

2026 Foundation Academies Application Document



The aim of the Foundation Academy programme is to develop the training and education of BD Youth riders along a defined pathway towards the National Academy and Podium Potential Pathway programmes. Foundation Academies will comprise of two 2-day camps running at several locations across the UK. In order to accept a place as a Foundation Academy Athlete, riders **must be able to** commit to attending both camp dates at the location to which they have been assigned.

Riders should indicate their 1st & 2nd choice of Academy locations. Applicants who are successful will be assigned to their first choice where possible, where capacity means that it is not possible to offer an applicant's first choice, offers will be made based on distance from applicant's home addresses.

Locations & Dates

Venue	Camp 1	Camp 2
Unicorn Equestrian Centre, Gloucestershire, GL54 1JZ.	10-11 October 2026	14-15 November 2026
National Training Centre, Hothorpe, LE17 6QX.	24-25 October 2026	28-29 November 2026

Foundation Academy Criteria

- Applicants must have attended 3 regional training sessions between 31 July 2025 – 1 August 2026. One training session may have been completed online or unmounted, any residential camps will be counted as two sessions.
- Applicants must be in C, C+, B, B+ or A Squad having completed a Formal Squad Assessment between 1 December 2025 and 1 August 2026. Formal Assessments can be completed either online or in-person.
- Applicants in C or C+ Squad must be under the age of 14, (to the end of the year of their 14th birthday) and meet all other outlined criteria to be considered eligible to apply.
- Applicants must have completed the online modules of the British Dressage Preliminary Horse Care Certificate or hold equivalent qualifications which grant direct entry to the Novice Certificate.
- Minimum performance requirement for competition results at BD affiliated shows is three scores of 66% at Elementary level or above within the previous 12 months. Applications are encouraged from riders who have competed above this level. All applicants should send in their best three competition results at the level at which they regularly compete. These results should be with the horse/pony on which they wish to participate.
- British Dressage reserves the right to prioritise applications from riders demonstrating consistent competition performance and results indicating an upwards trajectory. Achievement of the minimum performance standards does not guarantee selection. Competition records other than the three submitted scores may be considered in the selection procedure.
- Applications will be considered from riders on young horses (aged 7 years or below) who demonstrate the potential to achieve at least the minimum performance criteria and are achieving consistent scores of a minimum of 66% at the level appropriate for the horse's age and development stage.
- Applicants to submit their best three affiliated competition results gained between 31 July 2025 – 1 August 2026.
- Results should be from a minimum of two different venues and two different judges.

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- Combinations will be selected by a panel of independent members of the BD Youth Technical Committee, references may be requested from Development Officers/Regional Youth Representatives in the process of selecting Foundation Academy Athletes.
- Riders who have previously been selected for the Foundation Academy may reapply for following years (consecutive or non-consecutive). There is no limit to the number of applications a rider may submit, regardless of whether the rider is selected.
- Successful applicants will be contacted before the end of the week commencing 21 August 2026 by email from British Dressage Head Office.

Terms and Conditions

- Full payment of £300 per 2-day camp (£600 per Foundation Academy) will be due 28 days prior to the start date of each camp. (This amount is inclusive of costs for training, stabling and rider catering).
- Cancellations received no less than 14 days prior to a Camp will be refunded minus a 10% admin fee.
- Cancellations made less than 14 days prior to a camp are non-refundable/transferable unless the place can be filled, in which case a full refund (less a 10% admin fee) may be given.
- Amendments to bookings in the 7 days prior to the event are non-refundable and changes are subject to the organisers' discretion.
- Riders who are accepted onto the programme and subsequently change horses between the point of application and the first camp, for reasons such as injury, change in FEI age category or outgrown pony, may be permitted to attend the camps with the alternative horse following assessment of individual circumstances. Combination changes will be subject to the alternative horse demonstrating an ability to achieve the minimum performance criteria. Decisions will be at the discretion of the BD Youth Technical Committee and priority will be given to combinations already achieving minimum performance criteria.

Further Information

- Foundation Academies are partially funded for all athletes and the remaining fee paid by the athlete includes stabling for two nights, one bale of bedding, catering for the athlete and all mounted and unmounted training sessions for the duration of each camp. Additional payment will be required for any required hook-up, additional bedding, and catering for any accompanying parties.
- Venue facilities may vary and therefore any bedding, hook-up and stabling offered may differ depending on the venue.
- Academy clothing will be available to purchase prior to the camps. It is not compulsory for athletes to purchase clothing to wear at the camps and smart training clothing is acceptable for coaching sessions.
- Athletes are expected to attend and participate in all timetabled activities, non-attendance may affect selection to National Academy. In case of injury, alternative training sessions may be offered at the organiser's discretion.
- Foundation Academy athletes assessed at B Squad and above before 1 August 2026 who have completed all training sessions will be automatically eligible for National Academy selection following the completion of all camps. Selection will be based on overall performance, trainability, commitment, and the development throughout the duration of the Foundation Academy.
- Riders in C or C+ Squad at 1 August 2026 will not be eligible for National Academy selection.

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- Athletes may complete any number of cycles of the BD Youth Academy (Foundation/National Academy). These do not have to be consecutive, and athletes will be required to meet the relevant criteria and re-apply each year. This is not affected by National Academy selection.

Please complete and return the application form to hannah.james@britishdressage.co.uk (Development Pathways Supervisor) before midnight on Saturday 1 August 2026. There is no guarantee that late applications will be considered.

Postal applications can be sent to the below address

FAO: Development Pathways Supervisor

British Dressage, Meriden Business Park, Copse Drive, Meriden, West Midlands CV5 9RG.

Athlete Information:

Please ensure that all contact details are correct, and information supplied is accurate at date of application. Updates may be made to applications following their submission, up to the close of applications on 1 August 2026.

Athletes under the age of 18 require parent/guardian permission to apply.

Rider Name:				Membership Number:	
Rider Age: (at point of application)		Squad:		Competition Level:	
Horse Name:					
Horse Age: (at point of application)		Horse Height:		Horse Sex:	
Region:		Telephone: (parent if under 18)			
Email: (parent email if under 18)					
Address:					

Results:

Please list your best three affiliated competition scores achieved between 31 July 2025 – 1 August 2026. These must be listed on your BD rider records. Please refer to the criteria for more information about competition results and selection.

	Result 1	Result 2	Result 3
Score:			
Test:			

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Date:			
Judge:			
Venue:			

Please identify below the level at which you and your horse are currently training:

Level of Training:	
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Please detail below your 2026 Formal Squad Assessment date, venue and assessor.

Date:		Venue:		Assessor:	
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Coach Reference

Please identify your regular coach and ask them to complete the box below with a short reference. Alternatively, this can be completed on a separate document, please make sure to attach the signed reference with your application.

Coach Name:	
Coach Qualification(s):	
Reference: May include (but is not limited to), <i>How long/often have you been coaching the applicant? How well developed is the rider's position and seat? How effective is the rider and their influence on the way of going? What is the rider's level of knowledge and understanding of training? At what level are the combination confidently training? Any other comments on the rider and/or their training.</i>	
Signature:	

FIRST YEAR APPLICANTS ONLY

Please detail below why you think you should be accepted onto the Foundation Academy and what you hope to gain from the programme.

<p>'Why I would like to be accepted onto the Foundation Academy' – briefly detail in no more than 100 words</p>
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SECOND YEAR APPLICANTS ONLY

If you attended the Foundation Academy once between 2023 - 2025, please give detail below about your progression toward a minimum of one of your goals. If possible, please provide evidence for this, any format is acceptable and might include (but is not limited to) a score sheet, video, photograph or written reference. Please attach any evidence to your application.

Year Attended:	
Goal(s):	
Detail about how you have been working toward/achieved your goal(s):	

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THIRD YEAR OR MORE APPLICANTS ONLY

To support your third or more-year application, you will be invited to attend a short discussion about your own development and goals. This will take place via video call and will be an informal discussion about your experience of the Academy so far.

Ahead of the discussion, consider what you would like to achieve in your third or further year, your goals for the future, and why you think you should be selected for the Foundation Academy.

A member of the BD Youth team will be in touch to organise a suitable time for the discussion, if there are any day/time preferences, please indicate this below.

What year did you first attend a Foundation Academy?	
When did you attend your second year on the Foundation Academy?	
Please detail any day or time preferences below (i.e., weekdays after 6pm, any time Monday etc.)	

2026 Academy Preference:

Please clearly indicate in the box below your preferred camp location – please note that you may not be allocated your first preference and where the number of successful applicants exceeds capacity, priority will be allocated based on travel distance.

Venue	Camp 1 Dates	Camp 2 Dates	Preference
			1 st

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Declaration

I understand that by completing this form I commit to attending both Foundation Academy camps and making total payment of £560 for two camps, and agree to the Terms and Conditions.

Signed:

Date:

Parent / Guardian Signature (for under 18's):

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Date: