

USPC C-Level Western Dressage COMPARISON Flow Chart

(for Standards Revised 2024)

*No Western Dressage National certifications available at this time.

| | C-1 | C-2 |
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| Horse Management Expectations | The candidate should show a developing awareness of cause and effect in the care of their mount. He/she should be familiar with local common horse terms. Assistance is recommended in the demonstration of bandaging. | The candidates should show a solid awareness of cause and effect in horse management skills. Assistance is allowed in some demonstrations of bandaging and longeing. |
| Presentation/Turnout and Tack | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidates mount and tack to reflect the <i>Horse Management Handbook's</i> Turnout expectations. • Present in appropriate "Competition" attire for Western Dressage (found in the USPC Western Dressage discipline rulebook). • Mount to be well-groomed, reflecting regular care with a healthy coat; no sweat or dirt. Mane and tail brushed with little, if any, dandruff. External areas around sheath/udder clean. Hooves picked out and reflecting regular farrier care. Eyes, nose, lips, and dock clean. • Tack to be safe, clean, and properly adjusted, reflecting regular care/conditioning with metal polished. No jockeys or dust and all stress points clean. • Identify tack on own mount and discuss fit. • Describe 3 different snaffle bits. • Describe how to adjust a curb chain. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidates mount and tack to reflect the <i>Horse Management Handbook's</i> Turnout expectations. • Present in appropriate "Competition" attire for Western Dressage (found in the USPC Western Dressage discipline rulebook). • Mount to be well-groomed, reflecting regular care with a healthy coat: no sweat or dirt. Mane and tail brushed with little, if any, dandruff. External area around sheath/udder clean. Hooves picked out and reflecting regular farrier care. Eyes, nose, lips, and dock clean. • Tack to be safe, clean, and properly adjusted, reflecting regular care/conditioning with metal polished. No jockeys or dust and all stress points clean. • Identify tack on own mount and discuss fit. • Name 3 different snaffle bits. • Name 1 curb bit and describe how its function is different than a snaffle, as described in the <i>USPC D Manual</i>. • Describe how to adjust a curb chain. |
| Leading/Longeing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss 3 reasons for longeing. • Name 4 required items the rider must have when longeing and 3 items used for a mount at the C level as described in the <i>USPC C Manual</i>. • Describe parallel longeing and explain why it might be used. • Demonstrate parallel leading (from both sides at the walk only) with assistance, if necessary, as described in the <i>USPC C Manual</i>. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the fit of the longeing equipment being used on the mount. • Discuss the type and length of the longe line used. • Name 3 safety precautions when longeing. • In an enclosed area, longe familiar mount at walk and trot in both directions on a 20-meter circle, with assistance, if necessary. While longeing, demonstrate the correct use of equipment, body position, posture, and voice. |

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss technique used (parallel or pivot) in longeing demonstration. |
| Bandaging | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name 2 possible effects of poor bandaging techniques. • Apply 2 stable (aka standing) bandages (front a rear diagonal pair), with assistance, if needed, from the Examiner. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under direct supervision, apply 1 stable bandage without assistance. Discuss why you would make the choose to use a cupping technique. • Apply a tail bandage (for shipping or grooming) with assistance. |
| Foot and Shoeing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss causes of thrush and prevention. • Identify 6 farrier tools and their uses. • Identify 3 types of shoes. • Describe 3 examples of bad shoeing. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the 5 steps in shoeing. • Describe 2-3 types of common shoe features and why they might be used (e.g., clips, square toe, pads, studs). • If shod, discuss features of own mount's shoes. |
| Conformation and Unsoundness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and discuss 3 bad points of basic leg conformation. • Describe the outward appearance, and locate these 5 common unsoundnesses: splint, bowed tendon, bone spavin, curb, and ringbone. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss how conformation of own mount is related to its breed. • Discuss angles of shoulder and hip of own mount. • Name 5 basic conformation qualities that you want in a mount of your own use, and how they affect the basic movement and soundness. • Describe appearance, and specific location of the following unsoundnesses: splint, bowed tendon, ringbone, navicular, thoroughpin, curb, bone and bog spavin. |
| <p>Health and Maintenance Record Book</p> <p><i>Purpose: to supply an accurate and detailed outline of a member's (or borrowed or virtual) mount's basic health and care information in order for someone else to properly care for mount if member was laid up or called away for a prolonged period.</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a hard copy (in a folder/binder or stapled) of mount's Health and Maintenance Record Book that contains records for at least 6 months prior to the test. • In addition to the information from the previous levels (D-2 & D-3), records must contain: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ D-2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Horse information and photo * Contact information for veterinarian and farrier * Feeding information and schedule ○ D-3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Dated list of routine care (vaccinations, deworming, shoeing, and dentistry) * Daily schedule of care, which may include grooming, riding, feeding, etc. ○ C-1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Weekly riding/conditioning schedule and changes to this schedule (seasonal or other) * Activities (beyond daily routine, e.g., lessons, clinics, competitions, etc.) * Extra veterinary visits (beyond routine care) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a hard copy (in a folder/binder) of mount's Health and Maintenance Record Book that contains records for at least 9 months prior to the test. In addition to the information from the previous levels, records must contain: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ D-2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Horse information and photo * Contact information for veterinarian and farrier * Feeding information and schedule ○ D-3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Dated list of routine care (vaccinations, deworming, shoeing, and dentistry) * Daily schedule of care, which may include grooming, riding, feeding, etc. ○ C-1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Weekly riding/conditioning schedule and changes to this schedule (seasonal or other) * Activities (beyond daily routine, e.g., lessons, clinics, competitions, etc.) ○ C-2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 1 page or less description of your mount's history (if known) and daily routine * Tack and equipment used |

| | * Expenses (income can be added, but not required) <i>Template may be USPC design or own design that contains the same data.</i> | * Any blanketing or special care requirements <i>Template may be USPC design or own design that contains the same data.</i> |
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| Stable Management | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss 1 drainage and 1 absorbent bedding. • Describe 3 areas that are important to check for a sheet or blanket to fit correctly. Name 2 safety concerns when putting on a blanket or removing a blanket. • Discuss 5 general barn safety practices. • Describe and give reasons for 3 types of clipping. • Name 2 internal and 2 external parasites. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss 3 concerns for pasture safety and fencing. • Discuss emergency information that should be posted in all barns. • Name 3 toxic plants in your area and describe 1 aspect of each plant that would help you recognize it in the pasture (e.g., type of plant, flower, color, height, etc.). • Describe 3 ways to manage internal and/or external parasites in pastures and stalls. |
| Travel Safety | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe basic equipment or care needed for mount's safety and comfort during trailer travel. • Discuss 5 items from the truck/trailer safety checklist that you should check before you travel. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain 5 ways to keep your mount safe and comfortable during travel. Name which equine health certificates and/or documents are required to travel in your state. |
| Nutrition | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss how much water an average horse drinks in a day and 2 reasons why water is important for horses. • Describe 2 characteristics of bad hay and explain why access to good-quality roughage is important. • Name one legume hay and one grass hay. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe own mount's ration when developing fitness, maintaining fitness, taking day off, sick, and extended time off. • List the 6 classes of nutrients. • Look at a feed label and identify the percentage of protein and fat. From the ingredients list, identify 1 source of each protein, carbohydrates, fat, vitamin, and mineral. (Candidate should bring own label or copy.) <p><i>*See supplements to the C-Level Manual on the C-Level Certification web page.</i></p> |
| Conditioning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the meaning of conditioning and the reasons for conditioning a mount. • Describe 3 factors to consider before a horse can begin a conditioning program. • Discuss 2 types of conditioning work, such as long, slow distance hill work and how this helps improve your mount's fitness. • Name 2 indicators (evidence) of improved fitness for your mount. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the weekly riding plan in your record book. Candidate should show and be able to discuss details of duration, activity, and general exercise involved. • Discuss how you would condition your mount from unfit to C-1 level riding fitness that includes changes in feed, TPR, and recovery rates. • Name 2 ways to help cool down your mount in very hot conditions. • Name 2 things to be aware of when exercising your horse in cold weather (e.g., footing conditions, shoes, clipped horse). • Measure and record pulse, temperature, and respiration of own mount at rest with examiner present, and with assistance, if needed. |

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| Land Conservation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name 2 different locations near you where the land is used for horseback riding and other outdoor activities such as hiking and sports. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss what public land is available to ride on in your county. Describe 2 things you can do to be a good steward for public land used for recreation (equestrian activities, hiking, biking, etc.). |
| Health Care and Veterinary Knowledge | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe how to treat minor wounds. Discuss parasite management for your mount. Name 3 things you can do to prevent your horse from contracting a communicable disease (i.e., while riding at other facilities or keeping mount at show grounds). Discuss 3 health concerns before bringing a new horse into a barn or stable. Explain the reason for having a Coggins test done. Discuss causes, signs, and preventative measures for the following: colic, laminitis, and choke. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss immunizations and health requirements appropriate for your area (may refer to record book). List 3 prevalent internal parasites in your area. Discuss causes, signs, and preventative measures for the following: tetanus, rabies, encephalomyelitis, West Nile virus, and scratches. Explain the need for the regular care of mount's teeth. Describe location of the parts of the horse's mouth to include bars, lips, incisors, molars, wolf teeth, and canines. |
| Teaching | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bring a letter from DC/CA verifying the member assisted twice at an unmounted Pony Club activity. Demonstrate a safety and tack inspection for a D member (explaining any safety issues found) to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rider attire (helmet, boots, and medical armband or bracelet). Bit is right way up and is attached to bridle correctly. Curb chain adjusted correctly, if using. Crownpiece/Headstall and Browband fitted. Reins attached correctly. Billets, stirrup leather, and reins in good repair. Girth is good size for mount and in good condition. Saddle fits mount and rider, and pad is correctly attached. Ponies' feet picked out. <p><i>Refer to the USPC C Manual</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bring a letter from DC/CA stating, under supervision, the member is assisting in simple unmounted instructional activities for D-level members. A minimum of 4 hours teaching prior to the test is recommended. Under direct supervision by the Examiner, teach a D member how to safely prepare their mount for turnout at a rally or certification (not to exceed 10 minutes). Discuss with the Examiner how you might handle a tack or equipment check where there is a safety concern. Describe the following unsafe equipment and how it might be fixed: loose throat latch, saddle pad not attached, bit too low/high, worn-out stitching, and cracked leather. <i>(At C level, changes to tack should only be made by a parent or supervising adult.)</i> |
| Rider Safety | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> List 3 ways to determine if a riding helmet fits properly. Describe 3 signs of heat illness. <p><i>Refer to the USPC Safety Handbook.</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> List 3 signs of a concussion. Explain 2 ways to cool off a rider during a hot day. Explain the importance of the heat index. <p><i>Refer to the USPC Safety Handbook.</i></p> |
| Riding Expectations | <p>Candidate should ride with confidence and control on the flat, over ground poles, in the open, and in riding a WDAA Basic Level dressage test, demonstrating a continuing development of a basic balanced position in all gaits and transitions. The candidate should show development of the correct aids to ride</p> | <p>Candidate should understand the purpose of WDAA Level 1 and rider with confidence and control on the flat, demonstrating a secure balanced position. The candidate progresses towards an independent hand with a coordinated use of leg, seat and hands (aids) while riding figures and movements from</p> |

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| | <p>mount forward, with steady connection and bend, and with rhythm in a balance suitable for WDAA Basic Level. Candidate should be familiar with the Training Wheel and the purpose of Basic Level dressage tests. These expectations are applied to each block of the test.</p> | <p>WDAA Level 1 dressage tests, over ground pole and in the open. Candidate should have an understanding of the WDAA Training Wheel and demonstrate effective aids to ride the horse freely forward with suppleness and a steady connection, beginning to ride the horse on the bit. These expectations are applied to each block of the test.</p> |
| Warm-Up | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate and discuss warm-up routine to prepare mount and rider for a dressage test, using the following terms: rhythm, relaxation, bending, connection, and accuracy. • Discuss importance of mount stretching forward and downward. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss warm-up for both rider and mount, using following terms: rhythm, tempo, suppleness, relaxation, bending, connection, and impulsion. • Discuss all figures and movements found in Basic and Level 1. |
| Movements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate 20-meter circles at working jog and working lope. • Demonstrate a 3-loop serpentine or shallow loop with development of correct changes of bend. • Discuss aids for and demonstrate development of leg yields in both directions at walk and jog. • Demonstrate work on centerlines with halts. • Discuss aids for and demonstrate allowing horse to stretch forward and downward on a 20-meter circle at the rising trot. • Discuss aids for lengthening at the jog. • Discuss aids for and demonstrate a simple rein-back of 4-6 steps. • Ride without stirrups at the sitting and working jog, maintaining position. • Discuss arena etiquette and safety in a group (i.e., passing, problems that may arise, and how best to safely pass unfamiliar horses). Demonstrate and discuss passing another horse and rider head-on in an arena. • Discuss performance to include: rider's basic balanced position, use of aids, and whether horse developed free forward movement, balance, rhythm, and connection. • Candidate shows confidence and control with a basic balanced position appropriate to Basic Level. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate all figures and movements found in WDAA Basic Level and Level 1 dressage tests. • Demonstrate work on centerline or quarter line to develop straightness. • Discuss why stretching circles are important and demonstrate a 20-meter stretching circle at the rising jog. • Ride leg yields in walk and jog both directions. • Discuss differences in quality of leg yield left compared to right. • Increase and decrease length of stride at jog and lope. • Ride mount without stirrups at all gaits, maintaining position. • Discuss performance to include: rider's position, use of aids, and whether horse developed free forward movement, balance, rhythm, and connection appropriate for Level 1. • Discuss mount's straightness and bending left and right, and whether a change in stride length was shows in lengthenings. • Candidate rides with confidence and control with a secure balanced position and progresses towards more independent aids, initiating free forward movement with balance, rhythm, and a steady connection appropriate to Level 1. |
| Dressage Test | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring a hand-drawn diagram of the current WDAA Basic Level Test 3 to show the layout of the arena, letters, geometry, and placement of figures. • Discuss your goals for the test ride and preparation for movements and figures. • Perform WDAA Basic Level Test 3 (readers allowed). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring a hand-drawn diagram of the current WDAA Level 1 Tests to show the layout of the arena, letters, geometry, and placement of figures. • Discuss your goals for the test ride and preparation for movements referencing the Training Wheel. • Perform WDAA Level 1 Test 1. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss test performance relative to the purpose of the test. • Discuss mount's free forward movement, balance, rhythm, and quality of bend through the corners and figures. • Discuss whether the rider showed progress towards establishing a steady connection from the leg and seat to the reins. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss performance to include rider's position, mount's free forward movement, balance, bend, and clear rhythm at all gaits while developing suppleness, elasticity and steady connection. • Discuss whether the rider showed progress in establishing lightness and thoroughness while staying in harmony. |
| Riding in the Open | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ride with confidence and control over varied terrain at the walk and working jog, and lope. (Rider's option to ride alone or in a group.) • Discuss performance to include differences in mount's behavior in the open vs. the arena and benefits of riding in the open. • Discuss ways to control a mount in the open. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ride with confidence and control over varied terrain at the walk, working jog, and working lope. (Rider's option to ride alone or in a group.) • Discuss performance, including thoughts on any disobedience. • Choose one exercise from the following examples or one of your own when riding in the open that would benefit your horse and discuss its effectiveness. Discuss other possible exercises that might benefit your horse. (Lengthening up hills, transitions down a hill, riding forward to energize a lazy horse, walking in a group to settle a nervous horse, serpentines around trees, etc.). |



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