

New Grading Proposals

Frequently Asked Questions



Updated: 10 Nov 2021

Why are these changes being proposed?

These changes are being proposed to make our grading and competition structures more user friendly to give our members greater choice over what competitions they enter.

It is also envisaged this new system will enable clubs to attract new members to the Association whilst increasing participation at our activities with an increase in entries at shows.

What changes are being proposed?

Essentially some of the proposed changes include allowing our members to:

1. Compete at your grade and also the next level up.
2. Compete at a lower in level in a newly classified 'Open' competition

There are some conditions around this which may affect your grading so please review the presentation in full at <https://airc.ie/newgradingproposals/>.

What is an Open class under the new classification and who can enter them?

In an "Open" class, where a show is running them, any grade above the height of the class can jump at any height lower than their graded height, as low as 70cms. A grade equal to the newly classified open class may also enter that class if they wish. For example an RC80 rider may also compete in the RC80 Open class if they wish.

It is envisaged to introduce a restriction only permitting members to compete in two consecutive levels at any show on the same horse.

These competitions will be ideal for those graded higher who may have a young horse that need bringing on or an older horse that needs schooling, for those who may have lost their confidence after a fall, etc.

What class do I compete in if I want to compete up a level?

If you want to compete at a higher level, you can only go up one level from your current grade, and you will compete in the graded class and not the open class.

For example, the rider is graded at RC80 and wants to compete up a level. They may enter the RC90 class where they will compete against other riders graded RC90. They may not, however, enter the RC90 Open class.

What restrictions will be in place if I want to compete up a level?

You can compete up a level in competition as many times as you like but you should note that should you exceed either of these thresholds, then you will no longer be eligible for your grade and must move up a level:

1. Members who compete at one level higher within AIRC competitions can do so at club and inter-club level but must upgrade if placed 5 or more times within the previous 12-month period.
2. Members who compete at one level higher in SJI/DI/EI competitions can do so but must upgrade if they compete 5 or more times within the previous 12-month period. If they compete more than one level higher, they can be compulsory upgraded immediately. This is to ensure members are competing fairly within AIRC competitions.

Will there be any restrictions on the number of times I can compete in an 'Open' class?

No, there will be no restrictions on the number of times you will be permitted to compete in an open class, however, it is envisaged that there will be a restriction only permitting members to compete in two consecutive levels at any show on the same horse.

Who will be responsible for grading members under the new proposals?

The Club Committee in consultation is ultimately responsible for the grading of its members and there is no change to this. The Club Grading Officer advises the committee based on the grading rules while the committee may engage with an instructor to assist with the grading of a member if necessary.

Do the grade names really need to change?

Yes, as the new grade names are more transparent for members so it is clearer for them as to what level they can compete at including in unaffiliated competitions. It also brings us into line with the Olympic disciplines.

Will Grading Officers have to meet the minimum criteria?

Yes, they will. This is necessary to ensure that we have a consistent application of the grading rules in each club to ensure a level playing field for everyone. We have analysed the minimum criteria and as it stands every club can attain the criteria proposed.

Our club is concerned about allowing members to compete at a higher level, why is this being permitted under the new proposals?

The purpose of the changes are to offer our members more choice and flexibility around the competitions they can enter while increasing participation and entries at shows. We are no different to other organisations who currently offer this flexibility, such as ShowJumping Ireland and Dressage Ireland where riders may compete at higher level.

By offering choice and a degree of flexibility, this should help our clubs attract new members.

Will the Young Horse class be discontinued?

No, there are no plans to discontinue the young horse class at National level as long as there is a demand for it. What we did say at the webinar is that all other classifications such as green horse, novice horse, sportsmans, etc will be replaced by the newly classified 'open classes'.

Can I still compete Hor Concours (H/C) if I want?

Yes you can, however if you compete H/C in a class you must remain H/C in any other class that you enter. We would anticipate a reduction in the demand to compete H/C under the new structures as members will have a greater choice to enter the new open classes at a lower level. The restrictions outlined in the presentation only apply to those competing up one level.

Why are there no plans to run Open classes at National level?

Our national events are championships and have little capacity for additional classes. The classes at national level will run under the grades new names.