's yard in Shropshire.

You get so many benefits being a BGA member; there is fantastic personal advice and 24/7 help available with someone always there to speak to. The Equine Skills CV that the BGA offers all its members is based on practical experience and assessment. Although not a qualification, it is similar to an NVQ or BHSAL and members are rewarded with a certificate after completion. There are so many opportunities for grooms; the BGA is constantly looking for new members to join and take advantage of the services available."

Becky is currently working at Shaw Farm Stud Ltd owned by Lisa Hales where she looks after show jumping and racehorses and is in Portugal at the moment as a travelling groom for the Sunshine Tour.

The BGA gave me free help and advice - I am proud to be a groom and can't emphasise enough how important it is that all grooms join our association"

Hannah Sharp

COME ON.... IT'S ONLY £17.50 PER YEAR!

TO JOIN SIMPLY CALL 0845 331 6039
www.britishgrooms.org.uk



BHS Exams and NVQ's

BHS Riding Stage 1 Exam

Includes a riding and stable management section and candidates must understand the basic principles of horse care and working under supervision. Must show knowledge and practice of looking after a well-mannered horse in the stable/at grass.

BHS Stage 2 Exam

Horse Knowledge and Care candidates must understand the general management and requirements of horses for their health and well-being. The candidate should be able to carry out the care of stabled and grass kept horses during all seasons of the year.

BHS Riding Stage 2 Exam

Candidates have to understand how the horse adjusts his balance to carry a rider and be capable of riding a quiet, experienced horse or pony in the countryside and on the public highway as well as in a manège, or indoor school.

short lectures; showing genuine improvement of horse and rider.

BHS Intermediate Instructor Holders of the BHSII are qualified to teach riders up to elementary level dressage, novice horse trials and newcomers show jumping.

BHS Stable Managers Exam

Candidates will be tested on their practical handling skills, theoretical knowledge, business acumen and lecturing skills. Successful candidates at this level are mature, knowledgeable, practical horse people.

BHS Equitation and Teaching

Assessors look for a person who is a confident, stylish, effective rider with sound training and principles both on the flat, over fences and working with horses from the ground. They must be practical, personable, talented and enthusiastic.

BHS Instructor Much hard work and dedication is required to achieve the BHSI examination. The BHSI is qualified to teach riders to the level of advanced medium dressage, intermediate horse trials and foxhunter level show jumping.

BHS Preliminary Teaching Test

Candidates must show that they have the required qualities and can apply the basic principles of teaching and that they have the ability to improve their pupils' positions and horsemanship using a progressive plan.

BHS Preliminary Teacher's Certificate

In order for candidates to progress from BHSPT to BHSAL they are required to complete a Coaching Portfolio, which they will receive after booking for the PTT exam.

BHS Stage 3 Exam Candidates must show an ability to look after up to four horses in stables and at grass and to ride a variety of horses under a variety of circumstances. Candidate should understand the reasons for their actions both in horse care and while riding.

BHS Assistant Instructor's Certificate

Holders are qualified to teach riders in dressage to novice level, lungeing both horse and rider to show improvement and jumping to stage 2 level.

BHS Stage 4 Exam

Candidates must be capable of taking sole charge of a group of horses of various types in stable and at grass and must be an educated rider capable of training and improving horses in their work on the flat, over fences and on the lunge.

BHS Intermediate Teaching Test

Candidates are examined on their general teaching abilities relating to class rides; individual dressage and jumping lessons; lunge lessons; general discussion; talks and

Fellow of the BHS The Fellowship is the final step on the equestrian qualification ladder in the UK and is the highest teaching qualification within the BHS system. Successful Fellows are qualified to teach riders at the highest level within their chosen discipline.

NVQ/SVQ

The qualifications are available at Levels 1 and 2 in Horse Care and Level 3 in Horse Care and Management and are made up of a number of mandatory units and an optional unit at Levels 2 and 3. They cover a wide variety of stable management tasks and routines including units involving management and health and safety requirements. The optional units at Level 2 and 3 include:- breeding; exercising horses; schooling horses; driving; working heavy horses; trekking; care of performance horses; assisting riders with special needs (Level 2 only); polo; breaking; competition groom and coaching riders at Level 3. Achieving an NVQ or SVQ is completely different from obtaining a BHS exam. With NVQ's and SVQ's you are assessed on a continuous basis whilst at your place of work. To achieve an NVQ or SVQ you have to register through an accredited NVQ or SVQ Centre, which can either be an equestrian establishment, a college or a training agency. Centres will generally have a number of assessment locations and will be responsible for the registration and maintenance of candidates' progress and to also ensure that there are adequate numbers of trained assessors and internal verifiers available.