

Build Your UDJC Riding Program

You placed your students in Step 1. Now those placements have to become a real weekly program.

Do not simply rename your existing lesson groups Unicorn, B, E, and A. Build the schedule around what each level actually requires. The goal is a program that works educationally, operationally, and for the horses.

THE CORE RULE

A UDJC level is an educational promise. If a student is enrolled in a level, the lesson format, riding frequency, trainer attention, horse suitability, and progression must support that level.

START WITH THE STUDENTS YOU ALREADY PLACED

Take the placement list from Step 1 and look at the numbers. How many Unicorns do you have? How many B riders? How many E riders? How many A riders? Those numbers should drive your first schedule draft.

- Do not move a student up just to fill a group.
- Do not keep a rider down simply because the convenient class is full.
- Do not build mixed groups that destroy the purpose of the level.
- It is fine if one level is temporarily small or even empty. The pathway still has to be genuinely available.

STANDARDS THAT APPLY ACROSS THE PROGRAM

- Regular UDJC riding lessons are structured as 55-minute educational appointments, with age-appropriate adjustments for Unicorn formats.
- Dressage and correct flatwork are the base of the riding education. Jumping is added to the foundation, not used instead of it.
- The trainer chooses the horse according to suitability, education, workload, and welfare, not simply student preference.
- Students progress by competency and later through the Badge system, not because a certain number of months has passed.
- Weekly horsemanship belongs in every level. In Step 4, you will build the teaching routine and use the UDJC weekly materials.

UNICORN PLAYTIME

Ages 3 to 5 | Small children, Shetty ponies, purposeful play

Unicorn should look different from the rest of the riding school. These are very young children. The program combines pony contact, grooming, leading, movement games, balance, simple stable tasks, and short pieces of riding.

- Playtime groups should stay small, with no more than three children.
- Use suitable mini or Shetty ponies and rotate activities to match a young child's attention span.
- More advanced Unicorn riders can receive increasingly focused lead-line or lunge-line work in walk and trot.
- Do not turn Unicorn into a miniature Level B lesson. It should feel like play to the child while remaining intentional education to the trainer.

Build the Four Levels Into the Week

LEVEL B

Individual instruction | The foundation cannot be rushed

Level B is one rider with one trainer. This is where the student builds the seat, balance, confidence, aids, basic horse-care habits, lunge-line skills, and independent walk and trot that make later group lessons possible.

- Level B is individual. Do not place beginner riders into groups because the group lesson is easier to schedule or more profitable.
- The trainer teaches both lunge-line work and independent riding in the arena.
- The appointment includes the horse-care education appropriate to the rider, not only mounted minutes.
- Twice-weekly riding is strongly encouraged when the family and school can support it because repetition builds the foundation faster and more correctly.

DO NOT SKIP THE FOUNDATION

A group lesson is not a bargain if the rider does not yet have the balance, steering, control, and awareness to learn safely inside it.

LEVEL E

Group lessons | Up to 3 independent riders

Level E is where independent riders begin learning together. The range can be broad. One student may be establishing independent canter while another is already riding easy Dressage patterns and small courses. The trainer can adapt exercises, but the lesson still needs to function as one coherent Level E class.

- Maximum group size is three riders.
- Every rider must already be safe and independent enough to walk and trot in a group.
- At least two rides per week are strongly recommended for Level E.
- A Level E student may jump only if they ride at least twice each week.
- At least half of the riding education remains Dressage and correct flatwork.
- Jumping is normally no more than every other week. Poles, gymnastics, and flatwork can support the jumping education without constantly jumping courses.

LEVEL A

Advanced riding-school student | Minimum 3 rides every week

Level A is the serious performance stage of the riding school. These riders are preparing for or already attending shows and need enough consistent riding to make real progress.

- Level A riders ride at least three times every week.
- Groups contain no more than three riders. Two is recommended when possible.
- The normal balance is one Jumping lesson out of three riding lessons.
- A rider training four or five times per week may jump no more than two of those rides.
- Dressage, flatwork, accuracy, independence, and horse management remain the center of the program.

Make the Program Work in Real Life

BUILD GROUPS BY EDUCATION, NOT CONVENIENCE

Your first schedule does not have to be perfect. It does have to respect the educational structure. A good schedule creates enough consistency that trainers can teach forward instead of solving a new organizational problem every week.

- Group riders who can safely work on similar objectives together.
- Keep E and A groups level-specific, even when individual riders are at different points inside the level.
- Do not build groups around friendships, school grade, or parent requests when the riding ability does not match.
- If a rider belongs between two groups, use the lower group while the missing skills are developed rather than pretending the gap does not exist.

ASSIGN TRAINERS DELIBERATELY

Not every trainer has to teach every level. Decide who is strongest with tiny children, who is excellent at lunge-line education, and who can develop the more advanced E and A riders correctly.

- Assign a clear Head Trainer who oversees placement, consistency, and progression.
- Give each level to trainers who can actually deliver that education.
- Avoid a system where every trainer teaches the same student differently and nobody owns the progression.
- Trainer expectations and the weekly curriculum are covered in Step 4. For now, assign the people who will teach each level.

MAKE SURE THE HORSES CAN SUPPORT THE SCHEDULE

A schedule that looks great on paper can still fail if the same three horses are carrying the entire program. Build horse capacity at the same time as student capacity.

- List which ponies and horses are suitable for Unicorn, B, E, and A.
- Some horses can serve several levels. Others should have a narrower job.
- Track the complete workload, including lessons, training rides, camps, clinics, parties, and shows.
- Do not assign a horse simply because a student loves it. Suitability, soundness, confidence, and workload come first.
- If your proposed schedule requires more horse capacity than you currently have, identify that now before launch.

YOU CAN KEEP EXISTING PROGRAMS

UDJC certification is not a franchise. A larger school may continue operating legacy programs alongside the UDJC pathway. What matters is that UDJC students truly receive the UDJC system and that families can clearly tell the difference.

- You do not have to convert every existing customer to UDJC on the same day.
- You do have to make Unicorn, B, E, and A genuinely available as the UDJC pathway.
- Do not advertise an old lesson group under a new UDJC name if the format and education do not match.

THE GOAL OF STEP 3

By the end of this chapter, you should be able to look at one weekly schedule and see where each UDJC level happens, who teaches it, which horses support it, and how often the students ride.

Your Step 3 Assignment

Now turn the placements from Step 1 into a first working schedule.

WHAT TO DO NOW

BUILD YOUR FIRST UDJC WEEKLY PROGRAM

Create a first draft of how Unicorn, B, E, and A will actually operate at your school.

- Take the student placement list from Step 1 and total the students in each level.
- Create or identify the weekly Unicorn Playtime and focused Unicorn opportunities you need.
- Create enough individual Level B spaces for the riders currently placed in B.
- Build Level E groups of no more than three riders and identify which E riders will ride once, twice, or more each week.
- Make sure every Level E rider who will jump is scheduled to ride at least twice each week.
- Build Level A groups of no more than three and schedule every A rider for at least three rides each week.
- Check the Dressage and Jumping balance so jumping does not take over the program.
- Assign the trainer responsible for each lesson or level.
- Assign suitable lesson horses and check whether their total workload is realistic.
- Identify any gaps: not enough Level B time, not enough advanced horses, no appropriate A trainer, or another capacity problem.
- Write down what must change before launch and who is responsible for fixing it.

IMPORTANT: Do not worry about teaching the full weekly curriculum yet. Step 4 is where we train the trainers and put the curriculum and horsemanship materials into the week. For this step, build the operational structure that will make that education possible.

TASK COMPLETE? CONTINUE TO STEP 4: TRAINERS + CURRICULUM

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