

## **EQUINE STUDIES PRACTICAL**

The 2025 Equine Studies practical examinations were conducted in September, October, and November of 2025.

Fifty candidates were assessed, ten of which were Non-Riding candidates. This is a big jump in the overall number of candidates and an increase in those electing the Non-Riding option.

### **Non-Riding Option**

There were ten non-riding candidates. Most were able to present in person and a handful presented over Zoom.

It is important to stress that whenever possible, candidates should be strongly encouraged to present in person. Although online presentations have increased access to the subject and made it available to more potential candidates, particularly in rural areas, much of the authenticity is lost and interaction between the examiner and the candidate is slightly limited.

It has been mentioned in the past how important it is that the Non-Riding option cannot be seen to lack rigor or be viewed as 'the easier option'. I am very happy to report that with the bigger group opting for this choice, it has extended its comparative pool and the PAT held up well. Candidates that engaged fully with the program were given an excellent platform to present their findings and experiences. Those that were less enthusiastic and committed were only capable of producing a mediocre presentation.

The career path choices are becoming more innovative, with candidates choosing to engage with careers that are not as popular, but equally relevant and integral. The majority presented well-structured Powerpoint presentations with detailed records of personal experiences, findings and retrospective reflections. They also for the most part have feasible career paths with realistic plans to implement and achieve.

Finding professionals to shadow seems to be becoming easier to achieve. This year this was not cited as the biggest challenge for the candidates. The majority found the number of notional hours required a large hurdle to overcome. At this stage, notional hours do not need to be decreased. It is precisely that degree of commitment required to produce a presentation with the required substance and depth of knowledge. The candidates still managed to overcome this challenge creatively and were able to convey their personal growth in their presentations.

## **Riding Option**

### **1. Venues**

Even with the numerous new locations, again without exception each of the exam venues met all the industry standards as equestrian establishments. Many were well above the expected standard, and all the necessary safety and welfare practices were well implemented. Each venue was an excellent representation of good equine husbandry.

Preparations for the exam at the venues were well organised with all the necessary equipment in place and arranged as and when needed. Arenas and work areas were safe, enclosed and very well maintained. The necessary arena set up was correctly prepared in each instance and tracks accurately built.

The disciplines of choice in this exam cycle included the more specialised and unique fields of flat racing, Polocrosse and Eventing. The venue used for the polocrosse was a wonderful example of a well-run equine facility and the track is in frequent competitive use. There was the added challenge of torrential rain.

The venue where the Flat Racing candidates presented is a world-class training facility and it is always privileged to be hosted there.

The standard and suitability of the venues used is of great importance, not only for the smooth running of the examination process but also to ensure the candidates are unencumbered in their presentation of the practical requirements. This makes the process as fair and uniform as possible, notwithstanding the safety of the candidates during the execution of the exam, which is paramount.

This exam cycle reflected the reality of the risks involved in this discipline. Two candidates suffered serious injuries competing during the year. They still managed to present for their examinations. On my return to the Cape, I renewed my First Aid certificate, and I would like the opportunity to engage amongst ourselves as how potential falls and accidents should be handled.

I will take the opportunity at conference to stress the importance of using venues that meet competition standards. They have all thus far complied, but we should not allow ourselves to become complacent.

## 2. Conduct of the examination

An examination time of two hours per candidate works well. Where there were multiple candidates at one venue, grouping two in an examination session running for four hours worked efficiently.

The order of the sections in the testing tool improved running time, with a more fluid flow of the testing procedure and continued efficiency. I would like to further refine and improve the PAT. There have been a few changes in the industry that will in no way contradict the CAPS, but if included it will keep us relevant and current.

- (a) Most candidates were very well prepared and skilled in the first section of the exam in which they rode on their own horse in their discipline of choice. Usually, this is where the fewest marks were lost. We had several candidates that competed and rode to a very high level on an international platform.

A few of the candidates presented themselves and their horses correctly turned out for their discipline of choice. Although there are no marks allocated for this, it elevated their representation of competence in that discipline. Being knowledgeable regarding the correct attire – and in many cases these are bound within the rules of the discipline – and having the ability to turn the horse out appropriately for the discipline is an essential skill. This needs to be routinely reminded of the training providers as it is very easy to overlook.

- (b) The general knowledge section is now focused on the relevant rules and regulations of their discipline of choice. Although this means I need to study and review the rules for each possible discipline and remain conversant with all changes, it allows for a more applied and relevant engagement with each candidate, and I get a far clearer insight as to their degree of proficiency and currency.
- (c) The section on Stable Yard techniques, handling and safety was generally well done by the candidates. Several of the candidates presented a detailed tack check and explanation which further demonstrated their skill, proficiency and depth of knowledge. This demonstrated awareness and understanding of safety considerations, and efficiency and skill in using the necessary equipment in this field. Although there is no mark allocated for this, it added a deeper level to the candidate's performance in a professional manner.
- (d) No major issues arose during the demonstration of tacking and untacking; candidates displayed the required level of efficiency and technique. Attention should be paid to leading the tacked up horse and turning in hand. Leading a tacked-up horse needs to be practiced with candidates and emphasis put on not becoming complacent during the tuck up and untack of the unknown horse. The same should be said for mounting and checking stirrups, girth, etc.
- (e) More attention should be paid to the lateral movements, lengthening and basic school figures – understanding the correct shape of the horse, the correct direction of flexion and the aids required is paramount and the candidates are expected to be able to show insights as to how these movements are beneficial and how to problem solve.

In some instances, the candidate had a clear understanding of the movement required and the aids to apply, but the unknown horse they had to ride was not schooled to the requisite level to execute the movements.

In contrast, some of the mounts were schooled at a very high level and those candidates had a comparatively easy task in executing the movement. To ensure that the candidates have equitable examination experience, horses with the suitable level of schooling should as far as possible be utilised. I acknowledge that this is a very real challenge.

Potential solutions to this discrepancy in the level of training, ability and suitability of the unknown horses used can be expanded on at conference. I will endeavor to liaise exam dates as early as possible in 2026 to allow more time to source the horses for this section. Again, I must stress that access to a top-level competition horse for the exam does not equate a good mark. A few candidates have done this to garner better results and were sadly overhyped on each occasion, lacking the degree of skill to ride such a highly trained equine.

- (f) The completed logs for each candidate were emailed to me in advance and timeously. The three flat racing candidates presented their Race recording to me and sent me the links for these.

A few of the candidates were presented with serious obstacles during the year and had adequate logs for the preceding years but had only managed one or two competitions in 2025.

The candidates must take part in a minimum of four competitions in their Grade 12 year in compliance with the CAPS. I do not feel that two competitions in the Matric year are an unreasonable requirement. Most riders attend a minimum of one show a month.

## **Conclusion**

The overall standard and preparedness of the candidates examined was high. Their commitment and passion for the subject are clear in the assessments; it is fair to say that the average Equine Studies candidate was compelled by their personal dedication and commitment to the subject and therefore have a strong drive to achieve their best. The exam structure worked well, and the assessment process went smoothly with well-prepared venues and able candidates.

There were no instances of 'dangerous' riding or candidates that were deemed unsafe to ride any section.

## EQUINE STUDIES THEORY

### QUESTION 1

No problems with Question 1.

1.2.1 Most answered this question incorrectly – many gave duodenum instead of ilium.

1.2.2 Naming a hormone was a problem for most.

1.2.3 Most got liver correctly.

1.3 True or false was very well answered.

1.4 Very well answered.

1.5 This was a challenge – most marks lost here, some candidates gave symptoms and not identifying features. Most were unable to give the identifying features of poisonous plants – this is stated in the CAPS so must be covered. Most misidentified Senecio and Honey Flower.

### QUESTION 2

2.1 No real problems with the question, but most candidates battled with defining suspensory ligament.

2.2 Well answered, generally candidates gave enough detail to be awarded four marks. The function of the sole was the tricky part for some candidates.

2.2.2 The thrush aspect of the question was well answered but some candidates neglected the relationship to contracted heels.

2.2.3 50/50 confusion (some backwards) – in CAPS.

2.3 Again 50/50 split, the biggest problems were identifying laminitis and white line disease.

2.4 Surprisingly, those candidates that attempted this question, were awarded a good mark.

2.5.1 Very well answered by all.

2.5.2 Laminitis was well answered but corns proved to be problematic.

2.6 Most candidates did not provide enough information to gain the full six marks. The justification was often omitted.

### **QUESTION 3**

- 3.1 All answered well.
- 3.1.2 Ulcers very well answered, but choke was poorly answered.
- 3.2 Answered well, but often not enough detail was provided for four marks.
- 3.3 This was tricky as very few candidates mentioned what the purpose of oil in the diet was.
- 3.4 Very well answered.
- 3.5 Well answered, calculations were correct and ratios correct. Very few candidates mentioned increasing the frequency of feed and some candidates gave the answer of tranquilisers. Many candidates did not pay attention to the fact that the horse was recovering from an injury.
- 3.6 Myths were creative, but they did not link activities to the myths and just gave some team building activities in general.

### **QUESTION 4**

Overall, this was a very well answered question.

- 4.1 Definitions were fantastic with only a few candidates not being able to define lethargy.
- 4.2.1 The connection between internal parasites and effect on health was very well answers and thorough.
- 4.2.2 The question was very well answered and all candidates were able to give the impact.
- 4.3 Isolation protocols were well thought out in Question 4.3.
- 4.4 Students gave a good analysis in this question.
- 4.5 Candidates lost marks because they did not justify their plan.
- 4.6 Some candidates did not justify which method they thought to be most effective.

### **QUESTION 5**

- 5.1.1 Very well answered by all.
- 5.1.2 Some candidates simply gave the functions and not how the app will make the record keeping more effective.
- 5.2.1 Very well answered.
- 5.2.2 Very well answered.

- 5.3 Some candidates did not link this to the vet/farrier and the injured horse. They simply provided the general features of the app but, on the whole, many candidates gave an exceptional answer.
- 5.4 Generally very well answered.
- 5.5 Candidates had a lot of fun with this question and gave amazing and functional ideas. Some candidates did not actually provide what the feature would be but just spoke about each heading in the question. Some candidates gave a benefit to the area being addressed in the app but not an actual app feature. Some candidates did not provide the justification for their suggested features. Please remind candidates to read the question in full and to ensure that they add justifications if required.
- 5.6 The top candidates provided advantages and disadvantages, and then a critical analysis. Many candidates simply provided a pros and cons list.

## **QUESTION 6**

Generally, a very well answered question.

One candidate did not answer this question, having spent excessive time on Questions 1–4 and used additional lines, which limited the time available for the remaining question.

- 6.1 This question was answered correctly by all.
- 6.2 The reason that these are important indicators of health of the environment were missed by most and candidates simply gave functions.
- 6.3 Very well answered.
- 6.5 This was a challenge for most candidates to put forward their perspective on the weighing of.
- 6.6 This question was very well answered.

Overall, candidates to be reminded to fully read the questions and to also answer all parts – especially when reasoning and justification is required. Some attention can be given to teaching how to critically evaluate a topic (not to just give the pro's and con's).

## **EQUINE STUDIES SBA MODERATION**

The moderation of the School-Based Assessment (SBA) had four primary objectives:

- Ensure Authenticity
- Ensure Fairness
- Ensure Reliability and Consistency
- Ensure Rigour or Sufficiency

But the specific focus areas are:

- Design Grids for Prelims and evidence of moderation
- Calibre of tasks
- Accuracy of recorded/transferred results
- Quality of personal written feedback by teachers to learners

The learner and teacher files moderated in 2025 were all submitted electronically this year and found to be well organised, clearly structured, and user-friendly, with explicit task instructions and appropriate supporting documentation.

All SBA tasks were completed in full, and the overall standard of tasks was very high. Marking was generally consistent with the prescribed marking guidelines, and the allocation of marks reflected a fair and accurate assessment of learner performance across the academic year.

During moderation, a minor calculation discrepancy was identified in one instance. In this case, while the quality of the assessment tasks and learner evidence was of a high standard, a small arithmetic error resulted in the SBA mark being understated. An increased SBA mark has therefore been proposed to the IEB for amendment, in line with the evidence presented.

However, it should be noted that in the case of four (4) schools there was missing documentation (usually either a rubric or the marking page of a test) which meant that I was unable to verify the SBA marks completely. So, although no proposed changes were suggested to the IEB, the marks could not be completely verified.

In the case of one (1) school, a portfolio piece had not been submitted and the required declaration of omission had not been submitted and in addition, this school had not loaded copies of all the exam papers. This meant that the marks submitted could not be completely verified.

### **Administrative Notes**

Equine Studies remains subject to National SBA Moderation only. Centres are reminded that:

- A maximum of three learner files per centre must be submitted, regardless of candidate numbers.
- From these, two files are selected for moderation by the moderator.
- Where the same teacher is responsible for learners across multiple centres, it is recommended that a single consolidated teacher file be submitted where possible. This reduces duplication and supports clarity and consistency during moderation.
- All the required documentation must be submitted. This includes Question Paper, Design Grid, Marking Guides, Evidence of Pre and Post moderation and Feedback to learners.

## **Guidelines and Recommendations for Improvement**

While the overall standard of SBA administration and assessment was satisfactory, the following recommendations are made to support ongoing improvement and standardisation across centres:

### **Research Task**

Students generally produced tasks of a very high standard. Teachers are encouraged to ensure that all tasks follow the CAPS curriculum.

### **Practical Task**

It was noted that the tasks are becoming standardised in nature which does make moderation easier. It is recommended that practical tasks are examined by two examiners to ensure fairness.

### **Prelim**

This was set as a cluster paper and all teachers are reminded that all documentation must be submitted including moderation changes.

### **Controlled tests**

Tests of a good rigour and standard were set in all cases but teachers are reminded to ensure that tests are kept new and that tests set in previous years should not be completely used again.

### **Moderation Documentation**

The introduction of a subject-specific moderation checklist or form would assist both teachers and moderators by clearly outlining expectations for pre- and post-moderation requirements.

### **Conclusion**

The 2025 Equine Studies SBA submissions reflect a sound and, in many cases, excellent standard of teaching, assessment design, and learner engagement. The SBA marks submitted are considered to be a fair reflection of the work completed during the academic year, with only minor calculation adjustments proposed where necessary.

Thank you for the opportunity to moderate the 2025 Equine Studies SBA files.