

UNITED STATES PONY CLUBS, INC.

USPC GUIDELINES FOR CLUB/CENTER-LEVEL TESTINGS:

D-1 THROUGH C-2



2012

This Guide is designed to assist the local Pony Club, Riding Center and Region in the proper conduct of Club/Center Level Testings, D-1 through C-2. Direct questions to instruction@ponyclub.org or to the Chair of the D-1 to C-2 Program Committee.

Introduction

The “Standards of Proficiency” (“SOPs”) provide the core curriculum for instruction for young riders and horse enthusiasts in Pony Club. The SOPs and their related test sheets outline the skills and knowledge required, the test content, and the various types of arenas and areas required for each level, D-1 through A. Only the SOPs themselves define the specific requirements for each level within the specific disciplines. The SOPs also define dress and equipment required for each level and discipline. The tests themselves are based solely on the material, skills, and knowledge outlined in the SOPs. At each level, the testing must cover all sections of the specific testing-level test sheet, and may not include any other requirements beyond that which are in the SOPs. However, candidates are responsible for and can be tested on requirements of any previous level achieved. These standards provide a developmental and progressive path that each member can and should pursue at their own individual pace.

Pony Club certifications, reflect more than just riding skills, both on the flat and over fences, they also indicate a member’s horse management knowledge, the member’s communication skills, ability to analyze and discuss various aspects of horsemanship, and the member’s leadership skills and maturity.

It is ESSENTIAL that prior to each scheduled testing, the District Commissioner (“DC”) or Center Administrator (“CA”), the Test Organizer (“TO”) designated by the DC or CA and Examiners review the “USPC Guidelines for Club/Center Level Testings” (“Guidelines”), the current SOPs for the levels/disciplines or tracks being tested, and the test sheets themselves. The most current guidance available, including the SOPs, Test Sheets and Guidelines can be accessed on the USPC website. The Guidelines should be used in conjunction with the Examiner Handbook for a complete understanding of the certification process and to ensure conduct of a proper, safe and comfortable test for all candidates. Familiarity with the Guidelines is also very helpful to the Pony Club members and their parents/guardians.

***SOPs, Examiners Handbook, and Guidelines document can be found on the Pony Club Web site www.ponyclub.org either in the Forms page or Club/Center Testing page.**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	(p. 2)
I. PHILOSOPHY	(p. 4)
II. PURPOSE OF TEST	(p. 4)
III. POLICY AND GUIDELINES	(p. 4)
A. DC/CA CLUB/CENTER LEVEL RESPONSIBILITIES.....	(p. 4)
B. SCHEDULING TESTINGS.....	(p. 6)
C. SELECTING EXAMINERS.....	(p. 7)
D. CONDUCTING THE TEST – GENERAL GUIDELINES	(p. 9)
E. SHARING OF MOUNTS AND USE OF MULTIPLE MOUNTS.....	(p. 11)
IV. RESPONSIBILITIES OF EXAMINERS	(p. 12)
V. EXPANDED INFORMATION ON TESTING NEW MEMBERS AND CONTINUING MEMBERS	(p. 14)
VI. RIDING GROUPS AND USE OF MULTIPLE EXAMINERS	(p. 14)
VII. RETESTING SECTIONS OF A TEST	(p. 16)
VIII. TESTING OPPORTUNITIES: SUGGESTIONS FOR SUCCESS	(p. 16)
IX. GENERAL/RECOMMENDED TIME FRAMES FOR D-1 TO C-2 TESTS...	(p. 16)
X. TEST SITE REQUIREMENTS	(p. 17)
XI. REQUIRED CANDIDATE ATTIRE AND EQUIPMENT	(p. 17)
XII. DIMENSIONS OF FENCES	(p. 17)
XIII. SAMPLE JUMPING COURSES FOR D-1 to C-2	(p. 17)
XIV. WHERE TO GO FOR HELP	(p. 18)
APPENDIX A: ORANIZER’S CHECKLIST	

I. PHILOSOPHY

RIDING IS both a sport and a hobby for most of our members. It is something they do to have fun! Horsemanship encompasses both riding and horse care and stable management. The USPC curriculum, which is reflected in the SOPs, is designed to teach not only the riding or mounted skills to our members, but also the care of the horse and equipment, responsibility and self-reliance, communication skills, and understanding of the physical and mechanical functions of horse and rider. We use the SOPs and the respective tests to provide opportunities for goal setting, to recognize achievement, and to increase enjoyment by encouraging Pony Club members to gain confidence while at the same time, placing them in a safe and appropriate learning environment. All Pony Club members should be encouraged to progress at a pace and along a certification track that is most comfortable and attainable for them. Pony Club instructors should be very familiar with the SOPs in order to base their instruction program on the clear progression of skills described in the Standards. The candidates should have the assistance of an older Pony Club member, instructor or knowledgeable adult in preparing for the certification.

II. PURPOSE OF A CERTIFICATION

THE PURPOSE OF A TESTING is to measure and define an individual member's current skill level and to recognize achievement. The local club/center uses the SOPs as a basic guide or plan for their instructional programs. As a member progresses through the testing levels, the tests themselves should be a positive educational experience. They must be carried out by well qualified and well prepared Examiners in an environment that encourages the candidate to "show and tell" what he or she knows.

III. POLICY AND GUIDELINES

A. DC OR CA CLUB/CENTER RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDE:

- The proper administration and conduct of club/center level tests of its USPC members, D-1 through C-2. Clubs and Centers must facilitate a testing opportunity a minimum of twice a year. This can be done within the club/center, with another nearby club/center (with the recommendation of their own DC or CA, and the invitation of the DC or CA and Organizer of the club/center conducting the test), or at a regionally organized certification, (again with the recommendation of the member's own DC/CA). Offering tests more often is absolutely appropriate if the number of candidates warrants it. **At no level is it appropriate for a candidate or parent to make arrangements for a testing outside the club/center or region** without full concurrence of their local club DC or center CA and Regional Supervisor (RS).
- Providing an instruction program and certifications that follow USPC Policies, Procedures and Guidelines approved by the Board of Governors of USPC, Inc. Instructional programs should be based on the SOPs, and must include the elements of

the Standards; however club/center instruction **does not** have to be limited by/or solely to the Standards.

- Evaluating a member's readiness, with assistance of qualified instructors, older pony club members or other qualified adults. The SOPs describe the specific requirements for each level. A Pony Club member is ready for the new level if he or she is able to perform ALL the requirements for that level test in a supervised situation.
- The DC or CA can prescribe the use of the "Flow Chart" to assess a candidate's readiness to test to the new level. The Flow Chart, available for each testing level, is a useful tool for a candidate to prepare for a test. This is a matrix listing the individual skills required for each level and provides space for instructors or other observers to indicate their assessment of the candidate's readiness to achieve the next level. These assessments can be done within or outside of the club/center or region instruction program, depending on club/center or region's expectations and guidelines.
- In order to assist members' preparation for a testing, the candidates should have a good attendance record at the local club/center or regional instructional opportunities.
- DCs, CAs or their designated representatives are responsible for selecting Examiners. (See section III. C, for further discussion)
- The DC or CA must select and contract for a site that is appropriate for the requirements of the testing levels and skills being tested, to include adequate open space, cross country terrain with obstacles set to height to meet the requirements of the SOPs. No enclosed arenas, covered or outdoor, are adequate to test riding in the open or cross country sections of the tests. Larger pastures or open fields (mowed, with safe footing), or cross country courses are appropriate.
- Ensuring each candidate is fairly and impartially tested on all sections of the test sheet and has met the Standards of each section, in order to be awarded the new certificate.
- The DC or CA is responsible for selecting and/or approving all the officials present for a testing (or approving of/agreeing to the officials selected if the test is organized by the region or neighboring club/center). These include but are not limited to the TO, Examiner(s) and Impartial Observer ("IO").
- The DC or CA (strongly recommended), or their TO must be present to oversee proceedings and handle any unusual circumstances or conflicts that might disrupt the testing. *DCs/CAs, these are your Pony Club members...know what your Examiners expect of them.* (If a DC or CA's own child or student is a candidate, then it may be more helpful to appoint another club/center leader to provide oversight to the test proceedings as well as assigning an Impartial Observer.) As much as possible, be available to answer questions from candidates and parents, as well as Examiners.

- Be aware of the nearest Emergency Medical Facility and their phone numbers. Have Accident Report Forms on hand.
- Be ready to provide a signed USPC Certificate, signed at the time of the test completion by the examiner/s, and DC or CA (can be done ahead of time), recognizing the member's accomplishment of the new certificate level. Make sure you get the Examiner's signature on the test sheet **and** the Certificate prior to their departure from the site. It is a very powerful and important experience for the candidate to receive their certificate immediately upon completion of the test.
- A checklist for organizers is attached as **Addendum A** as a tool for planning and organization.

B. SCHEDULING CLUB/CENTER TESTINGS:

Proper and timely scheduling of tests is essential to the overall success of a club/center's testing program. Members can work toward the goal and have a target time frame; and the more notice parents have the better able they are to schedule family availability.

- At the club/center's earliest meetings of the year, have a tentative schedule of tests to include at least two opportunities for your members during the year). (Example: Spring (April) and Fall (October)). In some regions, group C-1 and/or C-2 tests are organized for several or all of the club/centers within the region to participate. Regional officials or club/center officials may organize these tests, but the DC or CA is still responsible for the preparation and recommendation of the candidate(s) to attend the testing. It is always recommended that the DC or CA attend a certification where one of their members is testing.
- The DC, CA or Certification Organizer should find a test site and required officials at the earliest opportunity. The use of an IO is highly recommended as seen at the National-level certifications. The IO is formally designated by the DC or CA to serve as the liaison between the candidates, their support team (parents, guardians, coaches), and the Examiner(s). The IO must not be a parent or instructor, etc. of a Candidate testing that day. See the Examiner Handbook and Impartial Observer job description for more information regarding the IO. Scribes can also be helpful; especially at C level tests where tests are longer and when using the Alternative Certification Progression.
- Not less than 60 days, preferably more, prior to the testing date, the DC or CA and TO should determine the number of candidates and secure examiners (one for every three candidates as a general rule).
- Within 30 days of the test a general schedule of events should be provided, to include location, directions, and start time. Candidates and their families must be informed of required attire (which is clearly outlined in the SOPs), what to bring, meal arrangements, costs (if any), and all other pertinent information. Supply each candidate with a copy of the particular SOPs and Test Sheets on which the candidate will be tested.

- Within 14 days of the test obtain the schedule from the Examiner and provide to all candidates and officials. Recommended time frames by phase for each test level, D-1 through C-2, are included in this guide based on the classic track SOPs (Section X.) These times can be adjusted or modified based on the level and type or discipline being examined and number of candidates. NOTE: Any schedule at a testing is tentative and flexibility must be advised and briefed to the participants. Many things can make one section go faster or slower than expected. Number of candidates being tested in a group, the behavior of horses, and weather can have an effect on the flow of the schedule. Every reasonable effort must be made to keep the test on track while allowing the candidate adequate time to demonstrate the skill required, if possible.
- On the day of the test the Schedule must begin with a briefing covering all pertinent information about the conduct of the day, to include but not limited to facility issues, introduction of the Examiners and IO, general schedule and flow of events for the day, and other pertinent information. Candidates and their parents should attend. The parents should be advised of a good location from where they can watch, without interference or interruption.

C. SELECTING EXAMINERS:

Particularly above the D-1, and sometimes D-2 levels, it is strongly recommended to choose appropriate and knowledgeable Examiners from the local region or neighboring club/center, NOT someone from within your own club/center. Allow your instructors and older, upper-level members to be the mentors and teachers to your members, not their Examiners. Do not select a member's regular instructor, older sibling or parent to test their own children, even if they are qualified Examiners. There is, as a minimum, the appearance of bias when an instructor is judging their own work; or feels that a student isn't doing what they have told them to do. Also, choosing someone outside your club/center to be the Examiner better prepares your members for future upper-level certifications, while providing a less biased assessment.

Ensure your selected Examiner(s) has been trained by and apprenticed with an experienced Examiner, attended a Standards and Certifications (S&C) Clinic (within a one to two year window is recommended), and has scribed for or "shadowed" an experienced Examiner, at the levels being tested. You can require attendance at an S&C Clinic, especially for those who have not recently grown up through, or recently participated in the Pony Club instructional programs and the certification system, or have not recently attended an S&C clinic. With the changes and evolution of the SOPs it is important for all examiners, even USPC graduates, to remain current by attending a Standards and Certifications Clinic and by reviewing all SOPs and test sheets prior to each test.

DCs or CAs should network with other DCs or CAs and RSs in the surrounding area to find the best Examiners. Your Regional Instruction Coordinator (RIC) is also a good source for qualified Examiners.

Examiners should be familiar with and understand the Basic Balanced Position (BBP), the Standards being tested, test sheets, the Examiners Handbook and these Guidelines. Ask how *they* interpret a certain skill or requirement to ensure you are “on the same page.”

The DC or CA must ensure that the Examiner selected is capable of recognizing when the candidate does not meet standards, and is able to tell the candidate when they do not meet standards and WHY. The candidate, their safety, nor the organization as a whole, is well served if the Examiner is not capable of turning the candidate down for the new certificate level when necessary, or is unable to provide clear explanations of why the candidate has not demonstrated the Standard.

Compensation for the Examiner is at the discretion of the DC or CA and club or center policy, but as a minimum, reimbursement for all travel expenses and appropriate meals during the testing period should be offered. All financial/compensatory arrangements should be agreed upon at the time the Examiner is first scheduled to do the test. Treat Examiners with respect and consideration, and provide them with a quiet place to eat lunch and for writing up test sheets. While some Pony Club Examiners may waive compensation, it should not be expected of them.

Discuss with the Examiners any local conditions of which they need to be aware.

Inform the Examiner if any candidate has learning, physical, or other disability, if this information is known by the DC or CA by reason of disclosure to the DC or CA by candidate or candidate’s parent or other legal guardian, and with their written permission.

Examiners may be adults or active Pony Club members. Using older, ‘upper-level’ Pony Club members as Examiners is particularly successful for the D-level tests, because they generally have a very positive relationship with the elementary-school age D candidates. Older Pony Club members from outside your own club/center provide role models for younger members; they are most often the most knowledgeable and current on the Standards; and they prepare the younger members for interaction with the “outside examiner” they will be meeting in the future. Using the older Pony Club member also provides those older members with the important instructor and leadership opportunity Pony Club offers. However, there are a few very important “rules of thumb” to consider when utilizing older and/or upper-level Pony Club members as Examiners:

- A three year age and/or three certificate level difference is recommended. It becomes increasingly more important to have both a substantial age difference (and real gap in certificate levels between Examiner and Candidate), as the level being tested increases.
- An active Pony Club member, having attained the National-level certification (usually B and above), if well trained and mentored as an Examiner, can be an excellent C-1 and sometimes, C-2 Examiner. Their experience as an Examiner at multiple tests and attendance at an S&C clinic presented by a National Examiner (NE), prior to a C-1 and C-2 test, is essential.

- Ensure proper oversight of Pony Club member Examiners. While it is never appropriate to leave any Examiner, adult or junior, without supervision, it is especially important to ensure that Pony Club member Examiners have the visible support and appropriate guidance of the DC, CA or the TO during the test. A team of Examiners (two or three for a group of 3 or more candidates), much like in a National Certification situation, is beneficial. (See Section VI.)

D. CONDUCTING THE CERTIFICATION - GENERAL GUIDELINES:

Whenever possible, complete the test in one day. If it is necessary to conduct a test over more than one day due to unforeseen circumstances (such as weather or footing conditions) all requirements must be completed within a one-month period if at all possible.

The test should be educational, but not deteriorate into a lesson on the topic/skill being addressed, and may not go beyond the requirements listed on the SOPs for that certificate level. ALL portions of the Test sheet must be completed, and riding must take place in the areas/venues (i.e. riding in the open, over terrain, etc.) required by the particular SOP being tested in order for the test to be completed.

At subsequent tests candidates are responsible for, and can be tested on, the requirements of any previous level achieved.

Because D-1 is an introductory level, there should be a “no fail” approach to the D-1 test. However ensure the new member understands and is ready for the testing process and can meet the minimum D-1 SOPs prior to administering the test.

THE LOWER LEVEL D TESTINGS (D-1 AND D-2) SHOULD BE A POSITIVE TEACHING/LEARNING EXPERIENCE. Ensure your candidates have been observed achieving the minimum SOPs of each certificate level so they are able to be passed at these levels. “Failure” at these levels is counterproductive to building confidence in our young members. Use of the Flow Charts and having a very knowledgeable and personable instructor reviewing the candidates’ readiness prior to testing provides the correct atmosphere for a successful testing day.

Multiple D Level tests may be taken on a single day. This is most often recommended or done for older joining, or re-joining, members that have more advanced skills and knowledge levels at the time they become members. We want to make their transition to Pony Club a smooth and positive one, thus facilitating rapid advancement, and greater interaction with their own age and skill peer group. However, the D-1 to C-2 Instruction Committee strongly suggests that a new Pony Club member, unless quite mature and both knowledgeable and skilled, be certified no higher than D-2 or D-3 (depending on age and skill levels) for the first several months, so that he or she can gain a broad experience of Pony Club.

AT THE C-1 AND C-2 LEVELS, ONLY ONE TEST SHOULD BE TAKEN AT A SINGLE TESTING/ON A SINGLE TESTING DAY IF ALL SECTIONS OF BOTH HORSE MANAGEMENT AND MOUNTED REQUIREMENTS OF THAT LEVEL ARE TO BE TESTED. An appropriate and thorough testing at the C level is tiring to both mount and member to preclude multiple tests in that day, and to require adherence to this rule. The C-1 and C-2 Certificate levels are more in depth than the D levels, and the requirement exists for the candidate to demonstrate more independence and self reliance in the testing environment. It is important that DCs or CAs select experienced well trained examiners for these levels so any candidate that moves on to the National levels is prepared properly to do so.

Be sure that examiners, candidates, parents and other spectators understand that there will be no unauthorized assistance, misuse of equipment, carelessness while working with horses or ponies, or unsportsmanlike behavior. Candidates are expected to show courtesy to one another, to examiners, and to their mounts. Unauthorized assistance includes but is not limited to those individuals not being tested providing answers to the candidates while they are interacting with the examiners, or assistance or coaching once the test has begun. Assistance can be given in such areas as holding horses while being wrapped or the candidate is setting a course, and for providing water to riders. This is best done by a Pony Club buddy or helper that comes to the test, or other neutral party, rather than a parent. If in doubt whether an action is or is not unauthorized assistance at any time during the testing day, the IO should be consulted, and will assist with the matter.

All candidates, but especially lower level Ds, need a relaxed test atmosphere for the oral portions of the test. Oral questioning can take place in a quiet room or under a tree, although many questions can be asked while the horse is present and the Pony Club member can demonstrate skills.

Organizers and Examiners should be prepared to adjust to different conditions that may exist at the time of a testing. Under no circumstances should children be kept mounted for long periods; riders should dismount or take breaks, if appropriate due to extreme temperatures, while others are performing individual skills. There should always be plenty of water available for both riders and horses.

Provide lunch and refreshments for the Examiners and other officials, and fluids for candidates and their mounts. Inform parents of meal arrangements for candidates prior to testing.

Make sure, after the test, that the landowner (and anyone else involved) was thanked and the property left as it was found.

IF FOLLOWING THE ALTERNATIVE CERTIFICATE PROGRESSION TRACKS IN YOUR CLUB/CENTER, THE FOLLOWING APPLIES:

- A member may follow the Alternative Certificate Progression tracks at the Club/Center Level in Horse Management, Flat, or Classic. An example: a member could hold a C-1 certificate in Horse Management, a D-3 Level in Flat, *and* a D-2 certificate in Classic.
- At every Level, D-2 to C-2, the Horse Management Test Section must be completed with a “Meets Standards” (MS, or above) in order to be awarded the equivalent certificate level in Classic, Flat or Jumping. Passing (meeting Standards) in the Flat Riding Test Section at each level must be achieved in order to achieve the equivalent Jumping level certificate.
- You may separate out the Horse Management portion of the Hunter Seat Equitation track by using the appropriate level HM Test Sheet but note that the ‘Turnout’ dress for the C level is different. The riding for the HSE track has to be done together at one time as the flat is a warm-up for the jumping (there is no alternative ‘flat or jumping’ for the HSE track). There is also no cross country section for the Hunter Seat Equitation track.
- For further information on Alternate Certificate Progression go to the Forms page of USPC web site and click on Alternative Certificate Progression Information and the Frequently Asked Questions.

E. SHARING OF MOUNTS AND USE OF MULTIPLE MOUNTS:

- **All Pony Club members should be tested riding a safe and reliable mount.** Any candidate’s, their parent’s, DC’s or CA’s concerns about a particular horse or pony should be discussed with the DC, CA, TO or the Examiner well before the test. If a mount is deemed to be unsafe by the TO, DC, CA or Examiner on site during the test, and is posing immediate danger to the rider or others, the person in charge (normally the DC, CA or TO on site with the concurrence of the Examiner) must stop the candidate’s testing immediately.
- While not recommended, the sharing of suitable mounts for a certification is allowed at the D-1 through C-2 levels. However, sharing should only be permitted if 1) each proposed candidate is familiar with the mount and has ridden it prior to the certification, successfully and safely at the level being evaluated On the Flat and Over Fences, as applicable; and 2) each proposed candidate informs the TO of the “shared mount” requirement prior to the test day in order to accommodate the mounts’ condition and the test schedule. As the safety of horses and riders are paramount, if Examiners determine that shared mounts’ condition or other circumstances preclude those mounts’ continued participation in the testing, they may indicate the candidates in question must withdraw from the test.

- If, due to unforeseen circumstances, a testing is not completed in the same day (weather stops the certification, the candidate does not meet Standard that day in a section(s) of the test sheet, etc.), the candidate is expected to complete the test on the same mount they rode when the test began. If for reasons of lameness or similar circumstance, the candidate is unable to complete the test on the same mount within the one month allowed, the candidate may use a substitute mount with the DC's or CA's approval.
- Candidates may use more than one mount at their test for separate phases of the test (riding on the flat, jumping, longeing) due to soundness or safety issues, with prior arrangement with the DC or CA. Once a phase begins with a mount, the entire phase must be completed with that mount.

IV. RESPONSIBILITIES OF EXAMINERS

EXAMINERS MUST READ AND BE KNOWLEDGEABLE OF THE SOPS AND TEST SHEETS FOR THE LEVELS BEING EXAMINED, THE CONTENTS OF THESE GUIDELINES, AND BE FAMILIAR WITH THE EXAMINER HANDBOOK, MANUALS AND TEXTS STUDIED BY CANDIDATES.

The Examiner should be sensitive to young people, and able to conduct the test in a positive, educational framework. Attendance at a local USPC Standards and Certification Clinic, whenever possible, is highly recommended, and may be required by the DC or CA of the candidate's club/center.

The Examiner must be capable of knowing what meets Standards and what does not, know how to encourage improvement, how to tell a candidate when they do not meet Standards, and be able to explain why.

The Examiner must avoid making comments about readiness to take future tests beyond the one being tested on that day. Even if a candidate exceeds Standards, **THE EXAMINER SHOULD NOT MAKE A STATEMENT REGARDING THEIR ABILITY TO PASS A FUTURE TEST.**

Testings can be stressful for candidates (and their parents), and Examiners should empathize with candidates' diverse personalities. The Examiner should set the tone of the test as a learning situation, drawing the best from each candidate, but must not turn the testing situation into a "lesson."

Outgoing, confident candidates should not be allowed to intimidate those who are less confident or shy; rather, each candidate must be encouraged to demonstrate what he or she *does* know. Ensure the testing atmosphere does not turn into a competition between candidates. Control the discussion so very shy candidates have the opportunity to tell/show what they know without the more outgoing child providing the obvious answers, leaving the quiet child without a response or few alternative answers (although they may have known all the answers already provided). The Examiner must not put a candidate in a position to have to exceed Standards in order to answer the question. No candidate is required at any time to exceed Standards.

The Examiner should request details about the facility and equipment available, and of any learning or physical disabilities of candidates. If a disability exists that limits performance, but the candidate can ride safely and still MEET the requirements of the Standard, he or she should pass the test.

There is a range from ADEQUATE (Meets Standards) TO SUPERIOR (Exceeds Standards), and anyone within that range should pass the certification.

The Examiners must ensure they have all necessary equipment, SOPs, and Test Sheets with them and information about the facility prior to starting the test.

Oral examination or demonstration must be used for the Horse Management sections at all certificate levels. Orals should be conducted on a one-to-one basis or in very small groups of two or three at the D and C levels. Care must be taken to see that candidates are afforded every opportunity to express what they know, thereby gaining confidence in a testing situation. *This is a time for the candidates to show what they know, not the examiner!* Care must be taken to allow the quieter/shy child to demonstrate knowledge, and not be expected to exceed Standards in order to answer a question already addressed by others in a small group. Rotating through your candidates, each giving a portion of the answer is an effective approach. Do not always call on the same individual to answer first or last.

For testing jumping skills and riding in the open (when required by the SOP being tested):

- Examiners must know what jump equipment will be made available, how large the arena or jump space is, and have jump courses in mind or ensure they will be set. The Examiner must inspect any courses already set, measuring jumps used to ensure they are within Standards. Refer to the SOPs for required distances, dimensions & sample course maps.
- The Examiner must have a tape measure, check all striding and check jump heights to insure they meet the SOPs being tested.
- The examiner should have a stop watch, know how to use it and how to measure pace, before the start of the test.
- At the club/center level tests D-1 through C-2, Examiners must adjust the striding of ground poles, the grid, combinations and related distances on course to meet the striding of the mount being used, and may not require/expect the candidate to adjust their mount's stride to the course or grid already set. The Examiner may need to organize the candidates order of go to maximize each setting before changing it for the next mount(s).
- The Examiner must provide adequate warm-up and lower warm-up fences, prior to requiring jumping to height, both in the arena and in the open.
- Examiners must inspect the terrain to be covered in the open and measure jump heights prior to proceeding on course. All obstacles on the cross country course should be at

required heights (as close as possible) according to the requirements of the SOP being tested, but not exceed the Standards. Lower warm-up fences may be taken first.

Although Examiners may suggest a particular exercise as an explanation or aid to perform to Standard better, **ONLY THE REQUIREMENTS LISTED ON THE TEST SHEET MAY BE TESTED.**

Examiners must complete Test Sheets and make clear and descriptive written comments, especially for those sections where the candidate did not meet the Standards (DNMS) prior to leaving the test site. Comments should be specific and encouraging, with suggestions for correcting any problems. Even when a candidate does not meet the Standard, the Examiner's comments should be as positive and encouraging as possible.

Candidates must be notified individually of test results to avoid uncomfortable situations among candidates, parents and examiners. In addition to continuous feedback during a test, a complete critique with each candidate should follow the test, with parents invited to listen **IF THE CANDIDATE AGREES.**

Examiners must dress appropriately, either in appropriately clean casual riding attire, shirt with collar and sleeves, tucked in with a belt, and boots shined, or in appropriate paddock boots, khakis or slacks, shirt with collar and sleeves, and tucked in, with a belt (if pants have belt loops). Examiners must keep in mind they are representing Pony Club Standards as much as the candidate is expected to. The Examiner must not use profanity, or slang that could be found offensive to the candidates or their parents.

V. EXPANDED INFORMATION ON TESTING NEW AND CONTINUING MEMBERS

Sometimes, though more rare, the candidate having achieved the D-1 while young, is unable to test again in a timely manner, (lameness or illness of their own horse), moving to a new state or town, a period of time away from Pony Club though still riding, etc., prevents their participation in a normal testing cycle. If the candidate is later ready to test both D-2 and D-3, this is possible at the next certification. Again, DCs and CAs want to facilitate growth and achievement for the candidates where and when they are ready, and possibilities exist.

It is important however, for DCs and CAs to be honest with both the candidate and parent when they *and* their instructor or other valid evaluators, feel the candidate is in fact not ready to be successful at the next certification level(s). Resisting the temptation to “push” a child is difficult for most parents at some point, and the DC or CA is responsible to insure “safety first”, at all times. However, if the candidate and parent are intent on testing, as long as it does not pose an immediate safety hazard, it is recommended that the DC or CA allow the candidate to rate.

VI. RIDING GROUPS AND USE OF MULTIPLE EXAMINERS

The ratio of Examiner to candidate, especially at the lowest test levels of D-1 and D-2, is very dependent on the age of your candidates and the examiners experience. One Examiner to every

one or two candidates if very young is appropriate. Not allowing the riding group to be more than four (with two or three examiners) with candidates of a very young age promotes safety.

A ratio of 1 Examiner to every 3 to 4 candidates is a rule of thumb, beyond the youngest candidates. However, it is preferable for up to 6, (or even 8 candidates at the C levels) to ride together while all 2 or 3 assigned Examiners work together testing these candidates. The Examiners should confer on the candidates and their performance of the required skills. This helps the Examiners see the relative success of the candidates, which do meet and which do not meet Standards. Each Examiner brings their own observations to the analyses of the candidates' performances. Riding with others also provides the candidates (and their families) with a better understanding of their performance relative to the Standards. The Examiners come to a consensus of the candidate's performance in a similar fashion as the National Examiners (NEs) at a National level certification. Finally, it helps the parents understand their own child's performance relative to the group, and helps prevent the perception, of "the easy" versus "the hard" Examiner if the candidates were in 2 or 3 separate testing groups with only one examiner. (This is especially true when you have two or more of the same level tests going on independently of each other with just one examiner each, at the same facility, at the same time.)

VII. RETESTING SECTIONS OF A TEST

If a candidate does not meet Standards (DNMS) in any part of one (or more) section(s) of the test (the number of un-mounted and mounted sections allowed for re-testing is specifically designated on each test sheet at each certification level), re-testing on these sections may be appropriate. The allowed number of sections to be re-tested is stated in each SOP, and on each test sheet, and re-testing is strictly limited to that number. **A RE-TEST MAY BE SCHEDULED ON SECTIONS NOT PASSED UNDER THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS:**

- **ONLY THE ORIGINAL EXAMINER MAY RECOMMEND RE-TESTING SECTIONS NOT MET, AND MUST RECOMMEND RE-TESTING TO THE CANDIDATE'S DC OR CA, AT THE TIME OF THE ORIGINAL TESTING. THE EXAMINER MUST INDICATE THEIR RECOMMENDATION ON THE ORIGINAL TEST SHEET.**
- The DC or CA must approve and schedule the re-test. The re-test, if at all possible, should be with the original Examiners, and **MUST** be completed within one month of the date of the original test.

Re-testing sections of the test sheet is not automatic, and is not necessarily appropriate in all circumstances. It is only appropriate in cases where a small amount of correction is needed on the part of the candidate, which can be reasonably expected to be accomplished in the short span of one month or less. The re-test must be completed in one day. Failure to meet Standards in any part of the re-test will require the candidate to take the entire test again, when next scheduled by the club/center, or available with another club/center (with approval of both DCs or CAs). If the re-test is not completed within a month, the entire test must be taken again at a later date.

ALL BLOCKS OR AREAS OF THE RIDING SECTIONS OF THE TESTS, (As applicable Flat, Jumping, and Riding in the Open, etc.), TO INCLUDE DISCUSSION SECTIONS, are considered mounted sections.

If a candidate takes a portion of the test over again with a different Examiner, BOTH Examiners must sign the original test sheet before the candidate is considered to have passed. The DC or CA must maintain accountability and control of the test sheet, until the certification is complete. Normally, any test or re-test must take place within the Pony Club member's own Region. It is important that DCs, CAs or Instructors do not provide unnecessary road-blocks or obstacles to the availability of re-testing opportunities. We want to facilitate growth and success when possible.

VIII. TESTING OPPORTUNITIES: SUGGESTION FOR SUCCESS

There are numerous ways for clubs/centers and DCs/CAs to offer multiple tests within the year, and ways to have adequate numbers of candidates to demonstrate group riding in the open, and group teaching at the C Levels. Club/centers within a Region can get together to hold multiple tests. This insures greater numbers attending the tests and more opportunities for their members to have a workable date to rate. Also, members from one club/center can rate at another club/center's test, or regions can assist their club/centers' DCs or CAs by helping to organize Regional tests. Note that DCs and CAs are still responsible for recommending their candidates to attend a test, and should be present at the test. In principle, it is still the DC's or CA's responsibility to ensure the location, and conduct of the test is in accordance with the requirements in the SOPs, and the DC or CA must still sign the candidate's Certificate. Increased opportunities to rate provide more possibilities for success and growth for our Pony Club members.

IX. GENERAL/RECOMMENDED TIME FRAMES FOR D-1 TO C-2 TESTS THAT INCLUDE ALL SECTIONS OF HM, FLAT AND JUMPING*

D-1 and D-2 levels: Groups of 2 to 4
1-2 hours riding
1 hour un-mounted

D-3 level: Groups of 3-4
1 ½ -2 hours riding max
1-2 hours un-mounted

C-1 level: Groups of 4-6 (2 -3 examiners ideal)
2-2 ½ hours riding
1 ½-2 hours un-mounted

C-2 level: 3-7 (2-3 examiners ideal)
2-3 hours riding
1 ½ - 2 ½ hours un-mounted

**The D-1 to C-2 Test which include all un-mounted and mounted sections are used in the development of this schedule, and can be used as an example from which a modified schedule can be developed for any alternate progression track. Times do not include breaks and tack changes, Examiners finishing paperwork and briefing candidates on results. Unforeseen events or difficulties with mounts can also affect the ability to stay on schedule.*

Generally speaking, a workable schedule is as follows (again, using the complete D-1 to C-2 Tests as a general guideline):

Turnout/Inspection (questions such as parts of the horse, tack, conformation, shoeing, etc., may be asked at this time).
Horse Management (D Levels hands on: saddling, grooming, etc.).
Flat riding phase
Break/Lunch (also for possible tack change, watering horses, etc. at C levels)
Grid work and jumping or further flat work
Riding in the open (D-2 and up)
Cooling out
Break/Lunch (in the case of C Levels)
Other Horse Management skills (hands-on) followed by remaining Oral Questioning (Parents can be used to watch horses if tied to trailers rather than stabled)
Complete paper work and provide results

X. TEST SITE REQUIREMENTS

Test site requirements are driven by the requirements of the SOPs and related Test Sheets being tested. Read the requirements of the test and Standards carefully to ensure your site meets the requirements for space, terrain and equipment required.

XI. REQUIRED CANDIDATE ATTIRE & EQUIPMENT

All required equipment and attire is described in the SOPs for each certificate level and the accompanying guidance for the specific discipline. This Guide does not supersede any requirements set forth in the SOPs. Be sure candidates have read the SOPs carefully and understand the attire and equipment needed for their testing.

XII. DIMENSIONS OF FENCES

Each of the SOPs provides a chart with the appropriate and required dimensions for jumps and grids to be used during the test. Always refer to the SOP and Test Sheets to ensure you are testing to Standard. Although striding distances can be adjusted to suit the size and stride of the horse being ridden, the required heights for the Certificate Level must be jumped by the candidate during the test. If the mount brought to the test is not capable of the required heights on that day, the candidate may not complete/be successful at that certificate level on that day.

XIII. SAMPLE JUMPING COURSES FOR D-1 THROUGH C-2 (Also see grids and charts in SOPs)

D-1 Level Requirements and Sample Courses

Very simple course, once around in enclosed area

4-6 ground poles

(Walk over poles in jumping position; No in-and-out or poles-in-line [cavaletti] allowed.)

D-2 Level Requirements and Sample Courses

Uncomplicated course with generous sweeping turns in enclosed area

4-5 obstacles, 18" maximum, with ground-lines if a vertical other than small log used

(No oxer or in-and-out combinations requiring correct striding)

Trotting permissible

D-3 Level Requirements and Sample Courses

Gymnastic Jumping Exercises to be set in accordance with the Chart "**Over Fences D-3 Level**" provided on last page of SOPs for D-Levels

Simple hunter type course with no difficult turns, with changes of direction across the diagonal

Course to be set in an enclosed or contained area

5-7 obstacles, **majority of fences to be set at 2'3"** maximum height, related distances of three or more strides (distances to be adjusted for individual horse's or pony's stride).

All jumps to have ground-lines, with one oxer (graduated only) on course

No single stride, bounce or two stride combinations

C-1 Level Requirements and Sample Courses

Gymnastic Jumping Exercises to be set in accordance with the Chart "**Over Fences C-1 Level**" provided on page 8 of the SOPs for C-1/C-2 Levels

Course to be set in an enclosed or contained area providing some related distances and smooth bending lines

6-8 obstacles, **majority of fences to be set at 2'9"** maximum height, with 2-3 oxers (must be graduated), and one 2 stride combination, (vertical must come first).

No bounce or 1-stride combinations

C-2 Level Requirements

Gymnastic Jumping Exercises to be set in accordance with the Chart "**Over Fences C-2 Level**" provided on page 8 of the SOPs for C-1/C-2 Levels

Slightly more difficult turns, related distances; bending lines

Enclosed area recommended

7-9 obstacles, 3' max. height

2-3 oxers (may be 1-stride), not part of combination; may be in line if enough room

XIV. WHERE TO GO FOR HELP

Regional and Club or Center leadership throughout the country must work to ensure that all tests are recognized as important and vital to the USPC goal of developing well-rounded, capable horsemen. These Guidelines and the documents they support (the Standards of Proficiency for each level and the supporting Test Sheets), are the core elements of the Pony Club Instructional Program and should be read carefully by all those involved with Pony Club instruction and testing.

If problems or questions arise, it is important to know that there people to turn to for answers. The D-1 to C-2 Program Committee is anxious to ensure that USPC, as an educational organization, is meeting the needs and expectations of all Pony Club members and their families. The committee is also available to help insure the program is delivered equitably, fairly and consistently throughout the Nation. To do this, the committee works closely with the Curriculum and Standards Committee, the National Testing Committee, and Regional Administration. Please feel free to call or contact the current Chair(s) of the D-1 to C-2 Committee, if you have questions, concerns, or suggestions.

For contact information for THE D-1 to C-2 PROGRAM COMMITTEE refer to the current Annual Directory for names, addresses and phone numbers of the committee members, or go to www.ponyclub.org and click on Contacts, or contact instruction@ponyclub.org for further information.

APPENDIX A

D1-C2 TESTING ORGANIZER'S CHECKLIST

6 MONTHS IN ADVANCE

- Schedule at least 2 tests for the upcoming year #1 _____ #2 _____

3 – 6 MONTHS IN ADVANCE

- Arrange for test site Location: _____ Cost: \$ _____
Date secured _____
Weather options _____
Insured through PC? Yes _____
Meets testing criteria? e.g. fenced in, footing, enough jumps, suitable cross country (if applicable). Notes: _____
Medical facility nearby Yes _____ (PH) _____
Trailer parking Yes _____/No _____
- Hire Examiner Examiner #1: _____ Fee: \$ _____
Food Allergies/Preferences: _____
Examiner #2: _____ Fee: \$ _____
Food Allergies/Preferences: _____
- Impartial Observer Assigned Name: _____
Phone #: _____
- Scribe Assigned Name: _____
Phone #: _____

60 DAYS IN ADVANCE

- Determine # of candidates D1 ____; D2 ____; D3 ____; C1 ____; C2 ____
- Provide date, facility, food, required equipment and attire information to candidates, families and officials

30 DAYS IN ADVANCE

- Obtain tentative schedule from examiner

14 DAYS IN ADVANCE

- Final Schedule distributed to candidates, families and officials

DAY OF RATING

- Test sheets on hand
 Certificates on hand