

What jumping level should I enter?

Guidelines for jumping levels at Dural Pony Club Closed Show jumping

In addition to the normal pony club grading system for jumping, Dural Pony Club also offers additional divisions so that every rider can participate at our closed competitions. All divisions are open to riders of any age. It is the skill of the horse/rider combination that determines the division you enter. *See the PCA website for all jumping rules* http://www.pcansw.org.au/default.asp?MenuID=Publications/13578/0/PCA_Handbook/20048/0/.

Graded

This is relatively straight forward if you and the horse you wish to enter have been graded A to E grade at pony club. The senior instructor must assess you and your mount over a course of jumps. This is the grade you may compete in at any competition with pony club rules.

If you want to go up a grade you must be reassessed by the senior instructor and show performance at the current grade. Showjumping grading cards are used to keep a record of your performance and must be taken to all PC competitions and be endorsed by judges when placings are gained. These cards are essential if you wish to compete at PCA state level. Upgrading must be done at a grading (rally) day before entries close for the competition.

The minimum requirement to be graded is E grade level. This is a course ranging from jumps 45cm high up to jumps of 60cm high, spreads of 50 – 75cm, riding at a speed of 300 to 325 metres per minute, which is a consistent canter pace. Riders also need to be able to remember a course of up to 20 jumps under the pressure of competition. Remember, jumping the prescribed jump height is only a part of the skill required. The speed and control at which the course is ridden is equally important to complete a course successfully.

You must be graded to compete at any zone pony club jumping event or in pony club jumping competitions at agricultural shows etc.

If you think the horse or rider's performance level has decreased and you no longer think you can compete at your grade, you need to speak to the senior instructor giving the circumstances that have led to this. Do this well in advance of the competition, not on the day. For zone competitions and above, you must be formally downgraded, meaning it has to be approved by the ZCI.

For those who aren't graded we have two divisions – ungraded and beginners.

As with all jumping divisions at pony club, these are based on skill levels not age.

Ungraded

This is for riders who are competent at riding on the flat at trot and canter in full control of their mounts, however the horse or rider will lack the ability to jump the heights or travel the speed required at E grade level.

Riders must be able to jump a height of 30cm with spreads up to about 40 cm and ride at a speed of 250-275 metres per minutes (trot and canter pace throughout the course). All other rules of graded competition apply, with the same jumping and time penalties used as for E & D grade. Riders must be able to complete the course independently with no assistance from outsiders while on the course.

Examples of ungraded combinations are: riders who have come out of beginners but not yet ready to be graded, green horses without jumping experience with a rider who has been previously graded, horses that just won't jump the heights required at E grade level, horse/riders not confident to jump at E grade because the combination has not had the time/experience to gel or combinations who have suffered a set back with their jumping.

Beginners

This is for riders who are usually just starting out, who have not jumped before or who lack the confidence and control to jump at ungraded level.

If the child is on a lead rein they are in the "led" division and if they are not, they are in "unled". Outside assistance is permitted at beginners level only - a parent may be in the ring for unled riders also.

The rules for beginners are very relaxed – All jumps are low enough that they can be stepped over at a walk, many are poles on the ground or poles on low wooden blocks. Riders can take their time, they are not riding against the clock so they can walk around the course or trot when they feel comfortable. The purpose is that every child will get through the course and develop confidence while practicing the basics of jumping e.g. jumping seat, a flowing line through the course, keeping a straight line at approach, "takeoff" and departure, etc. The rider's aim should be to keep the pony travelling at a consistent, controlled trot throughout the course with no run outs.

Because of the height and nature of the jumps and the different timing rules, judging may be based on the riders' skill, as in a jumping equitation competition, rather than jumping and time penalties.