

ACE Stallion

Assessment and Licensing Information Booklet 2026



Keystone Bechstein. Champion Preliminary Licensed Stallion 2024



ACE is excited to announce that as the quality of foals, stallions, and mares presented for classification continues to evolve and improve, we believe adjusting our scoring criteria to better reflect the higher standards that breeders produce is beneficial.

We are confident that recalibrating our scoring percentages will foster a more equitable evaluation of assessments and motivate everyone involved to strive for the highest quality and performance.

The new Award Scoring is as follows with a new addition:

PREMIUM: 78% - 82.99%

ELITE: 83% - 87.99%

DIAMOND: 88% upwards

We look forward to assessing the high quality of foals, stallions and mares in the future.

“ACE Breeders now and in the past, we thank you for your commitment to maintaining our organization's reputation for excellence”.

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All stallion owners and handlers are to adhere to the Equestrian Australia (EA) Stallion Safe Practice Guide. Please read the [Equestrian Australia Safe Stallion Practices and Guidelines](#)

***IMPORTANT:**

At any time before or during the Stallion Assessment, should a Stallion show any behaviour issues or aggression, the Assessment will immediately stop, and the Stallion will be withdrawn from the Assessment.

Ensure you read and understand the requirements

Vet Check and X-Rays (X-Rays are optional for 2025 & 2026 Classifications).



Prior to the assessment have a Vet Check and X-rays performed on the Stallion. Allow enough time for the X-Rays to be examined and given all clear by the ACE selected Veterinary Surgeon.

For each stallion presented, the following information must be provided:

- passport or copy of registration, which includes pedigree
- DNA results if available

Assessment for Preliminary License



Every stallion grading will contain the following elements:

Section 1 Walk, trot and stand up on hard ground to assess conformation, correctness, and soundness.

Section 2 Loose presentation in trot and canter.

Section 3 (Optional) Loose presentation in free jumping.

Loose jumping is carried out in a jumping lane with the jumps being raised according to age and Specialist category (See Page 8).

3 Jumps in a lane.

~ Minimum age for Preliminary Licensing is 30 months.

Assessment for Full License



Section 1 Walk, trot and stand up on hard ground to assess conformation, correctness, and soundness.

Section 2 Loose presentation in trot and canter.

Section 3 Loose presentation in free jumping.

Loose jumping is carried out in a jumping lane with the jumps being raised according to age and Specialist category (See Page 8).

3 Jumps in a lane.

Section 4 Presentation under saddle.

~ Ridden dressage presentation to be judged according to age and Specialist category (See Page 9).

~ Minimum age for Full License is 36 months.

NB: Stallions having previously passed Sections 1 and 2 need not repeat those 2 sections for Full Licence.

Assessment Awards

The aim of the ACE Stallion Classification is to raise the standard for Stallions using a unique STAR system in Australia and by recognising talent from an early age.



The aim is also to encourage people to only breed sound, easy-to-handle and ride horses.

The current Assessment Award system has been raised and includes a third tier called “Diamond” Award

Increases are warranted due to the improvement in Australian breeding and the quality of horses that we are now seeing, which is also evident during assessments and at competitions.

Stallions are required to attain a minimum of “Premium Award” or 78% and becomes a 1 Star Stallion.

78.0% - 82.9%	= Premium	= 1 Star stallion
83.0% - 87.9%	= Elite	= 2 Star stallion
88.0% and over	= Diamond	= 3 Star stallion

Depending on the score, each stallion will be given a STAR rating. Eventually the title of “Licensed” will be replaced by the Star Rating.

Stallion Licensing Requirements

- ✓ Horse must be registered with DNA analysis confirming parentage
 - ✓ If parentage cannot be verified, the stallion may still qualify for Stallion Studbook 3 (conditions apply)
 - ✓ For Preliminary Licence: Minimum age 30 months at assessment
 - ✓ For Full Licence: Minimum age 36 months at assessment
- ❖ As of 1st August 2024, Veterinary examination is required as part of the selection process to identify any hereditary illnesses and malformations in body structure. A list will be provided with the information booklet.

“The stallion will be considered to be licensed if he has been awarded an overall mark of at least 78% but he must not score lower than 5 in any individual criteria.”

Optional for 2026 Classification:

X-rays may be submitted (must be less than 3 months old). Required x-ray list included with this booklet. X-rays will become mandatory in 2027.

Studbook Classification Requirements

Stallion Studbook 1 - Fully Licensed:

Must have 4 generations of complete proven pedigree by DNA analysis

Stallion Studbook 2 - Preliminary Licensed (Option 1):

Must have 4 generations of complete proven pedigree by DNA analysis to advance to Stallion Studbook 1

Stallion Studbook 2 - Preliminary Licensed (Option 2):

No requirement for 4 generations of complete proven pedigree to be accepted into Stallion Studbook 3 (Conditions apply)

Stallion Studbook 3 - The presented stallion must be ACE Registered or ACE Recognised with a certificate of pedigree but needs not prove four (4) complete generations of performance-oriented breeding.

Stallions that do not meet the requirements for Studbooks 2 or 1 will remain in Studbook 3.

Key Distinctions in Stallion Classification

Regular Stallion	Licensed Stud Stallion
• Basic male horse classification • No special breeding privileges • Not officially tested or licensed	• Officially approved by ACE Group Inc. • Completed stallion performance test • Authorised to cover mares • Meets strict breeding criteria

Importance in Sport Horse Breeding

Sport horse breeding focuses on continuous population improvement and enhanced sporting qualities. The stringent selection of breeding stallions is crucial because:

1. A single stallion can sire numerous offspring
2. Stallions have greater influence on the breeding population
3. Higher standards and more criteria apply during licensing

“Stallion – Male horse over three years old which has not been castrated, also known as ‘entire.’”

The licensing process ensures only the highest quality stallions contribute to the breeding program, maintaining and improving the breed standard



Fourinertel Celestial. Champion ACF Fully Licensed Stallion 2024

Option for Jumping Stallions



For the Jumping specialist, there will be more emphasis on canter and free jumping scores and less on the trot and walk scores.

Free jumping with three jumps - both technique and ability (scope).

Full License option: Jumping: Be placed in the top three (3) in at least 1.45m to 1.50m courses for a total of five (5) times at EA Australia recognised events

At Licensing, the Stallion will be given a title of “Specialised Jumping Horse, Licensed “J”.

Option for “DUO” Stallions

Those which can perform both the jumping phase, and the dressage phase will be given a title of “Licensed “G”

Option for Dressage Stallions



For those selecting “Dressage” only, the free jumping **must still** be performed but the Jumping component is reduced to 5% of the overall score.

Older proven Dressage stallions can be exempt from free jumping if they can show good Dressage performances under saddle.

i.e. Receive scores of at least 68% five (5) times under various judges in tests at the advanced level or higher at EA Australia recognised events. These Stallions will be given the title of “Specialised Dressage Horse” Licensed “D”.

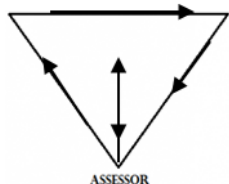


Specialised Dressage horses under 5 years old must still jump but emphasis is placed more on the willingness to work and the paces.

Procedure:

The stallions are led individually by hand to the assessor, where they stand briefly for Conformation assessment and the correctness of the legs is judged.

They are then led away where the judge assesses the correctness of the conformation, the breed and sex type as well as the quality of the walk. A correct stride is characterized by a clear four-beat rhythm, the horse should walk relaxed, contentedly, and diligently always. If all this is the case, the front and hind legs form a V for a moment.



The trot in hand is then undertaken in a triangular workout, where it is examined from different perspectives. A correct trot is characterized by an even two-beat rhythm in which the diagonal pairs of legs should move off parallel. This results in a short

suspension phase. A high-quality trot is characterized by the impulsion from the hindquarters, the swinging back as well as diligence, scope, and suppleness.

For the next test, the licensing candidates go into an arena (if not already) - here they continue with free running and free jumping. The canter is assessed here. A correct canter is characterized by an even three-beat rhythm and a clear suspension phase. The canter jumps should be jumped "uphill", with impulsion from the hindquarters and with scope.

After free-running, the stallions are carefully introduced to the free-jumping line where the obstacles are steadily raised after the initial warmup. In terms of equipment, it is permitted to attach white gaiters to the front legs. During free jumping, the stallions are judged on their ability and manner.

"Free jumping is a particularly effective way of testing the potential of a show jumper and therefore plays a significant role in forming a judgment. The focus here is particularly on the reflexes that the horse shows at the jump, the jumping technique, and the stallion's ability to learn - if a pole is touched in one round, more attention is paid in the next round to whether the stallion has learned from his mistake or whether he will make the same mistake again".

Warmblood Fragile Foal Syndrome

In Australia, it is not mandatory to test stallions for WFFS *but is highly recommended*. WFFS stands for Warmblood Fragile Foal Syndrome, which causes a disease of the connective tissue in warmbloods and thoroughbreds. These foals are unviable, and most WFFS pregnancies end in abortion. The inheritance of the gene mutation is autosomal recessive, so a positive WFFS result for a stallion **does not** mean that he will not be licensed, as horses with Warmblood Fragile Foal Syndrome can be bred to non-carriers without any problems and clinically healthy foals are born.

However, mating a mare with a stallion that carries the genetic defect should be avoided, as the gene mutation that causes it is passed on to the foal 50 percent at a time - so there is a 25 percent chance that the foal will be affected by WFFS and therefore not viable.

Health Defects

Which health defects exclude a stallion from licensing?

In addition, a **veterinary examination** is carried out as part of the selection process to identify any hereditary illnesses and malformations in the body structure.

This veterinary examination excludes stallion candidates before licensing that would be unsuitable for breeding for certain reasons. One reason for rejection at the preliminary examination may be, for example, changes to the stallion's scrotum. Ideally, the stallion's testicles should be the size of a goose egg. Testicles which are only the size of chicken eggs are classified as questionable (**macroorchidism**).

Before licensing, ridden stallions have the option of undergoing a laboratory test to verify the quality of their semen under the regulations for riding horses.

In the case of **cryptorchidism**, for example, one or both testicles of the stallion are not present in the scrotum and are therefore neither palpable nor perceptible. Such a stallion is then referred to as a lump stallion.

Cryptorchidism is a developmental disorder in which the testicles do not descend into the scrotum as they normally would, but instead get stuck in the groin area or abdominal cavity, starting near the kidneys.

As cryptorchidism is hereditary, it permanently excludes the stallion from licensing.

X-Rays (Optional for classification 2025 and 2026 after which it becomes mandatory).



In addition, x-rays can be produced, which must not be older than 3 months at the time of delivery to the licensing event. Of particular interest here are the toes, the fetlock joints, the hocks, and the knee joints. There are precise specifications for the x-rays as to which joints are to be x-rayed. These are set out in guidelines for veterinarians.

X-ray examination reveals, among other things, hereditary diseases such as osteochondrosis dissecans, or OCD for short. In this case, insufficient ossification of cartilage during skeletal growth leads to splintering in the joint (these are called chips). Chips can affect the function of the joint and therefore have a lasting effect on the horse's performance. However, it should be added that not every chip necessarily represents an impairment of the horse.

A hereditary component is strongly suspected in OCD. The breeding associations deal with the occurrence of OCD findings in the joints in a uniform manner. Up to three chips are permitted for admission to licensing, but these must not be located on both sides of the hocks; an OCD finding or a notch in the stifle joint also definitively excludes the stallion from licensing.



Stallions with spavin findings (arthritis of the hocks) and with cystoid defects are also not permitted.

A stallion is also not fit to be licensed if there are neurological findings such as obvious ataxic disorders or shivering. Shivering is a neuromuscular disorder characterized by muscle spasms that lead to cramps in the horse's hindquarters. In the case of ataxia, the horse's movement is disturbed and there is a lack of coordination.

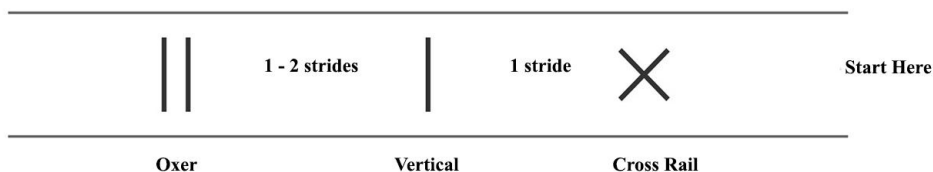
First-line X-rays for Ataxia in Horses.

1. **Lateral cervical spine (from poll to withers).**
 - a. **C1 - C7 in overlapping sections.**
 - b. **This is the standard starting point, as cervical vertebral malformations or arthritis are the most common structural causes of ataxia.**
2. **Additional angled lateral cervical views**
 - a. **Especially at C5 – C7, where overlap often hides lesions.**
 - b. **Helps assess “wobblers” (cervical vertebral compressive myelopathy).**
3. **Oblique cervical views (if available, but usually second line)**
 - a. **For better detail of articular facet joints if arthritis or enlargement is suspected.**

Jumping Assessment Guidelines

Free Jumping Layout:

- Cross Rail
- One stride to Vertical
- One or two strides to Oxer (depending on available space and equipment)



Assessment Points:

- Approach and willingness to enter the jumping lane
- Rhythm and regularity of canter
- Natural balance through the exercise
- Take-off technique
- Form over the jumps (basculé)
- Landing and recovery
- Consistency through the jumping line

It would be most beneficial for the horse if it could be schooled several times prior to the assessment through a free-jumping lane to ensure optimal points once it is assessed.

Ridden Jumping Assessment over a Show jump Course:

Note that helpers will be required to raise the jumps as requested and pick up knocked rails

- Evaluation over Vertical jump
- Evaluation over Oxer
- Rider's position and influence
- Horse's response to aids

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