

British Dressage U21 Pathway Review

Frequently asked questions



Following a review and stakeholder consultation into the development pathways available to youth riders, from grassroots up to FEI championship team selection, we have published a [summary report](#). This selection of frequently asked questions is to help with any queries you may have as a result of the report and new pathway.

Why was the review undertaken into the Under 21 development pathways?

As part of BD's ongoing activities, we're always looking to review and improve what we do, to ensure that we provide the best possible service for our members and utilise our resources as effectively as we can.

The Under 21 competition pathway and BD Academy programme have been developed independently and it was felt that a review was required to make the system more inclusive, transparent and simpler to understand for all stakeholders, as well as help to streamline our activities and avoid duplication of effort.

As part of the consultation process, participants were asked what they considered to be the strengths and areas for development across the pathways. The themes that emerged from this were developed into a range of proposals that were put forward as recommendations to the BD Board – and we are now implementing these agreed actions ahead of the next season.

We also cannot hide from the fact that the coronavirus pandemic has, and will continue to have, a significant impact on the equine sector generally and BD is no exception. As a business we have a responsibility to ensure that any investment in this area is allocated in a way that will produce optimum results and ensure the most efficient use of resources.

However, the overriding objective of the review is to provide our riders with the best chance to compete successfully at the highest level internationally, fulfil their potential and produce medal-winning results.

Who was involved in the consultation process?

As part of the review, we consulted with a range of stakeholders that are currently part of the pathway or have been involved previously. These include:

- BD Board of Directors
- BD Senior Managers and staff
- BEF World Class staff
- Riders and Parents
- Chefs d'Equipe
- Selectors
- Trainers / Coaches

What are the main changes?

The key objective is to clarify the selection process for riders looking to be part of our Academy programmes, those who want to compete at CDIs and in turn be eligible for selection to represent Great Britain at the FEI European Championships. We are trying to ensure that the Academy structure and U21 international pathway are seen as seamless and being part of the same system. This means we have a [new development pathway](#) which supports our riders at whatever age or level they are currently and helps them to achieve their future aspirations.

Key to this will be to encourage riders to enrol onto the Foundation Academy programme, where they will receive high quality support and content with expert input. This will also include the chance to test ride in front of at least two FEI / List 1 judges, at relevant FEI level, to try and achieve the scores required to attend CDIs and put themselves forwards for selection to the U21 European Championship longlist.

In parallel with this, our existing international riders will be able to go out and compete as normal, with selection for the longlist taking place after the CDI at Keysoe in March each year. However, any international rider is welcome, and indeed encouraged, to apply and become part of the Foundation Academy programme.

We have also revisited the timeline around the delivery of these programmes and will provide further details around selection policies, training activity, dates and venues as early as we can.

Will it be more difficult to be selected for a CDI and FEI championship teams in 2021?

The percentage required for selection for CDIs and FEI championship teams will be based on the evaluation and analysis currently being undertaken. This means that our policy is data driven and can be benchmarked against recent international results. We will set the required percentage for selection to ensure that we can send competitive combinations to internationals and championships teams that will have a realistic chance of podium success. The international arena is becoming increasingly competitive, so to make sure we are making best use of our resources, it is important that we are able to send teams that will genuinely be in contention, with the ability to win medals.

I'm a regular international competitor, what does it mean to me for 2021?

If you're already achieving the required scores to compete International competition, this will not affect you providing you maintain the minimum selection percentage required to continue. If you're ready to upgrade into a new age category or have a new horse, you'll be required to achieve international qualifying scores. These can be achieved at Premier League and High-Profile Shows and/or through test riding as part of the Foundation Academy.

I want to do my first international competition in 2021, how do I start under the new pathway?

You'll need to go through the squadding process at regional level, which includes attending three regional training sessions, and completed your corresponding BD Horse Care course. Those squadded at B Squad or above can be put forward and considered for selection for CDIs once they have a qualifying score (currently 67.5% but this is under review). The Selectors will be looking for scores achieved at this level at Premier League and High Profile shows, or through test riding as part of the Foundation Academy.

What is the process for selection to the European Championships in 2021?

Riders who wish to be considered should enrol onto the Foundation Academy in the preceding year. Therefore those aiming for 2021 should apply for this autumn's intake, but please note that applications close on 19 August 2020. Otherwise under 21 riders continue to compete as normal, aiming for Premier League and High Profile shows to achieve scores for CDI selection. Riders should target Keysoe CDI in March as a final benchmark from which Selectors will select the longlist for that year's U21 FEI European Championships.

The riders on this list will be invited to a series of training camps between April and June. These camps will focus on supporting performance and targeting individual areas for improvement for all involved, specifically with the European Championships in mind.

Final selection for the FEI European Championships will take place in July, taking into account competitive performances and results during the preceding months, with a final camp prior to the Championships.

When will the 2021 selection policies be available?

A review of our selection policies is currently underway and the aim is to have these circulated for further consultation by the end of August, so they can be published in September. This is earlier than previous years as we are trying to provide riders with as much information as possible, to help riders plan and prepare their season well in advance.

The production of selection policies is dependent on a number of external factors, including confirmation of the international competition calendar, so even if we are unable to produce a complete policy at this stage, we will still provide indicative criteria as a minimum.

I've not heard of the Academy programme, how do I find more information?

More information about the BD Youth Academy programme, including selection criteria, camp dates and locations [can be found online](#). Alternatively, please contact your local RDO or the BD Youth Development Officer for more information. If you have international ambitions for next year, you'll need to apply for this autumn's intake – the deadline for applications is on 19 August 2020.

What is the difference between the Foundation and National Academies?

The BD Youth Foundation Academies are a camp-based development programme for young riders, focusing on the foundations for successful athletic performance. Selection for the Foundation Academy is based on applications, rider performance and engagement with BD Youth.

Riders can only access the National Academy through the Foundation camps and are selected on their dedication to the process, the level of improvement shown, as well as riding knowledge and ability. National Academy athletes receive further fully-funded training camps, support from elite industry professionals and development opportunities throughout the remaining academic year.

I want to apply for the Foundation Academy – what are the age and squad criteria?

Anyone over the age of six can come forwards for regional squadding. To be fully squadded you will also need to complete the relevant [BD Youth Horse Care](#) certificates. To be considered for the Foundation Academy, you'll need to be in the B, B+ or A squad. You'll also need to attend three regional training days and have a minimum of three scores at 66% plus at Elementary level or above.

A championship for under 21 riders was mentioned in the BD Coronavirus Operational Plan – are there any details available yet?

Due to the lack of International competition in 2020 for U21 riders, we felt it was important to recognise the achievements of those riders by hosting an Under 21 National Championship later in the year, if at all possible. We also want to acknowledge some riders are in their last year of their age category and won't have the opportunity to represent GB at that level again. Work remains ongoing at the present time and we hope to confirm the dates, venue and criteria in due course.

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