

DENMARK (August 2015)

Introduction

The Accreditation Committee reserves the right to issue provisional accreditation for one year due to a lack of clarity regarding the conduct of the examination of farriers in 2014. It was agreed that at the next farriers' examination, a member of the Accreditation Committee would visit Denmark again to check the points that were criticised regarding the 2015 examination, in order to achieve a further four years accreditation for Denmark.

The Danish farriers' association agreed to this request and invited a member of the Accreditation Committee to the 2015 examination.

Siegfried Dauner, Head of Vocational Training (Metalwork) from the Swiss Metal Union, attended on behalf of the Accreditation Committee.

The individuals responsible for the conduct of the examination, Mogens T. Christophersen, Head of School, and Tobias Villsen, Senior Blacksmith, made all the required examination documents available.

Points a to f of the report from 2014 were studied after attending the examination with the Head of School, Mogens T. Christophersen, and Siegfried Dauner's comments on these were handed over.

By comparison with the previous year, the atmosphere at the workplace was basically very quiet and concentrated. The workshop was very clean and tidy and appropriate for an examination.

The forge had a sign saying 'Examination' to prevent access by unauthorised persons. The only people there were those who were authorised and directly involved with the examination.

The animals to be shod were in good condition and showed no signs of stress.

One can assume that the examination was conducted satisfactorily and correctly.

Recommendations of the 2014 Accreditation Committee with comments

- a) Safety equipment should be worn by candidates while working in the forge.

Comment:

Work clothes, sturdy footwear and shoeing protection were worn by the candidates. Protective goggles and ear plugs were provided by the school. The candidates need more explanation and enforcement from those members of the School who are responsible for the examination. Implementation is a perennial responsibility of the course coordinator. It was agreed that the students must work with protective goggles from the first course and get used to it, so that it will be normal for them when they undergo the examination.

- b) There should be notices announcing that there is an exam in progress and a clear programme for the examination period. The examiners should be more focussed on the exam and the forge should present a clean and professional appearance.

Comment:

The forge had a sign on the outside that read "Examination". The timetable and the examination programme were displayed and all those involved were aware of them. The candidates were neatly dressed and focussed on the examination.

- c) The time allowed for the practical is too long. Shorter times should be set for each task.

Comment:

The times were reduced appropriately in order to challenge the students. The time management is different to that in other systems, which is not to say that it is worse or even wrong. The candidates are allocated a total time for their work. Candidates must manage their time themselves. The finished pieces are marked by the invigilator with a special stamp so that they cannot be produced again and again, or even swapped. The total time with the horse is set at 2½ hours, but it should be mentioned that the assessment for trimming and fitting takes about 20 minutes. This leaves a total time of about two hours for the candidates. This is regarded as appropriate.

- d) It is again recommended that there should be training events for training farriers at which the standards expected of apprentices can be explained and demonstrated, and advice can be given on the training expected in the workplace.

Comment:

This point has been addressed as follows: the candidates are given their tasks and have 30 minutes to study these and ask specific questions. There is silence during the examination, also on the part of the candidates. The experts ensure that the individual work is carried out. If there are problems with the horse, the candidate may consult the experts at any time, but not his course instructor.

- e) The marking of the practical shoeing task was too generous and not of the standard required by the EFFA. It was felt that only the examiners and not the tutor should be involved in the marking process. Marking sheets should be used for the practical task and each examiner should allocate marks independently rather than in consultation. There should be an annual standard-setting seminar for examiners.

Comment:

Grading at the horse was carried out by two experts. Both graded independently and submitted their results separately. No deviation from the EFFA standards regarding the weighting of the tasks was observed.

The association currently has six independent experts in shoeing. They are invited annually to a meeting by the Secretary, Steffen Mose. The experts also share responsibility for adapting the examination conditions, and after the 2015 examinations are finished they will discuss and adopt the recommendations of the EFFA in a modification of the regulations. (Draft Regulations 2015 have already been submitted and have been seen by Siegfried Dauner).

- f) There should be marking sheets for each task in the practical exam, to be completed independently by each examiner.

Comment:

For grading, there is a document that includes the individual tests with a grading scheme and tables for entry of the grades.

Each expert enters his notes and comments in the document. At the end the expert's documents are collected.

In fact no detailed grades are awarded for the individual tasks, only overall grades. These are summarised for the qualification area and their sum results in the final score.

The grading system corresponds to international university standards.

In summary, the Danish examination system is not a purely mathematical system, but one that requires the experts to discuss the results together. But this cannot be regarded as wrong or outdated. On the contrary, I think this is common practice. But the association of Danish farriers recognised that more discipline and order was required in the workplace during the examination, and has acted accordingly.

Conclusion

I would like to thank those responsible for the examination for their commitment to the welfare of the horses, and recommend that the General Assembly grant unrestricted accreditation to Denmark for four years.