

Exceptional circumstances - where the committee may consider downgrading

- Young rider/junior rider who has not competed official above Prel level, purchases an aged but sound school master graded FEI.
- Rider with a disability purchases a school master.
- A junior/young rider with limited experience or very new to dressage, purchases a trained pony to compete officially.
- A rider (young or old) with limited experience or very new to dressage, purchases a graded school master.

Those considering the purchase/lease/loan of a horse or pony for dressage competition need to check the current official grading of the horse or pony with the State Equestrian office BEFORE finalising the purchase or lease. Vendors do not have the authority to advise prospective purchasers that the horse or pony will be eligible for downgrading.

Buying, leasing or borrowing a horse or pony that is graded at a higher level than the rider's current ability is not in itself a reason for downgrading; nor is bringing a semi-retired horse/pony back to competition that has soundness issues. Under the FEI and EA rules the welfare of the horse is paramount.

Most riders wanting to improve their skills and knowledge of dressage will look for a mount that has more experience at that level than the rider. Dressage NSW strongly encourages riders to take advantage of the opportunity allowed under the national rules to ride non-competitively at any level.

Riders who compete non-competitively still have their score published, receive their test papers from the judge and can see how their performance compared to the other results in the class.

Downgrading will only be considered in circumstances where the committee believes that the health and welfare of the horse/pony is not compromised and that the rider does not have the potential to reach the current grading level within 2 years of competition.

An Assessment from an independent EA/NCAS Instructor is required with all applications.

Extract from the current rule book (as at Nov 2010) relating to downgrading on next page.

EA Rule 1.16: Applications for downgrading must be made in writing together with supporting documents to the State Dressage Authority (SDA) of the State where the horse is registered, domiciled or to be transferred to. The decision to downgrade a horse is entirely at the discretion of the SDA. Each request will be considered on its merit.

Down-grading

- will only apply to those graded at least Elementary level
- applies to the individual horse/rider combination. The horse cannot compete at the downgraded level with a more experienced rider. If the horse is sold on, the downgrading may be reviewed.
- will be effective as from the date of issue of the new downgraded performance card.
- may occur only once in the duration of a rider's partnership with the horse/pony
- may occur more than once in a horse/pony's lifetime but not more than once in a two-year period
- if approved, a horse/pony will be down-graded a maximum of three levels e.g.:
Advanced to Novice
- if graded FEI, may only be down-graded to half-way through Medium
- half the points of the new level will be allocated. E.g. Medium horse/pony downgraded to Elementary will be allocated 90 points
- If the horse is ridden by someone other than the rider for whom the downgrading is requested, it must compete at its previous level and any grading points earned will be awarded in relation to that previous level.

1.19 Hors Concours (HC) also referred to as non-competitive

- horses/ponies may compete HC at any level below their grade and at only one level above their grade