



# Equine Career Guidebook

Your pathway into Ireland's equine industry



**Comhairle Contae Chill Dara**  
Kildare County Council



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# Joint Foreword

By the Chief Executive and Cathaoirleach of Kildare County Council

**The Equine Industry is a cornerstone of Ireland's heritage, economy, and global reputation. From thoroughbred breeding to racing, education, research, and tourism, the Equine Sector fuels a diverse array of career paths and opportunities, each contributing to the vibrancy and prosperity of communities across the country.**

In economic terms, the Equine Industry is a significant contributor to Ireland's prosperity. According to the most recent research conducted, the industry is generating an estimated €3.4 billion annually and supporting 75,000 jobs (directly and indirectly) nationwide. In Kildare specifically, the sector's impact is especially pronounced, with the County recognised as a central hub for breeding, training, and equestrian services, underpinning local economic and community development.

County Kildare is home to world-renowned stud farms, training facilities, and innovative enterprises. The Equine Sector not only supports local employment and business growth but also enhances our cultural identity and international standing. The Equine Industry is a priority for Kildare County Council, hence our commitment to supporting the sector's ongoing development and innovation.

This guidebook, commissioned by Kildare County Council and produced by *ifac*, presents the vast range of opportunities and possibilities available in Equine careers. It showcases the diverse disciplines integral to the Equine Sector; from veterinary science and animal welfare, to marketing, hospitality, technology, and environmental stewardship. We hope that the case studies included within this book will inspire readers to explore the exciting possibilities and consider a fulfilling career in the Equine Industry.

Whether your interest lies in hands-on roles or supporting services, the Industry offers dynamic and rewarding careers for people of all backgrounds. We encourage you to explore these opportunities and become part of a tradition that shapes Ireland's past, present, and future.



**Cllr Carmel Kelly**  
Cathaoirleach Kildare County Council



**Sonya Kavanagh**  
Chief Executive Kildare County Council



# 1. Introduction to Equine Careers

## About this guide

This guide is designed to provide a clear, practical overview of career and business pathways across Ireland's equine sector. It outlines key industry areas, explains role types and required skills, and highlights training, education, and enterprise supports.

Each section provides clear, practical information to help you explore options, identify pathways, and plan your next steps.

## Why work in the equine industry

Ireland's equine sector is one of the most globally respected and economically influential industries in the country. The industry welcomes people of all backgrounds, abilities, and identities.

Working in the equine industry offers:

- **Diverse career pathways** – From hands-on roles to business, research, marketing, science, logistics, and entrepreneurship
- **Opportunities across rural and urban Ireland** – Equine enterprises support employment and innovation in communities nationwide
- **A globally connected sector** – Irish horses, riders, breeders, and brands operate internationally across sport, sales, technology and genetics

- **A blend of tradition and innovation** – The industry combines its world class heritage with advancements in science, digitalisation, biomechanics, nutrition research and equine technology
- **Pathways for every skill set** – Whether your strengths are practical, creative, scientific, business focused or entrepreneurial, the industry offers valued roles for all

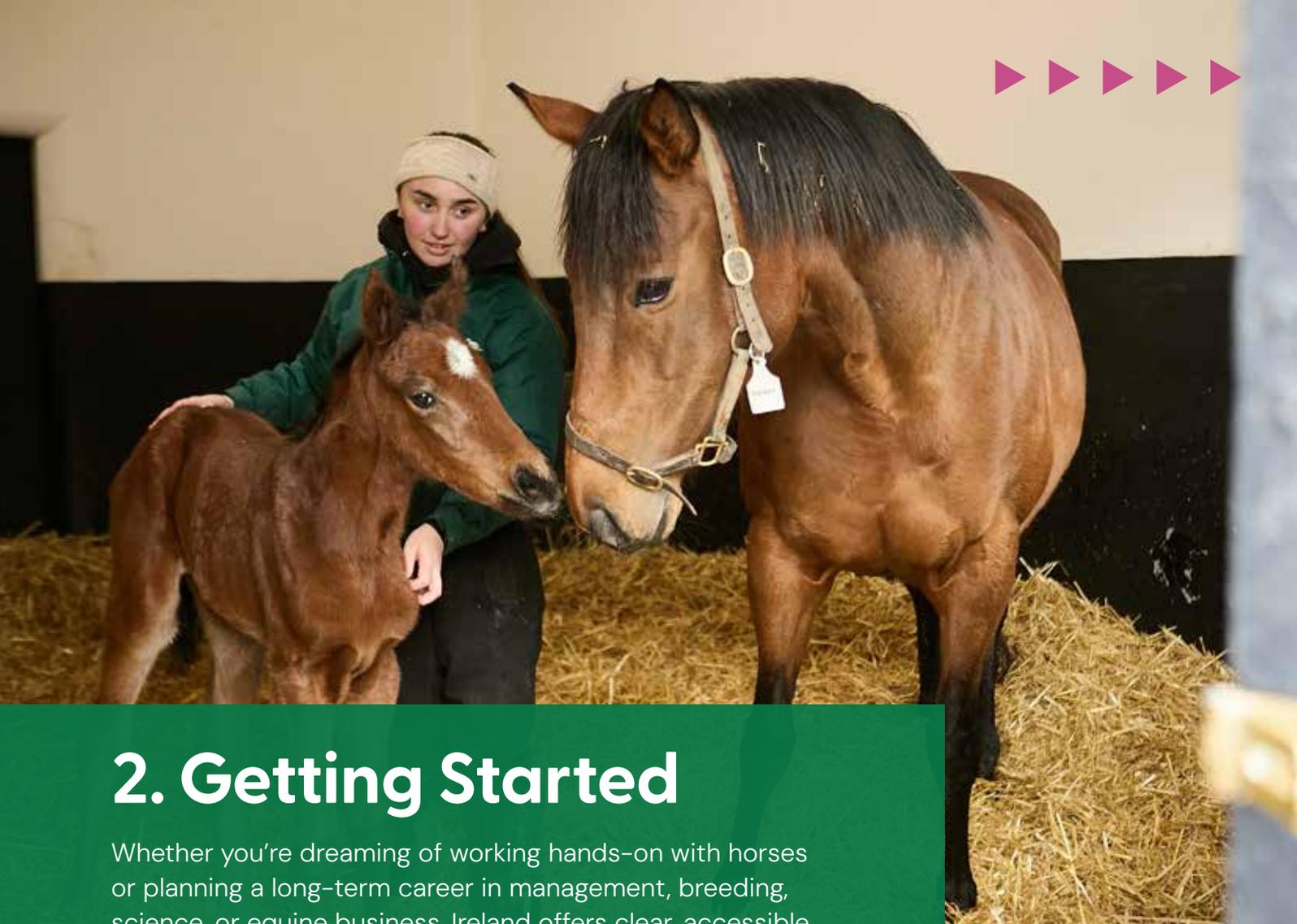
## Key opportunities across the sector

Ireland's equine industry is not one single pathway, it is a network of interconnected careers, each supporting the health, welfare, performance, business, and sustainability of the sector.

Ireland's equine industry continues to expand through:

- Increased international demand for Irish sport horses and thoroughbreds
- Growth in equine research, genetics, nutrition, and welfare science
- Rapid digitalisation, media, marketing and equine technology
- Rising equine tourism and cultural engagement
- Strong government and agency support for enterprise, innovation and export

These developments make this an exciting time for individuals beginning their journey or seeking to progress into new roles.



## 2. Getting Started

Whether you're dreaming of working hands-on with horses or planning a long-term career in management, breeding, science, or equine business, Ireland offers clear, accessible routes into the industry.

### Skills you will need

#### Working directly with horses

##### Core stable and horse-care skills

- Mucking out, feeding, watering, grooming
- Yard and tack care; maintaining safe working areas
- Daily horse-welfare checks

##### Handling and horsemanship

- Leading, tying, loading
- Reading behaviour and recognising stress signals
- Understanding basic anatomy, physiology, and welfare to handle horses safely

##### Workplace, safety, and people skills

- Reliability, punctuality, early starts, and weekend work
- Clear communication
- Safety awareness and a welfare-first mindset

##### Physical readiness and attitude

- Good stamina for physical yard work
- Comfort working outdoors in all weather
- A positive attitude and willingness to learn

#### Equine professional services

##### Equine knowledge and sector awareness

- Understanding horse-care basics and welfare standards
- Familiarity and awareness of the sector in general

##### Workplace communication and customer-facing skills

- Professional communication
- Teamwork in fast-paced or seasonal environments
- Ability to follow procedures, safety guidelines, and welfare regulations

##### Organisation, digital, and business skills

- Scheduling, record-keeping, paperwork, and data
- Customer service and client relations
- Social media, marketing, or ecommerce awareness

##### Professional attitude and adaptability

- Understanding the needs of a busy equine workplace
- Willingness to work around peak seasons or events
- A commitment to equine welfare and professionalism

## Starting out with no formal training

Many people enter the equine sector through hands-on work first, then add qualifications later.

Employers often value practical ability, reliability, and a willingness to learn just as highly as certificates, especially for entry-level roles such as:

- Yard/stable hand
- Groom
- Riding-school assistant
- Trekking-centre guide

If you can demonstrate a strong work ethic, good communication, and genuine interest in horses, most yards are happy to help you build your skills from the ground up. Many beginners start part-time or through short trial shifts, gradually gaining confidence in daily care, safety routines, horse handling, and yard organisation. A common pathway is to gain a few months of hands-on experience first, then progress to structured learning once you feel ready. Starting without formal training doesn't limit your long-term career options. Many successful grooms, stud staff, riding instructors, and even yard managers entered the industry this way. What matters most is curiosity, consistency, and the willingness to take each step as it comes.

## How to find work experience

Most work-experience opportunities are arranged informally by contacting:

- Riding schools
- Stud farms
- Trekking centres
- Livery yards
- Racing or sport-horse yards

A short message saying who you are, why you're interested, and when you're available can go a long way. Even a quick visit in person can make you stand out. You can also find opportunities through:

- Local yard social media pages
- Irish equine job boards
- Volunteering at shows, pony camps, and events

Every connection you make opens another door.

## Education and training pathways

Ireland offers a wide range of equine education pathways to suit every starting point. These include QQI Level 5 and 6 college courses, short courses, racing and stud-sector apprenticeships, and internationally recognised third level qualifications. Whether you prefer classroom learning, hands-on yard-based training, or a blend of both, there are accessible options that support progression from beginner level right up to degree and professional accreditation. [Full details of courses, colleges, and training providers are listed in Chapter 10.](#)

## How to move between sectors

Moving between areas of the equine industry is very common. Many skills transfer easily, including horse handling, yard management, communication, and welfare knowledge. A smooth transition usually involves:

- **Gaining exposure** through short-term placements, seasonal work or part-time roles
- **Taking targeted short courses** (e.g., stud management, young-horse handling, nutrition, coaching)  
[See course list → Chapter 10.](#)
- **Building connections** with employers, instructors, vets, farriers, and other professionals

Because the Irish equine sector is closely connected, even small steps, like a weekend placement or a recommended short course can open new doors and lead to more advanced opportunities.

**Tip:** Be open to seasonal work. Many people shift between sport-horse and stud sectors depending on the time of year.

## Setting goals and choosing your next steps

### 1. Explore your interests

Think about what interests you most: riding and coaching, young-horse work, stud and breeding, racing, equine science, management, or welfare. Your interests will naturally point you toward the right pathway.

### 2. Map out what you need

Every role has its own skill set. Determine what qualifications, experience, or short courses will help you.

### 3. Take action

Build experience step by step:

- Start in a yard or riding school
- Complete a Level 5 or Level 6 programme  
[See course list → Chapter 10.](#)
- Add practical placements, workshops, or specialist modules

Each step strengthens your confidence and opens more career options.

### 4. Review and adjust

As you gain experience, your interests may change. Check in with yourself regularly, update your goals, and take new opportunities as they arise.

"2024 RDS Dublin Horse Show, Main Arena Nations Cup, Dublin City" 1st Class Images (Courtesy of Fáilte Ireland/Ireland's Content Pool)



## 3. Careers in Sport Horse and Performance

Ireland's sport horse sector is a dynamic, hands-on industry. This sector offers roles for every kind of person, from hands-on horse work to high-pressure competition support. Many people start in one area and naturally progress into others.

### Rider, groom, and yard roles

Sport horse yards across Ireland rely on a combination of skilled riders, grooms, and yard staff to ensure the smooth running of daily operations and the long-term development of competition horses. These roles form the backbone of the performance industry and offer clear pathways for progression, whether working in professional showjumping, eventing, dressage, or young horse production.



#### Rider

Riders may be employed to school, exercise, and compete horses depending on their level of experience. Duties often include flat work, jumping, fitness work, and producing young horses for sale or competition. Strong horsemanship, discipline, and a willingness to continuously develop skills are essential. They work closely with yard managers, owners, and trainers to improve horses' athleticism and confidence.

#### Benefits

- Daily riding and skill development
- Travel to competitions
- Progression into professional riding or horse production

#### How to become

1. Start by building solid flatwork and jumping basics through riding schools, Pony Club, Riding Club, or volunteering.
2. Gain hands-on experience as a working pupil or rider's assistant, combining yard duties with daily training.
3. Complete a Horsemanship or Equitation programme to strengthen theory and practical riding skills. [See course list → Chapter 10.](#)
4. Progress by schooling a variety of horses under supervision, gradually taking on young horses or competition rides.
5. Build a portfolio of videos, references, and competition results to support applications to professional yards.



## Groom

Grooms play a central role in the welfare and preparation of sport horses. Responsibilities typically include feeding, mucking out, clipping, bandaging, tacking up, lunging, competition preparation, and travelling with horses to shows. The role requires high attention to detail, excellent horse-handling skills, and the ability to work under pressure.

### Benefits

- Close connection with horses
- Travel opportunities

### How to become

1. Begin with basic horse care experience through riding schools, livery yards, or volunteering at shows.
2. Complete a QQI Level 5 Horsemanship programme to develop core yard, welfare, and stable management skills. [See course list → Chapter 10.](#)
3. Apply for entry-level roles in competition yards, production yards or sport horse stables.
4. Build competence in clipping, bandaging, show prep, lunging, and handling fit competition horses.
5. Progress with experience and optional short courses in equine first aid, nutrition or competition grooming.



## Yard Staff and Yard Managers

Yard workers support the day-to-day functioning of the business, undertaking tasks such as stable management, maintenance, turnout routines, and assisting with veterinary and farrier visits. Yard managers oversee the coordination of horses, staff, and schedules to ensure efficient running of the business. Their role often includes record-keeping, horse care management, staff supervision, liaison with owners, and logistics for training or competitions. Strong organisational skills, leadership, and practical experience are key to excelling in this position.

### Benefits

- Stable employment across many yard types
- Opportunity to run or manage large operations

### How to become

1. Start with practical yard experience as a groom or stable hand.
2. Develop strong organisational and horse care skills through daily routines and increasing responsibility.
3. Complete QQI Level 6 Horsemanship/Equitation or higher level training to prepare for supervisory roles. [See course list → Chapter 10.](#)

4. Take on leadership tasks: scheduling, record keeping, liaising with vets/farriers, and supporting junior staff.

5. Progress into full yard management or assistant roles as you gain confidence and experience.



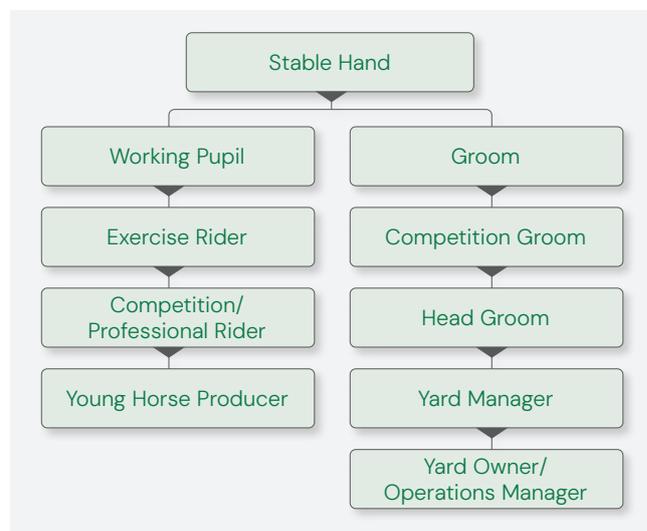
## Horse Trainer/Young Horse Producer

Horse trainers and producers specialise in schooling sport horses for sale, competition, or owner clients. Their work commonly includes breaking and early education, developing horses through foundation flat-work and jumping, building correct strength, balance, and rideability, and identifying talent and suitability for future careers. Reputation, consistency, and strong communication are key to success.

### How to become

1. Build strong riding basics and confidence with a variety of horses through working pupil roles.
2. Complete Horsemanship or Equitation programmes (QQI Level 5 or Level 6). [See training options → Chapter 10](#)
3. Gain hands-on experience in production yards or with established trainers, starting with groundwork and early schooling.
4. Learn specialist skills such as breaking, long-reining, young-horse development, and competition preparation.
5. Progress by producing horses independently, building results, client relationships, and a professional reputation.

### Career Progression Map: Rider, Groom and Yard Roles





## Working as a rider, groom, yard staff

### Working conditions

- Outdoor, physical work
- Early mornings and long days during competition season
- Riders: more travel and competition days
- Grooms: busy show seasons
- Yard Managers: variable hours and staff coordination

### Transferable skills gained

- Horsemanship and attention to detail
- Time management and reliability
- Communication and teamwork
- Problem-solving and resilience
- Yard Managers: Leadership and organisation

### Typical employers

- Sport horse yards
- Showjumping and eventing yards
- Dressage yards
- Young horse production yards
- Sales and production yards
- Riding schools and equestrian centres

### Entrepreneurial opportunities

- Freelance grooming or clipping services
- Running a livery or training yard
- Producing and selling young horses
- Riding instruction or exercise riding (with qualifications)



"2024 RDS Dublin Horse Show, Main Arena, Dublin City" 1st Class Images (Courtesy of Fáilte Ireland/Ireland's Content Pool)

# Coaching and training roles

Coaching and training careers within the sport horse sector play a vital role in developing both horses and riders for competition. These roles are firmly rooted in the performance disciplines and support Ireland's reputation as a leading producer of high-quality sport horses.



## Coach

Sport horse coaches work with riders who are training primarily in showjumping, dressage, and eventing. They teach riders at grassroots to intermediate levels, focusing on technique, safety, horse-and-rider partnership, and preparing riders for training shows and competitions.

Performance Coaches support competitive riders, developing technical skills, planning training and competition schedules, analysing performance, and guiding riders through high-pressure environments. These roles require advanced knowledge of equine training, competition demands, and long-term athlete development.

### Benefits

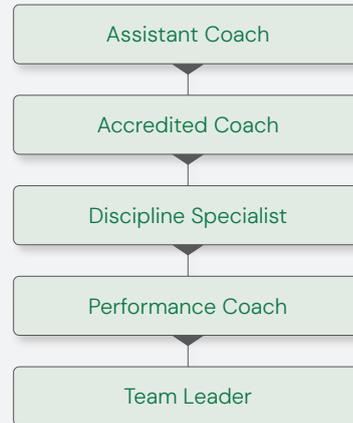
- Rewarding teamwork with riders
- Flexible working patterns
- Opportunities to engage with high-performance programmes
- Highly respected role

### How to become

1. Build strong riding and horsemanship foundations through riding schools, pony clubs, riding clubs, working pupil roles.
2. Gain early coaching experience by assisting instructors at riding schools, camps or club sessions.
3. Complete a coaching training to become a certified coach and start teaching independently.  
[See course list → Chapter 10.](#)
4. Develop practical coaching experience by teaching a variety of riders, shadowing established coaches, and delivering sessions at different levels and disciplines.
5. Progress towards performance coaching by completing advanced CPD in areas such as biomechanics, sports psychology, or strength & conditioning.



### Career progression map: coach



### Working as a coach

#### Working conditions

- Mix of indoor and outdoor sessions
- Evening and weekend coaching commitments
- Travelling to training shows, competitions, and clinics
- Performance driven environment for advanced coaching

#### Transferable skills gained

- Teaching and communication
- Planning
- Leadership and mentoring

#### Typical employers

- Riding schools and equestrian centres
- Pony Clubs and Riding Clubs
- Private yards
- High performance yards
- National federations (Horse Sport Ireland, Dressage Ireland, Eventing Ireland, Showjumping Ireland)
- Training and performance academies

#### Entrepreneurial opportunities

- Freelance coaching or clinics
- Specialist performance consultancy



# Competition and event roles

The sport horse competition scene in Ireland depends on a wide range of support staff who ensure that events run safely and efficiently. These roles suit individuals who enjoy fast-paced environments, teamwork, and being close to the action at events. Many people enter the industry through volunteering which is an excellent entry point into the wider sport horse industry as it provides valuable networking opportunities with riders, officials, and industry professionals.



## Event Support Crew

Event Support Crew keep competitions running smoothly: resetting fences, organising start lists, managing warm-up arenas, timing and scoring rounds, providing commentary, and supporting judges.

### Benefits

- Excellent entry point
- Fast way to build networks
- Opportunity to advance into officiating or event management

### How to become

1. Start by volunteering at shows with Pony Club, Eventing Ireland, Showjumping Ireland, Dressage Ireland or local show centres.
2. Gain experience in tasks such as arena setup, stewarding, timing, scoring and warm-up management.
3. Build skills in communication, organisation, competition rules and safety procedures.
4. Progress into roles such as steward, judge's assistant, or event coordinator.



## Show Organiser/Event Coordinator

Event Coordinators plan and run competitions. Duties include scheduling classes, managing entries, coordinating officials and volunteers, ensuring risk assessments are in place and overseeing smooth event-day operations. Strong organisational skills and knowledge of sport horse disciplines are essential.

### Benefits

- Dynamic, people-focused role
- Impact on Ireland's competition scene
- Clear progression to major events

### How to become

1. Gain hands-on experience at equestrian events by volunteering at show centres, pony clubs, riding clubs, Eventing Ireland, Dressage Ireland, or Showjumping Ireland fixtures.

2. Develop strong organisational and communication skills through roles such as arena party, stewarding, entries desk support, or warm-up management.
3. Take on assistant organising roles with show centres or equestrian venues.
4. Progress to leading event coordination, overseeing entries, timetables, officials, volunteers, safety procedures, and competition-day delivery.



## Judge or Technical Official

Judges and technical officials play a key role in maintaining the integrity and standard of competition. Roles vary by discipline:

- Dressage judges assess movements, accuracy, and quality of work
- Showjumping judges oversee scoring, faults, timing, and course adherence
- Eventing officials support dressage judging, showjumping scoring, and cross-country control

### Benefits

- Deep understanding of competition structure
- Respect and influence within the sport

### How to become

1. Begin by shadowing or stewarding at local dressage, showjumping or eventing competitions.
2. Complete discipline specific judge training and assessment. [See course list → Chapter 10.](#)
3. Register with AIRC, Dressage Ireland, Eventing Ireland, or Showjumping Ireland for inclusion on the show officials lists.
4. Take part in CPD, stewarding days, clinics, and shadow judging to build accuracy and confidence.
5. Judge regularly at local and regional shows.
6. Progress to national, and eventually FEI level, officiating with additional training and experience.



## Course Designer

Course designers create engaging and safe jumping or cross-country courses that test skill, balance, and technique. Tasks include designing layouts, adjusting technical difficulty, managing footing, and updating courses as conditions change.

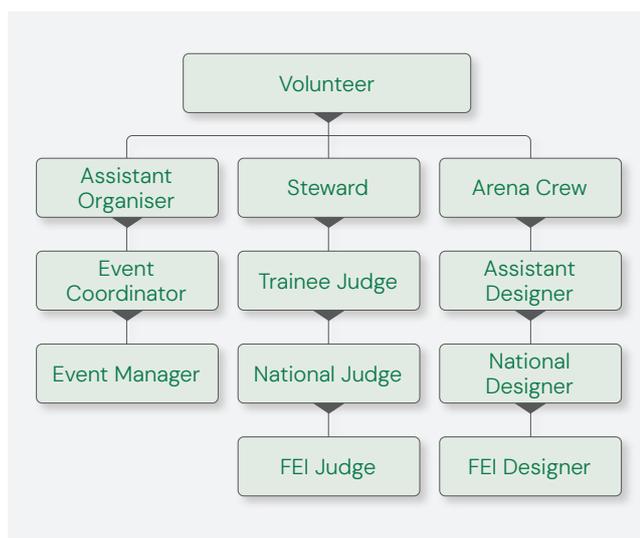
### Benefits

- Creative, technical, and influential role
- Opportunities to progress to FEI level
- Increasing support for new entrants

### How to become

1. Start by helping with arena setup, fence building or assisting experienced course designers at local shows.
2. Complete course design training or similar accredited programmes.  
*See course list → Chapter 10.*
3. Register with AIRC, Dressage Ireland, Eventing Ireland, or Showjumping Ireland for inclusion on the show officials lists.
4. Design training courses at local or club level, gradually taking on more technical layouts.
5. Progress to national and FEI level accreditation through experience, CPD, and supporting major competitions.

### Career progression map:



## Working in competitions and events

### Working conditions

- Fast-paced, event day environments
- Outdoor and indoor work depending on role
- Long days during show seasons
- Team oriented, safety critical tasks
- Judges: high concentration and rule interpretation
- Course Designers: early starts and physical course building
- Event Support Crew: active, hands-on work

### Transferable skills gained

- Communication and teamwork
- Organisation and time management
- Accuracy and rule awareness
- Safety management
- *Course designers:* Spatial awareness

### Typical employers

- Show centres and equestrian venues
- Eventing venues and cross country centres
- National federations (Eventing Ireland, Dressage Ireland, Showjumping Ireland)
- Riding clubs and Pony Clubs
- Competition organisers and event management teams
- Auction centres (for some event based support roles)

### Entrepreneurial opportunities

- Freelance judging
- Course design services
- Event management/coordination
- Timing, scoring, and commentary contracts





## Case Study: Camilla Speirs, International Event Rider and Coach

### From Pony Club to Badminton and Beyond

Camilla Speirs is one of Ireland's most accomplished event riders, known for her precision, resilience, and partnership with horses she has produced from a young age. Raised on a family farm where horses were part of everyday life, she has built a career that combines elite sport, coaching, and running a busy yard alongside her partner, fellow rider Ethen. Her journey reflects talent, hard work, and a deep understanding of horses on every level.

### Early Years and Background

Camilla grew up surrounded by horses. Both parents worked with them, hunting was a major part of family life, and her mother trained racehorses while Camilla progressed through Pony Club. She competed in everything, eventing, showjumping, mounted games, and loved every minute of it.

Her partner Ethen came from a completely different background, taking one weekly lesson at a local riding school with no family connection to the sport. Two very different starts, but the same lifelong love of horses.

Camilla always wanted horses to be her career, though her parents encouraged her to pursue college for broader life experience. She now sees the value: confidence, communication, and exposure to different people and ideas – skills that balance the intensity of equestrian life. But even then, she knew she'd end up back with horses.

### Coaching, Mentors and Early Opportunities

Access to top coaching shaped Camilla's development. She spent summers in the UK training with leading coaches like Judy Bradwell. At home, she progressed through national youth squads, benefitting from guidance from showjumping coach Ian Fearon and later senior squad mentors like Ginny Elliott and dressage trainer Ferdi Eilberg.

At 15, she was invited to train with the junior squad on a young, bold horse she had produced herself. Her progress was noticed, and she earned selection for the Junior Europeans with a six year old. She returned the following year with another six year old, 'Jiff', a horse who would later take her to the Olympics.

Her consistent results, work ethic, and ability to improve young horses helped her stand out.

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*"People see the hard work first – the talent comes through."*

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Camilla Speirs. Source: Eventing Ireland.

### Competing at the Olympics

Riding at the Olympics was a defining moment. Camilla was young and determined not to be overwhelmed – so determined, she now realises, that she didn't fully allow herself to enjoy the experience.

She rode with heart and bravery, but with hindsight would ride more with her head. Still, the Games taught her lessons that now make other major events feel manageable.

### The Mental and Physical Demands of the Sport

Eventing is a long game. Riders often peak in their 30s, 40s, and even 60s because experience matters as much as physical ability. Calmness, clarity, and communication with the horse are key.

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*"Your partner is an animal, you can't talk to them. They understand you best when you're calm and clear."*

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## Running the Yard

Camilla and Ethen run their yard from her family farm, where facilities have been gradually developed over many years. Ethen brings experience from top riders like Trevor Breen and Greg Broderick, along with time riding in Germany.

A serious leg injury for Ethen, while Camilla was pregnant, created a natural turning point. Once he recovered, he began riding Camilla's horses, they bought a few together and eventually built the business jointly.

A typical day is structured and busy: mucking out, feeding, working horses, coaching clients, fitting in shows, and managing staff. They value balance now more than they did when younger, building a system that keeps horses, riders, and team happy.

## What It Takes to Work in the Sport

Above all: awareness.

Spotting a horse that seems "off," noticing a full feed left untouched, recognising heat in a leg, or feeling something in their stride – these observations define good horsemanship.

Everything in their yard is tailored: feed plans, management routines, recovery, grooming. Staff learn by doing.

Hard work and determination matter too. Horses need care seven days a week, year round. But every hour invested adds value – to the horse, the rider, and the business.

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*"You can read books, but being around horses, seeing them, feeling them, is how you learn."*

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## Career Progression: Athlete, Coach, Trainer

Coaching developed naturally. Camilla valued the trainers who shaped her career, and she wants to pass that on. Clients train at home, at shows, or have horses produced for them. Seeing riders progress is hugely satisfying.

Running a business also requires realism: knowing which horses suit which riders, which horses will sell, and how to build opportunities sustainably.

## Challenges and Realities of the Sport

The biggest challenge, Camilla says, is recognising your strengths and working with them, not against them. Not everyone will jump on a Nations Cup team. Success might come in producing young horses, in selling them well, or in developing riders.

She emphasises the importance of building gradually, selling wisely, and not clinging to horses you can't afford to bring to the next level. Awareness applies as much to business decisions as to horsemanship.

For grooms entering the industry, Camilla stresses realism: you can't start at the top. Learning happens at lower levels where mistakes are allowed.

## Defining Moments

Badminton stands out. In 2010, at her first attempt, she finished 13th, not fully understanding the achievement. It took five more years to achieve another top result, and that second one meant far more. It came from experience, patience, and doing everything "the right way."

## Advice to Her Younger Self

Camilla would be more selective about the horses she took on. As a young rider she wanted to prove she could ride anything, but some horses simply weren't suited to her.

Still, she believes the lessons were valuable.

Mistakes shape judgement; judgement shapes success.

## What Makes You Stand Out in a Yard

- Awareness – of health, mood, legs, feed, behaviour
- Proper horse care – cooling, grooming, bandaging, hoof care
- Willingness to learn by doing
- Calmness around horses
- Reliability – especially in daily routines
- Work ethic – long days, seven days a week

## Start Like She Did

- Ride or handle as many horses as possible
- Learn from experienced coaches
- Train abroad if the opportunity arises
- Develop feel through everyday care
- Build experience at lower levels where mistakes are allowed
- Recognise your strengths early and grow from there
- Work hard, stay resilient, take each step as it comes



## 4. Careers in Horse Racing

Ireland's racing industry is fast-moving, team-oriented, and offers clear pathways for anyone passionate about thoroughbreds. Whether you want to work hands-on in a racing yard, develop as a jockey, or support race meetings behind the scenes, structured routes exist through Horse Racing Ireland (HRI), the Irish Horseracing Regulatory Board (IHRB), Equip, and the Racing Academy & Centre of Education (RACE).

### Racing yard and jockey roles



#### Racing Groom/Stable Staff

Grooms are the backbone of racing yards, caring for horses daily: feeding, mucking out, grooming, tacking up, assisting vets and farriers, and leading horses to gallops. Some also ride out depending on experience.

#### Benefits

- Close connection with horses
- Travel to race days

#### How to become

1. Start with basic horse-handling experience (riding school, pony racing, or volunteering).
2. Complete a QQI Level 5 Horsemanship course. [See course list](#) → [Chapter 10](#).
3. Apply to work in a licensed racing yard.
4. Register with the IHRB as a stable employee once employed.
5. Build skills on the job: clipping, lunging, tacking up, leading horses, race-day duties.



## Work Rider

Work riders exercise horses on the gallops, give feedback to trainers, and help implement training plans. This role can be a stepping stone to race-riding for those with the talent and ambition.

### Benefits

- Daily riding and skill development
- Involvement in horse fitness and performance
- Pathway to jockey licensing

### How to become

1. Gain strong flatwork and jumping basics (pony club, riding school, or pony racing).
2. Gain experience in a yard as a groom or yard worker.
3. Attend a trial morning in a licensed yard to assess riding level.
4. Learn to ride steady and fast work on gallops under supervision.
5. Progress to regular work riding and feedback to trainer.
6. Complete short courses for further learning.  
See course list → Chapter 10.



## Head Person

Senior yard roles coordinate horses, staff, and schedules; manage welfare records; liaise with vets, farriers, and owners; support entries and declarations; and oversee race-day logistics.

### Benefits

- Leadership responsibility within the yard
- Broad exposure to training and race planning

### How to become

1. Progress within a yard through experience.
2. Complete QQI Level 6 Horsemanship or similar supervisory training.



## Jockey

Ireland has a structured pathway for Apprentice (Flat), Conditional (National Hunt), Claiming Professional, Professional and Qualified Rider (amateur) licences, led by the IHRB, with coaching and support from Equip and race-riding preparation at RACE.

## Apprentice Jockey (Flat)/ Conditional Jockey (National Hunt)

Apprentice (flat) and conditional (national hunt) jockeys are early-career riders who race under a structured development system. These roles allow young riders to begin race-riding competitively while benefiting from a weight allowance ("claim") that helps them secure rides and build experience.

### Benefits

- Race-ride competitively in flat or national hunt disciplines
- Receive a weight allowance that supports career progression
- Access structured coaching (fitness, skills, nutrition, S&C) through Equip
- Clear progression to professional jockey status once the claim is "ridden out"

### How to become

1. Gain strong riding experience (pony racing or extensive work riding).
2. Work full-time in a licensed trainer's yard – trainer must agree to support your jockey application and guarantee rides.
3. Apply for an apprentice or conditional licence through the IHRB.
4. Take part in short courses. See course list → Chapter 10.
5. Complete RACE assessments: race riding, fitness, stalls/schooling, medicals.
6. Begin race riding under claim and progress through allowance stages.
7. Maintain ride minimums to keep the licence active.

### Professional jockey

Professional jockeys are fully licensed senior riders who no longer claim a weight allowance. They compete at the highest level of the sport, riding regularly for trainers, maintaining strict athletic standards, and working closely with owners, jockey agents, and racing organisations.

### Benefits

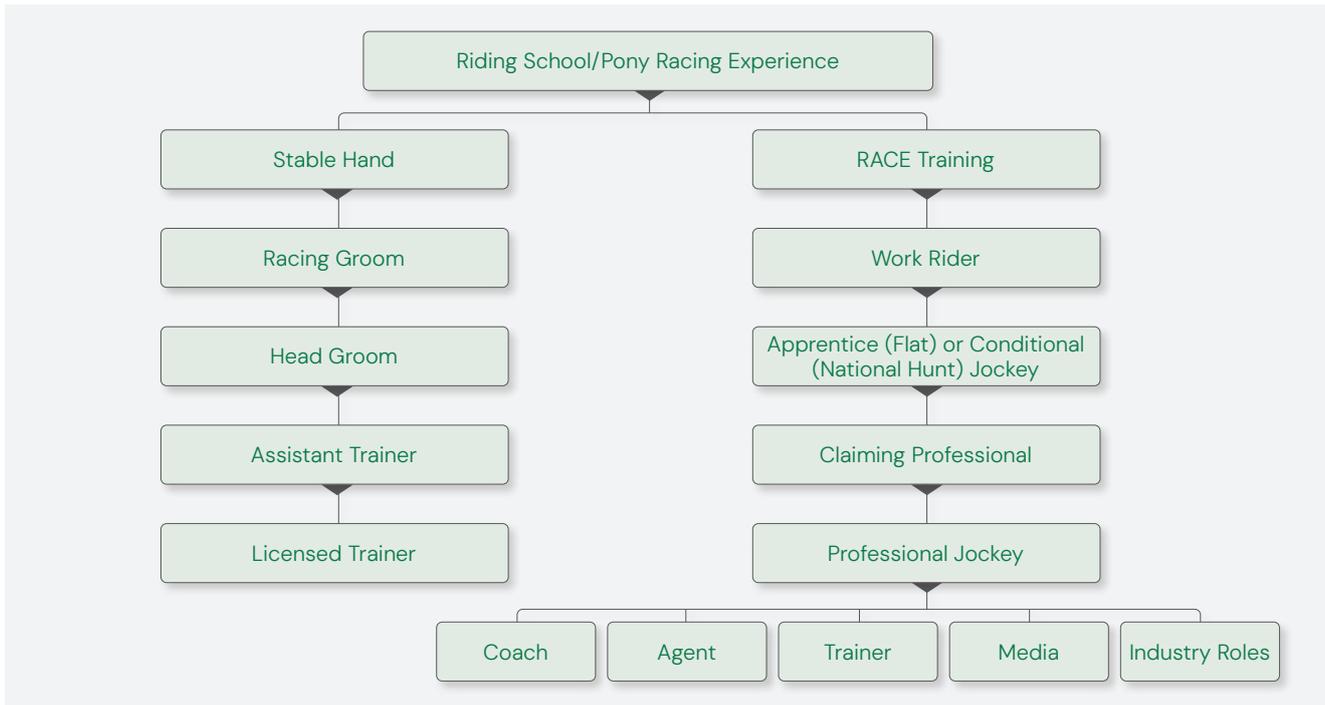
- Compete at the top levels of flat or national hunt racing
- Opportunities for sponsorship and media engagement
- Work with leading trainers and owners in Ireland and abroad

### How to become

1. Ride out your apprentice/conditional claim.
2. Apply to IHRB for a professional licence and complete medical, fitness, and concussion baselines.
3. Work with a trainer and, usually, a jockey agent to secure rides.
4. Complete ongoing CPD (fitness, nutrition, skills coaching).



## Career progression map: racing yard and jockey roles



### Working in a racing yard or as a jockey

#### Working conditions

- Early starts and morning exercise routines
- Outdoor, physical work in all weather
- Busy race-day schedules and seasonal intensity
- *Jockeys*: strict fitness and weight management
- *Jockeys*: Competitive, performance driven environment
- *Professional Jockeys*: greater travel demands and media commitments

#### Transferable skills gained

- Horsemanship and welfare-first mindset
- Discipline and self-management
- Tactical decision-making at speed
- Focus and mental resilience
- Time management and reliability
- Communication and teamwork
- *Professional jockeys*: Public speaking and media skills

#### Typical employers

- Licensed Flat and National Hunt training yards
- Pre-training and breaking establishments
- Racing yards producing young horses
- Breeze up consigners and prep yards
- Rehabilitation and retraining yards (for some grooming/work riding roles)

#### Entrepreneurial opportunities

- *Groom*: Freelance grooming or clipping
- *Jockeys*: Coaching or young-rider mentoring
- *Jockeys*: Media, commentary and analysis
- *Jockeys*: Brand partnerships and ambassador roles (mainly professionals)
- *Jockeys*: Training or agency pathways after riding career



"Béal Bán Races, Ballyferriter, Dingle Peninsula, Co. Kerry" Valerie O'Sullivan (Courtesy of Fáilte Ireland/Ireland's Content Pool)

# Racecourse and track roles

Irish race meetings rely on teams working behind the scenes to ensure safety, organisation, and an enjoyable experience for participants and the public. These roles fall into two groups:

- **Racecourse operations staff** (employed by racecourses)
- **Irish Horse Racing Regulatory Board licensed officials** (trained and appointed by IHRB)



## Racecourse Operations Staff

Racecourse operations staff support the organisation and delivery of each race-day. Their work includes event logistics, customer flow, safety checks, and coordination with grounds, medical and veterinary teams. Job descriptions vary but often involve supporting hospitality, administration, and race-day setup.

### Benefits

- Work at the centre of race-day activity
- Varied, fast-paced role

### How to become

1. Apply for casual race-day work (weekends/seasonal).
2. Gain experience in customer service, events, safety or administration.
3. Build competence in communication, customer flow, basic safety checks.
4. Apply for full-time operations roles at any of Ireland's 26 racecourses (HRI or independent).

### Career progression map: racecourse operations staff



## Grounds Crew/Track Maintenance

Grounds staff prepare and maintain the racing surface, fences, hurdles, rails, and surrounding track environment. Their work directly influences race-day safety.

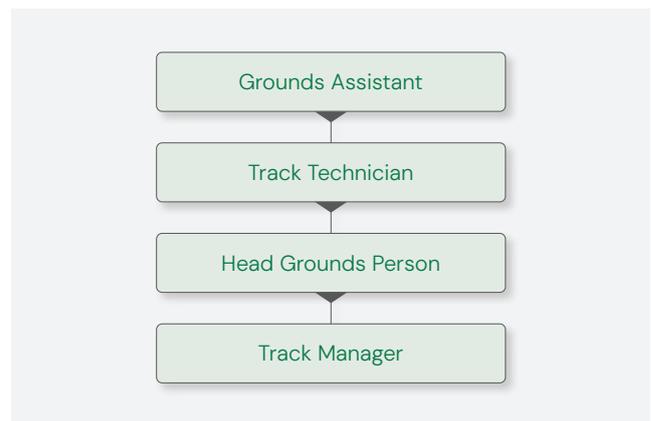
### Benefits

- Outdoor, hands-on role
- Stable employment within racecourses

### How to become

1. Gain practical experience in outdoor, farm, landscaping or maintenance work.
2. Apply for seasonal or entry-level grounds roles at a racecourse.
3. Learn on the job: machinery use, track care, fence/hurdle setup, and safety procedures.
4. Take any available training in machinery operation or health & safety.

### Career progression map: grounds crew/track maintenance



"The Gallops, The Curragh, Co. Kildare" Sonder Visuals (Courtesy of Fáilte Ireland/Ireland's Content Pool)



# Licensed regulatory roles (IHRB)

The IHRB appoints and licenses all race-day officials, including Clerks of the Course, Clerks of the Scales, Starters, Judges, Veterinary Officers, and Stewards. These roles uphold the integrity and safety of racing nationwide.



## Clerk of the Course

Responsible for the general arrangements of the meeting, ensuring the track is correctly measured and marked, fences/hurdles meet regulations, medical and veterinary teams are in place, and races start from the correct point and at the correct time. The Clerk can also order the bypassing of obstacles or stop a race in the interest of safety.

### How to become

1. Gain experience in racing operations or grounds management.
2. Complete IHRB training.

### Career progression map: clerk of the course



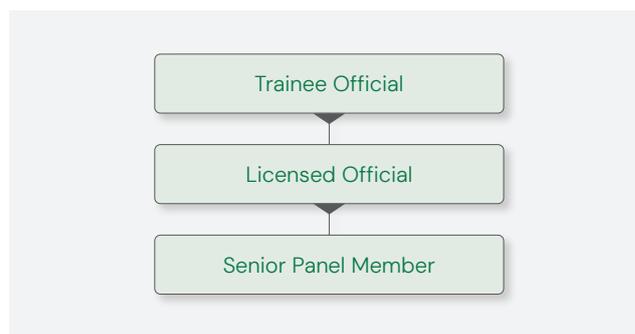
## Starter, Judge, Stewards, and Integrity Officials

The IHRB appoints trained officials for each race meeting: starters ensure fair starts, judges confirm finishing order, and stewards enforce racing rules and review any interference or breaches. Stewards must complete the IHRB trainee steward scheme before officiating independently.

### How to become

1. Apply to the IHRB trainee official programme.
2. Complete structured training and shadowing.

### Career progression map: starter, judge, stewards, and integrity officials



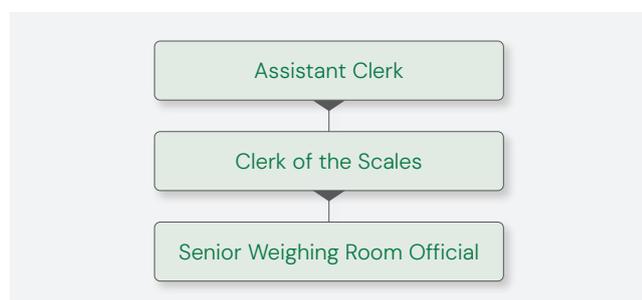
## Clerk of the Scales

Verifies jockey weights before and after each race and ensures compliance with weight regulations. This maintains fairness in race outcomes and is a central part of weighing room integrity.

### How to become

1. Gain experience in racing administration or officiating.
2. Complete IHRB training.

### Career progression map: clerk of the scales



"Arkle Memorial Statue, Ashbourne, Co. Meath"  
Gail Connaughton (Courtesy of Fáilte Ireland/  
Ireland's Content Pool)



## Working at a racecourse

### Working conditions

- Fast-paced race-day environments
- Mix of indoor and outdoor work
- Physical duties (track prep, movement of equipment)
- *Operations*: public-facing responsibilities
- *Grounds Crew*: heavy machinery and early starts
- *Officials*: regulatory responsibility and accuracy under pressure

### Transferable skills gained

- Communication and teamwork
- Safety awareness and rule adherence
- Organisation and multitasking
- Problem-solving and situational judgement

### Typical employers

- Racecourses: Opportunities across Ireland's 26 racecourses, including HRI owned venues (Leopardstown, Fairyhouse, Navan, Tipperary).
- IHRB (trained and appointed by IHRB)

### Entrepreneurial opportunities

Most roles are employed positions; entrepreneurship is limited, but may include:

- Freelance commentator/stewarding/judging
- Event consultancy (operations/logistics experience)

## Case Study: Ross O'Sullivan, Horse Trainer

### From Curragh Pony Rides to a 70 box Training Yard

Ross O'Sullivan is an Irish racehorse trainer based near the Curragh, known for developing a successful, steadily growing operation built on horsemanship, hard work, and a deep understanding of each horse as an individual. A former amateur jockey who grew up immersed in racing, Ross established his own yard from the ground up and now trains a strong team of National Hunt and Flat horses with the support of his wife, Katie Walsh, one of Ireland's most successful former National Hunt jockeys. His philosophy centres on patience, positivity, and creating an environment where horses and people thrive.

### Early Years and Background

Growing up on the edge of the Curragh, horses weren't just an interest, they were the backdrop of daily life. His parents both worked in racing, and there was always a pony and a stretch of open Curragh grassland to ride on. A local man, Chally Chute, even let the family use his stables for free, an early gift of opportunity that shaped everything that followed.

As a young teenager, he became obsessed with racing. At 13 or 14 he was devouring books about champion jockeys and wondering whether he could one day join their ranks. Weekends and school holidays were spent riding out for Jim Kavanagh and later Frank Berry.

### Amateur Riding Career

At 16 he secured his amateur licence, and with a filly that came "for nothing" through a family friend, he rode and won a bumper in Roscommon. The moment the bug truly bit.





After a half-hearted CAO application, he finished his Leaving Cert and went straight to work for Jessica Harrington at 18, spending five formative years there before freelancing around other yards. Through his 20s he lived and breathed the life of an amateur jockey, earning a living, building experience, and learning the sport's rhythm of highs and lows.

---

*"There was nothing else mattered, only racing."*

---

As a young rider, he was focused on getting mounts and sometimes felt he should be on a particular horse, only to watch a trainer make a different call. He now sees the realism behind those decisions and finds himself making similar ones as a trainer with ambitious riders who feel "ready" before they truly are.

Racing delivered the full emotional rollercoaster: horses thriving and then sidelined by injury; defeats that stung because of an error; long periods of waiting, rebuilding, and starting again. What stayed with him most was this: ability matters, but the mind matters just as much. The people who last are the ones who can absorb disappointment and still walk in the next morning ready to go again.

### Transition to Training

As he grew older, the focus shifted from riding to building something of his own. Starting from scratch gave him freedom from expectation, but not from responsibility. He began small, renting a few stables, breaking and pre-training horses, and trying a few point-to-pointers. A handful of horses became a dozen, then 15, then 30.

Eight and a half years ago, he and his wife built their own yard with 30 boxes on her parents' land; today it holds around 70, with 16–17 staff.

Along the way, he learned that success wasn't about doing everything himself. He stopped riding out to watch the gallops properly, and he began surrounding himself with people whose strengths complement his own. He knew that the best thing you can do as you grow is recognise what isn't your strength and bring in people who excel in that area.

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*"If it's not what you're good at, make sure you have someone who is."*

---

### Current Operation and Training Philosophy

His approach to training is built on understanding horses as individuals. To him, they're like people: some happy, some grumpy, some lazy, some overly keen. Their personalities shape their training plans. Pedigree and physique can hint at distance preferences, but he avoids pigeonholing them too early. A thriving horse is a happy horse, and managing their health, mindset, and workload is central to performance. That care feeds into a bigger dream: uncovering a superstar. For a National Hunt trainer,

that means Cheltenham; for the Flat, the Epsom Derby or Royal Ascot.

Racing remains as competitive as ever, fit horses, healthy horses, the right horses, the right owners, the right staff, and then a dose of luck. But the rewards make every setback worth it. A big early win came with a filly called Baie Des Iles, who won a major chase in Paris when their operation was still small. A standout breakthrough arrived at Galway 2024: four winners in three days. "We were going around shaking hands like politicians," he recalls. The momentum "half exploded" afterwards.

Despite tough days, the injuries, the disappointments, the head-shaking moments, he's never once considered giving up. The key is always the same: look forward, stay positive, and move on.

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*"Negativity will kill you... you walk back out the next day and say, right, let's go."*

---

His advice to his younger self is simple: have more confidence, don't overthink, and kick on. Because if the lifestyle suits you, there's no better way to spend your days. He jokes that he's "institutionalised and addicted" now. And he wouldn't change a thing.

### What Makes You Stand Out in a Yard

- Be nice, be willing, work hard
- Pitch in everywhere – riding out, mucking out, tacking up, sweeping
- Keep the atmosphere positive – horses feel tension, and staff do too
- You don't need to be the best rider, reliability and teamwork matter more
- Turnout counts – neat horses, neat gear, neat work
- Don't hang on the latch – laziness stands out instantly

### Start Like He Did

- Gain experience working in a yard
- Begin in a small yard where people have the patience to teach you
- Build riding basics on ponies or hunters before racehorses
- Aim for milestones (e.g., amateur licence) but learn the craft first
- Watch everything – older riders, visiting jockeys, yard managers
- Travel and learn: Ireland, England, France, America, Australia
- Resilience is everything – there are daily setbacks in this sport
- Make sure the lifestyle suits you – because if it does, there's nothing better



# 5. Careers in Breeding and Stud Management

Ireland is internationally recognised for excellence in horse breeding, supported by world-class stud farms and deep equestrian tradition. Stud farms of all sizes rely on skilled staff to care for broodmares, foals, yearlings and stallions. From hands-on care and foaling to sales preparation and bloodstock roles, stud management offers wide-ranging and fulfilling career opportunities.

## Stud farm roles



### Stud Hand/Stud Groom

Stud Hands are the backbone of stud farms. They care for broodmares, foals, and youngstock; complete feeding, mucking out and grooming routines; assist vets and farriers; and support daily handling of growing horses.

#### Benefits

- Daily work with mares, foals and young horses
- Early exposure to foaling and reproduction
- Clear progression into senior stud roles



### Stud Manager

Stud Managers oversee the wider breeding operation including breeding schedules, foaling management, yearling prep, staff supervision, farm planning and client communication. They play a key role in welfare oversight and long-term breeding strategy.

#### Benefits

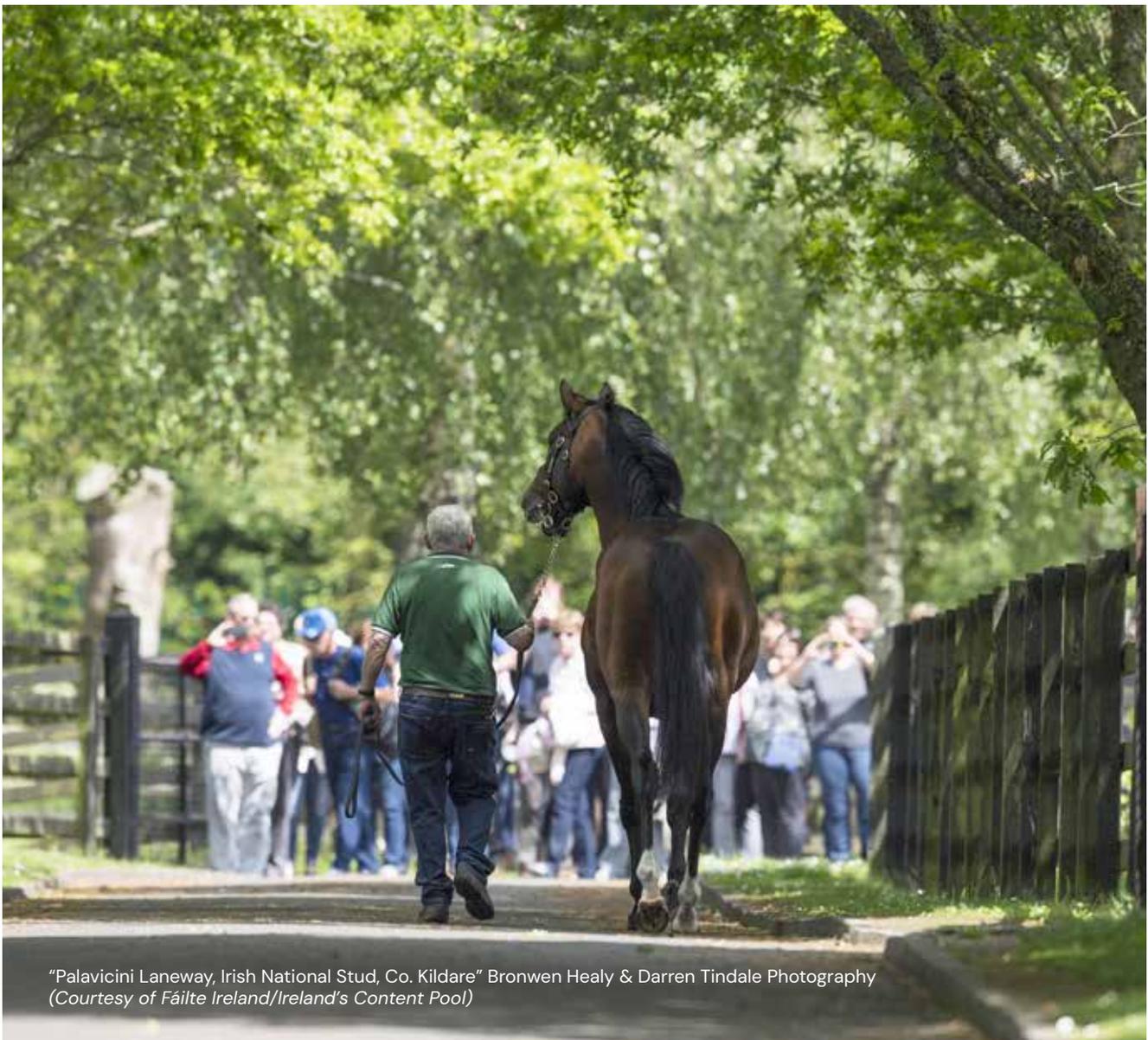
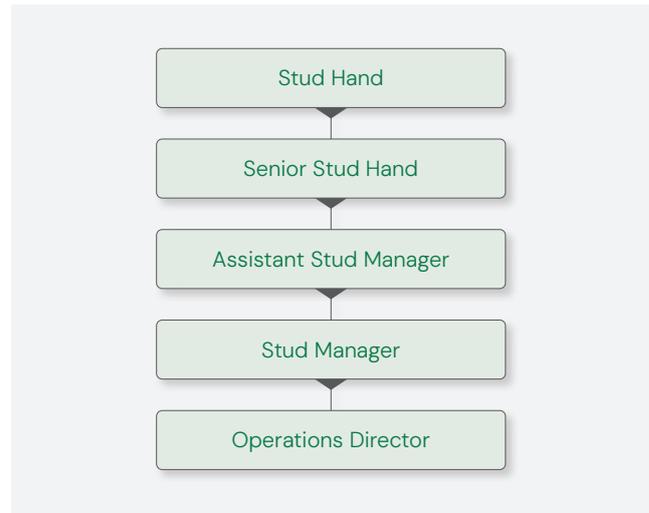
- Leadership and responsibility
- Involvement in strategic breeding decisions
- Opportunities across Irish and international studs



## How to become

1. Start with seasonal or part-time stud work, ideally during foaling or sales seasons, to build hands-on handling and yard experience.
2. Complete QQI Level 5 Horsemanship (Stud) for core skills in youngstock handling, nutrition, and welfare. [See course list → Chapter 10.](#)
3. Progress to QQI Level 6 Equine Breeding/Stud Management to develop advanced breeding, foaling, and management capabilities.
4. Gain experience across multiple areas: foaling unit, broodmare unit, yearling prep, and sales.
5. Take short specialist courses (foaling, neonatal care, reproduction, sales prep).
6. Build leadership and organisational skills by supervising routines, supporting junior staff, and liaising with vets and farriers.

## Career progression map: stud farm roles



# Stallion, broodmare, and foaling management roles



## Stallion Handler

Stallion handlers manage elite thoroughbred stallions during the breeding season. They are responsible for safe covering procedures, stallion exercise, and presenting stallions to clients and vets.

### Benefits

- Work with high-value stallions
- Specialist skills valued across the industry

### How to become

1. Begin as a Stud Hand to build strong youngstock and mare-handling experience.
2. Complete QQI Level 5 Horsemanship (Stud) progressing to Level 6 Equine Breeding/Stud Management. [See course list → Chapter 10.](#)
3. Gain experience in stallion yards during the breeding season.
4. Train in safe stallion handling, covering shed procedures, and behaviour management.
5. Progress into specialist stallion yards with mentorship from senior handlers.



## Broodmare Manager



## Broodmare Manager

Broodmare managers oversee all aspects of mare care, from pre-breeding management to late-term pregnancy. They coordinate vet work, monitor health, track reproductive cycles, and support foaling staff.

### Benefits

- Leadership role with strong welfare focus
- Deep involvement in reproductive management

### How to become

1. Start as a Stud Hand during foaling season to gain practical experience.
2. Complete QQI Level 5 Horsemanship (Stud) followed by Level 6 Equine Breeding/Stud Management. [See course list → Chapter 10.](#)
3. Complete a foaling or neonatal health course.
4. Gain experience handling mares in late pregnancy and supporting vets during foaling.
5. Develop strong organisational and welfare monitoring skills through daily practice.

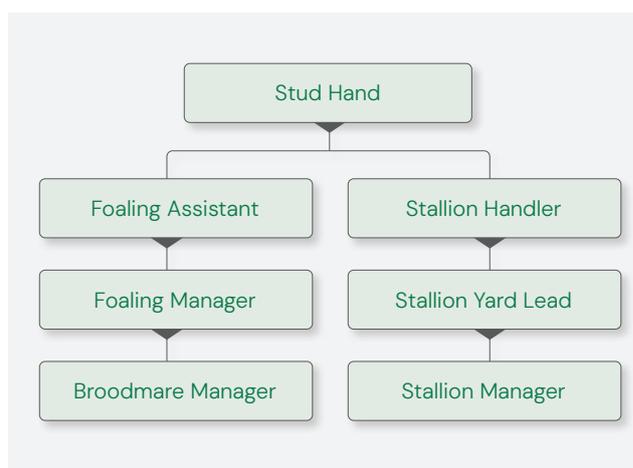
Foaling roles support broodmares through late pregnancy, delivery, and neonatal care. Duties include monitoring mares, assisting vets, and caring for newborn foals.

### Benefits

- Close involvement in foaling and early life care
- Specialist knowledge in reproduction
- Opportunities to progress into broodmare management



### Career progression map: stallion, broodmare, and foaling management





# Sales/prep roles



## Sales Preparation Staff

Sales prep teams ready foals, weanlings, and yearlings for auction, including conditioning, grooming, and walking in-hand.

### Benefits

- Work with sales-bound youngstock
- Industry exposure
- Seasonal role ideal for experience seekers

### How to become

1. Begin with seasonal work as a Stud Hand during sales preparation.
2. Complete QQI Level 5 Horsemanship (Stud) for handling, nutrition and management basics.
3. Progress to QQI Level 6 Equine Breeding/Stud Management to develop conformation and conditioning skills. [See course list → Chapter 10.](#)
4. Gain experience in walking in-hand, presentation, grooming, and ring-craft.
5. Build confidence through multiple sales seasons and exposure to different consignment yards.



## Bloodstock Agent/Pinhooker

Bloodstock agents advise clients on purchasing and selling horses, often at public auction or private sale. Pinhookers specialise in buying young horses to resell later at a profit, requiring sharp market insight and conformation knowledge.

### Benefits

- Dynamic, business-oriented role
- Opportunities to travel and network globally
- High earning potential for successful agents

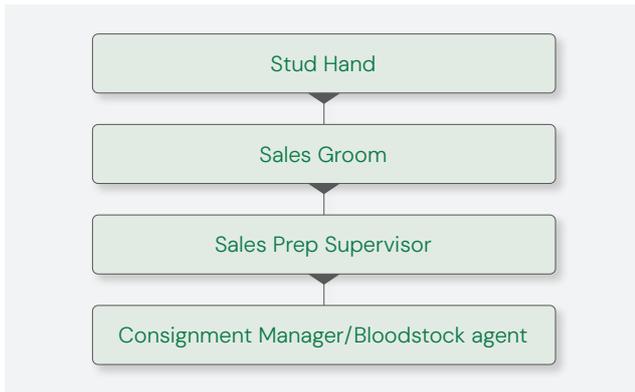
### How to become

1. Gain hands-on experience in sales prep, auctions and stud administration.
2. Develop strong conformation assessment and pedigree analysis skills.
3. Build networks through work across companies.
4. Start as an assistant with a sales company, stud office or established bloodstock agent.
5. Gain market knowledge through attending sales regularly in Ireland, the UK, France or the USA.



"Invincible Spirit Statue, Irish National Stud, Co. Kildare" Bronwen Healy Photography  
(Courtesy of Fáilte Ireland/Ireland's Content Pool)

## Career progression map: sales/prep roles



### Working in breeding or stud management

#### Working conditions

- Seasonal peaks during foaling, breeding, and sales
- Outdoor, physical work in varying weather
- Early starts and variable hours
- Broodmare Managers: high responsibility during breeding season
- Stud Managers: year-round oversight and leadership duties

#### Transferable skills gained

- Horsemanship and welfare-first mindset
- Observation and attention to detail
- Communication and teamwork
- Planning and organisation
- Leadership
- Calm decision making, especially during foaling
- Stallion handling: advanced behavioural awareness and safe handling techniques
- Sales prep: presentation, conformation assessment, ring-craft

#### Typical employers

- Thoroughbred stud farms
- Sport horse breeding farms
- Boarding farms and mare and foal units
- Large commercial breeding operations
- Stallion Handler: large stallion farms or stallion stations/covering sheds
- Bloodstock Agent/Pinhooker: sales companies/ bloodstock agencies/auction houses

#### Entrepreneurial opportunities

- Foaling support or night watch contracting
- Broodmare boarding and youngstock operations
- Freelance sales preparation and presentation services
- Consultancy in breeding strategy or stud operations
- Specialist stallion yard services (showcase, handling, visitor tours)
- Ringside support services (presentation teams, grooming, pre sale prep)
- Bloodstock Agents/Pinhookers: independent consultancy, buying/selling, and market analysis





## Case Study: Mary Kilduff, Bloodstock Manager – Goffs

### From Farm Life to Ireland’s Premier Sales House

Mary Kilduff is the Bloodstock Manager at Goffs, one of the most respected sales companies in the thoroughbred world. Her journey began long before her career officially started, shaped by life on her family farm and constant exposure to horses. Today, she plays a central role in selecting, cataloguing, and managing horses for major sales, working with vendors, breeders, and agents across Ireland and beyond.

### Early Influences and Foundations

Mary grew up watching her father buy, sell, and assess horses, and without realising it, she absorbed the fundamentals of evaluating conformation, movement, and potential from an early age. Her childhood revolved around Pony Club, hunting, and riding half breeds, which led her to study Equine Business at Gurteen College. The course helped her realise that while riding wouldn’t be her career, the thoroughbred world could be.

A summer job at Ballylinch Stud opened the door. Mary discovered that the bloodstock side of the industry offered endless opportunities, and she loved it.

### Entering the Bloodstock World

After graduating, Mary secured a full time role at Newtown Stud. A significant milestone came when she was selected for the ITBA Apprenticeship Scheme, during its inaugural year. Her rotations included placements at Derrinstown Stud, BBA Ireland, and Coolmore, giving her exposure to every aspect of the industry; foaling, sales prep, pedigree literacy, nominations, client management, and hands-on stud work.

Mary later joined Forenaghts Stud. Her mornings were spent in the yard; afternoons in the office managing nominations, veterinary scheduling, accounts, and stud administration. It was an important step in developing both her horsemanship and her business acumen.

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*“The horses are important, but you have to understand the business too.”*

---

### Joining Goffs and Rising to Bloodstock Manager

Seven years ago, Mary sent her CV to Goffs. After a conversation with Henry Beeby, she left with a job offer. She began as a Bloodstock Executive, working closely with Sales Director Nick Nugent on valuations, inspections, and sales logistics.

During COVID, a vacancy arose for Bloodstock Manager, and Mary stepped into the role. Today, she oversees the full lifecycle of entries for Goffs sales. Her responsibilities include managing nominations, liaising with vendors and agents, coordinating inspections, preparing catalogues,



researching prospective entries, overseeing onsite activity during sales, and supporting communication between buyers and sellers.

The role demands judgement, diplomacy, attention to detail, and clear communication in fast-moving, high-pressure environments.

### Inside the Role

Mary’s year follows the rhythm of the sales calendar, shifting from evaluation to preparation to live auction support. At the start of each cycle, she reviews nominations, allocates inspectors, and travels across Ireland to assess horses in person. As sales approach, she compiles catalogues using verified pedigrees, monitors race and point-to-point form, and finalises entries for flagship Sales such as the Arkle, Orby, and November Sale.

On sales days, she moves to the frontline; assisting auctioneers from the rostrum, coordinating with veterinary teams and the Bloodstock Office, and ensuring smooth resolution of any issues that arise. Fast-paced as it is, she finds the buzz energising, particularly the vantage point from the rostrum: spotting buyers shift into position, sensing rising interest, and witnessing stories unfold in real time.

## The Best Part of the Job

For Mary, the best part of the job is the people. Visiting clients on their farms, seeing their horses at home, and building long-term relationships are the greatest rewards. She takes pride in working with vendors at every level, from established breeders to new entrants and young consignors. She finds huge satisfaction in seeing a client getting the results they want in the ring.

She also values the team culture at Goffs: young, dynamic, collaborative, and focused on continuous improvement.

## The Challenges

Part of the role involves delivering difficult news: when unable to accommodate all nominations, making calls about catalogue placement, or dealing with disputes. With over 1,800 nominations for certain sales and space for only a fraction, standards must remain high.

Diplomacy and honesty are essential.

---

*“There’s no point giving false hope – you’re not helping anyone.”*

---

## Career Moments and Mindset

Mary is proud of her journey, from her early days on the farm to her current role at one of the world’s premier sales companies. Along the way, she faced knockbacks, had CVs ignored, missed opportunities, but perseverance paid off.

---

*“If you work hard enough, you make your own luck.”*

---

## What It Takes to Succeed in Bloodstock

- Work ethic – long days, seasonal peaks, and steady graft.
- Curiosity – visit studs, sales, races, seminars; absorb everything.
- People skills – diplomacy, clarity, professionalism, and empathy.

And above all: confidence in your eye for a horse, something Mary developed through years of experience, mentorship, and constant observation.

## Advice to Her Younger Self

If Mary could speak to her younger self, she would say embrace education for the doors it opens, but not to rush the journey because building a strong foundation takes time. She would remind herself to get as much experience as possible, to stay humble, and to never fall into the trap of thinking she knows it all. She believes in pushing yourself, because nobody else will do it for you, and in the importance of networking: shaking hands, introducing yourself, and meeting people whenever the opportunity arises. She’d also tell herself not to pigeonhole her ambitions, because the industry is far bigger than one role, and reassure herself that if you can handle a horse, you can travel the world.

## What Makes You Stand Out in Bloodstock & Sales

- A good eye for a horse – conformation, movement, pedigree, and potential
- Keen attention to detail – accuracy in cataloguing, paperwork, and research matters
- Strong communication skills – building trust with vendors, agents, and buyers
- Calmness under pressure – sales days are fast paced, high stakes, and unpredictable
- Commercial awareness – understanding markets, trends, and what buyers are looking for
- Relationship building – people return to those who are reliable, honest, and easy to work with
- Work ethic – long days, seasonal peaks, and an “all in” mentality are part of the job

## Start Like She Did

- Immerse yourself in horses early – Pony Club, riding, hunting, or yard work all help build intuition
- Get a taste of the industry – summer jobs on studs or sales yards provide invaluable exposure
- Study the business side – equine business or bloodstock courses give a strong foundation
- Ask questions and stay curious – watch how experienced people assess horses and read pedigrees
- Take opportunities when they appear – a seasonal job or placement can become your big break
- Build connections – the bloodstock industry is small; relationships matter
- Be willing to start at the ground level – every skill Mary uses today began with hands-on experience



## 6. Riding Schools, Trekking Centres and Equine Tourism

Ireland's riding schools, trekking centres, and equine tourism providers support thousands of riders and visitors each year, offering accessible ways for people to engage with horses. These centres rely on skilled instructors, guides, yard staff, administrative teams, and customer-facing professionals who deliver safe, enjoyable, and educational experiences. From beginner lessons to coastal treks and tourism-led visitor attractions, the sector provides diverse and rewarding career pathways.

### Instructor roles



#### Riding Instructor

Riding schools depend on qualified instructors to deliver structured lessons, support rider development, and maintain a safe and positive learning environment. Roles range from teaching beginners in local riding schools to coaching developing riders preparing for assessments, exams, or club competitions. Many instructors work in riding schools approved by the Association of Irish Riding Establishments (AIRE), ensuring safety and quality standards.

#### Benefits

- Rewarding, people focused role
- Opportunities to specialise (dressage, therapeutic riding, children's coaching)
- Flexible working patterns

#### How to become

1. Gain strong riding and horsemanship foundations through lessons, pony clubs, riding club, or working pupil roles, and assist qualified instructors at camps or riding schools.
2. Complete recognised instructor training.  
[See course list → Chapter 10.](#)
3. Gain practical coaching experience in riding schools or group lessons.
4. Work towards higher level accreditation.



## Therapeutic Riding Coach/Equine-Assisted Activities Assistant

Therapeutic riding and equine-assisted programmes support children and adults with physical, social, cognitive or emotional needs. Many centres operate alongside organisations such as Riding for the Disabled Association Ireland (RDA) or follow international standards from Horses in Education and Therapy International (HETI) or Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH).

### Benefits

- Deeply rewarding, people centred role
- Opportunities to specialise in equine assisted therapy
- Significant demand in riding schools and community programmes

## How to become

1. Build foundational riding and coaching skills through HSI training.
2. Volunteer or assist at RDA or therapeutic programmes.
3. Complete accredited training such as Therapeutic Riding Coaching certificate.  
[See course list → Chapter 10.](#)
4. Develop skills in adaptive coaching, safeguarding, and supporting diverse needs.

# Customer experience roles

Alongside instructor roles, riding schools and trekking centres depend on customer facing teams to support visitor experiences, trek delivery, bookings, and daily operations.



## Trek Leader/Guide

Trek leaders deliver guided rides on set routes, ensuring the safety and enjoyment of visitors. Duties include selecting suitable horses, providing safety briefings, supervising groups, and offering local commentary.

### Benefits

- Outdoor, adventure based role
- Daily work with horses and people
- Seasonal and international opportunities
- Ideal for those who enjoy customer interaction

## How to become

1. Build strong horse-handling and hacking skills.
2. Gain experience riding in groups and varied terrain.
3. Complete trekking specific training where available (group supervision, route management).
4. Develop customer service skills through tourism or hospitality roles.



## Admin/Booking Coordinator

Booking Coordinators manage daily lesson timetables, trek bookings, customer enquiries, payments, and communications across digital and in person platforms. They support instructors and management teams by ensuring efficient scheduling and a positive customer experience.

### Benefits

- Core role in customer experience and centre organisation
- Transferable to wider tourism, administration, and hospitality sectors
- Structured working hours compared to yard roles

## How to become

1. Gain customer service or administration experience in retail, hospitality, or tourism.
2. Learn basic equestrian terminology and riding school operations.
3. Develop ICT and booking system skills (email, phone scheduling, online booking tools).
4. Progress to supervisory roles by managing timetables, coordinating instructors, and streamlining customer processes.



# Management and ownership roles

Riding schools and trekking centres require strong leadership to ensure safe operations, high-quality customer experiences, and sustainable business practices. Management and ownership roles involve strategic planning, staff supervision, financial oversight, and the long-term development of equestrian programmes and tourism services.



## Riding School/Trekking Centre Owner

Owners are responsible for the overall direction of the centre. Their work includes business planning, financial oversight, marketing, insurance, horse welfare strategies, and building relationships with tourism partners and the local community.

### Benefits

- Lead a customer focused equestrian business
- Creative independence in programme development
- Opportunity to shape local equestrian access and tourism

### How to become

1. Gain experience as an instructor, trek leader, supervisor, or manager.
2. Complete training in business management, marketing, tourism, or leadership.
3. Undertake certification in equestrian centre safety and child protection.
4. Build experience managing staff, budgets, horse welfare systems, and customer services.
5. Establish or purchase a centre, developing business plans and partnerships.



## Centre Manager

Centre managers oversee the day-to-day running of the riding school or trekking centre. Their responsibilities include staff coordination, scheduling lessons and trekking activities, managing bookings, maintaining safety and welfare standards, supervising horse care routines, monitoring financial performance, and communicating with clients, parents, tourism partners, and regulatory bodies.

### Benefits

- Leadership focused role with varied responsibilities
- Direct involvement in centre development and customer experience
- Opportunities to manage expanding centres or multi activity tourism businesses

### How to become

1. Start in frontline roles such as instructor, trek leader, yard assistant, or booking coordinator.
2. Build strong organisational, leadership, and communication skills.
3. Complete relevant training such as:
  - QQI Level 6 Equitation/Horsemanship
  - Business, leadership or tourism modules
  - First Aid, safeguarding and safety training[See course list → Chapter 10.](#)
4. Take on supervisory tasks including staff scheduling, bookings oversight, and safety checks.
5. Progress to assistant manager and then full Centre Manager roles as experience builds.

"Horse Trekking, Ballyhoura, Co. Limerick" Ballyhoura Fáilte (Courtesy of Fáilte Ireland/Ireland's Content Pool)



# Yard-based roles



## Yard Staff

Yard Staff in riding schools and trekking centres carry out the daily care of lesson horses and ponies and support instructors during busy lesson and trekking schedules. These roles are essential to keeping centres running smoothly and safely, particularly during peak seasons.

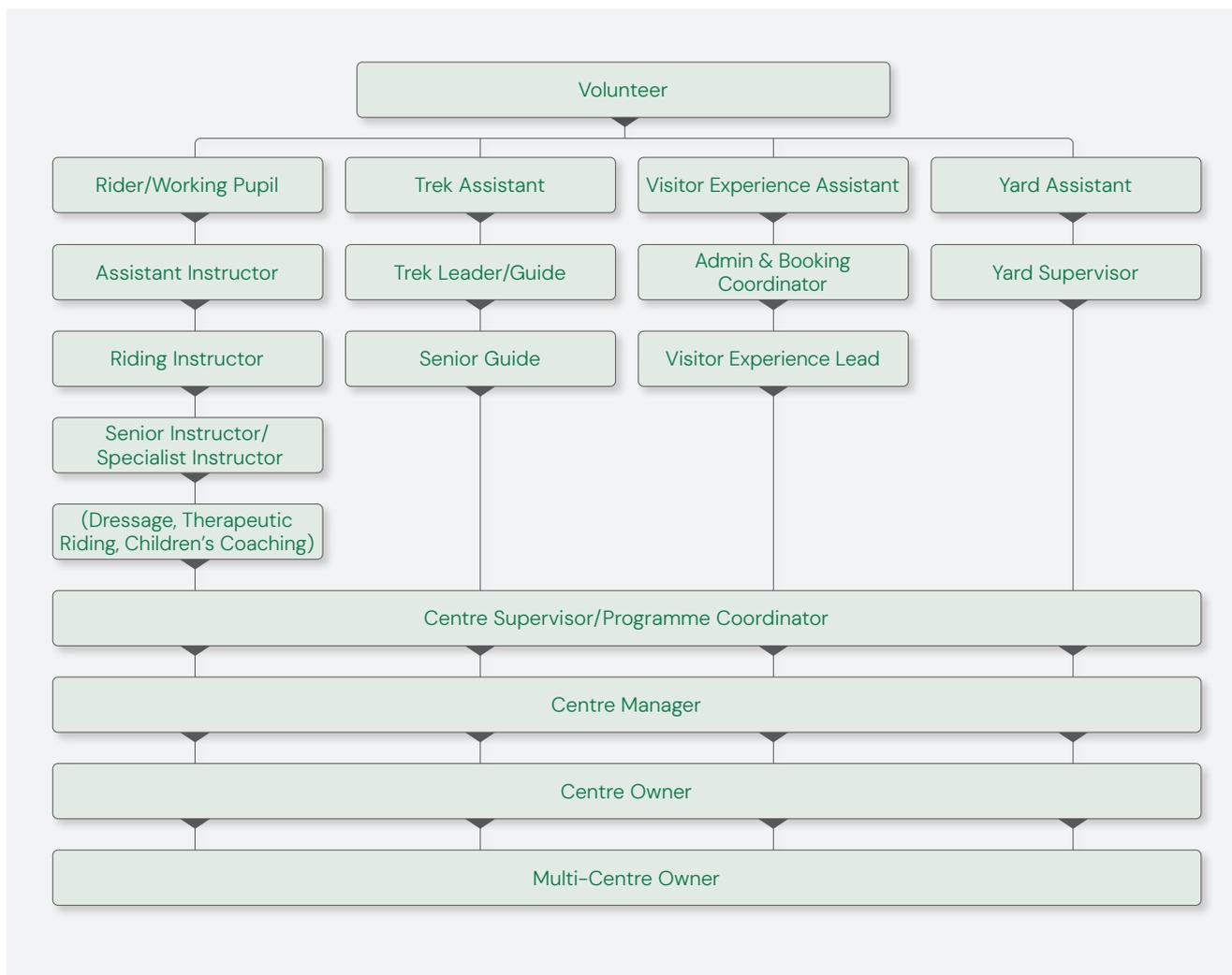
### Benefits

- Hands-on, practical work with steady, well trained school horses
- Excellent entry route into instructing or trekking roles
- Opportunity to build strong horsemanship and yard management skills
- Highly varied day-to-day work

### How to become

1. Gain basic horse care experience through riding lessons, volunteering, or local stables.
2. Complete QQI Level 5 Horsemanship or similar foundation training to develop core yard skills. [See course list → Chapter 10.](#)
3. Build experience assisting instructors, handling novice riders, and preparing horses for lessons.
4. Develop skills in tack fitting, arena setup, and safe leading of horses and ponies.
5. Progress into senior yard roles, assistant instructor positions, or trekking support roles with experience.

### Career progression map: riding schools, trekking centres and equine tourism





## Working in riding schools, trekking centres and equine tourism

### Working conditions

- Outdoor work in varied weather
- Seasonal peaks during tourism months
- Mix of horse-handling, instruction, and customer care
- Evening and weekend duties
- High responsibility for client safety in lessons and treks

### Transferable skills gained

- Communication and customer service
- Teaching and supervision
- Organisation and time management
- Safety awareness and horsemanship
- Problem-solving and adaptability
- Tourism, hospitality, and public engagement skills

### Typical employers

- Riding schools and equestrian centres
- Trekking and trail riding centres
- Holiday riding centres
- Visitor attractions with equine or heritage experiences
- Therapeutic riding programmes or RDA centres

### Entrepreneurial opportunities

- Freelance coaching or camp instruction
- Guided riding experiences or photo treks
- Pony camps and children's programmes
- Riding holiday packages

## Case Study: Jill Hughes and Aideen Morrin, Stories Ireland DMC

### From Five-Star Hotels to a Leading Luxury Destination Management Company

Stories Ireland is a luxury destination management company (DMC) founded by Jill Hughes and Aideen Morrin, two industry professionals whose combined strengths have made the company one of Ireland's most respected names in bespoke international incentive travel. Their work blends creativity, logistics, and authentic Irish culture, often including equine experiences, to deliver high-impact incentive travel experiences.

### Early Careers and Background

Both founders began their careers in five star hotels. Aideen studied Hospitality Management at DIT and first encountered DMCs while on hotel placement. The fast pace and creative scope immediately intrigued her, and thanks to a former colleague who approached her to apply, she made the move into her first destination management role.

Jill's path was similar, working in luxury hotels until a director of sales recommended her for a DMC position. From day one, she gravitated toward operations and delivery, building the skill set that would later define her role in Stories.

They spent their early careers in different DMCs, Aideen focused on sales, Jill on operations, developing complementary strengths. They met as competitors on a Tourism Ireland trade mission to South Africa in 2006.

### Working Together: The First Spark

Their professional paths aligned in 2010 when Aideen moved to a conference management company to open a DMC division. Jill, newly back from Australia, was hired as an operator. From the beginning, they realised their contrasting yet complimentary strengths created a powerful balance: Aideen securing clients and shaping the vision; Jill ensuring flawless planning and delivery.



Both were strongly aligned on the quality of events they wanted to deliver.

### Founding Stories Ireland

After 12 years, Aideen and Jill left that company. Clients continued reaching out, asking whether the pair would consider starting something of their own. For two years, the answer was always no, until one long-term client asked them to take on a major programme and made it clear the opportunity wouldn't wait. Aideen and Jill spoke, and within 24 hours, Stories Ireland was born.

Today, the company delivers high end experiential programmes across Ireland for international agencies and global brands. Their focus: authenticity, creativity, connection, and world class execution.

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*“We didn’t plan to start a DMC – but the right moment found us.”*

---

### **Approach, Team and Company Philosophy**

Both Jill and Aideen grew up on farms where teamwork, responsibility, and respect were non negotiable. Jill spent her childhood helping run one day equestrian events, learning by osmosis how clear communication and preparation are the backbone of any successful operation. That farm mentality, where everyone pulls together, now shapes how they lead their team.

Their company name, Story Farm, reflects that ethos. Ideas are nurtured the way you would nurture anything on a farm: with care, collaboration, and follow through. Creativity matters hugely to them, but only if it can be delivered flawlessly.

---

*“Creativity is only as strong as its delivery.”*

---

Jill and Aideen recruit carefully, choosing people with the same values; collaboration, curiosity, reliability, and care. Their first hire wasn’t sales or operations but business management, ensuring strong foundations from day one.

### **Equine Tourism and Ireland’s Unique Offering**

Equine experiences have become one of the most powerful threads in their programmes. While not every guest arrives with an interest in horses, almost everyone leaves with one. From racing yards to beach rides to behind the scenes moments with trainers, these interactions consistently become the emotional core of a trip.

The passion found in racing, hunting, breeding, and sport horses is generational and deeply felt by visitors.

### **Planning, Delivery and Navigating Curveballs**

With long project lead times, high expectations, and strong international competition, their work demands constant creativity and meticulous planning. Regardless of reputation, you are only ever as good as your last event. Ninety nine percent of an event happens before a guest arrives; the remaining one percent is the on site orchestration.

They collaborate only with suppliers they trust to match their standards, especially in equine settings where welfare, timing, and safety are paramount. Weather, logistics, and last minute changes are normal, but years of experience have taught them to adapt calmly. As Jill says: “There’s no bad weather in Ireland, just bad clothes.”

One story they often recall was managing four simultaneous familiarisation trips during Hurricane Ophelia in 2017. Everything changed in an instant,

but clients still talk about how they handled it. The reassurance and problem solving under pressure earned lifelong loyalty.

### **What Makes the Work Rewarding**

For Jill, it’s the relationships:

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*“Our events are temporary; our client relationships are long term.”*

---

For Aideen, the best events are a sum of their parts. There is nothing more exciting than collaborating with our partners to create experiences that have never been seen before.

### **Advice to Their Younger Selves**

Both agree on the same lesson: trust your instincts. When they follow their gut, things go right.

And for anyone considering a career in this industry, they advise seeking internships, asking endless questions, taking initiative, and embracing hard work.

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*“Just keep going. Momentum and curiosity will take you where you’re meant to be.”*

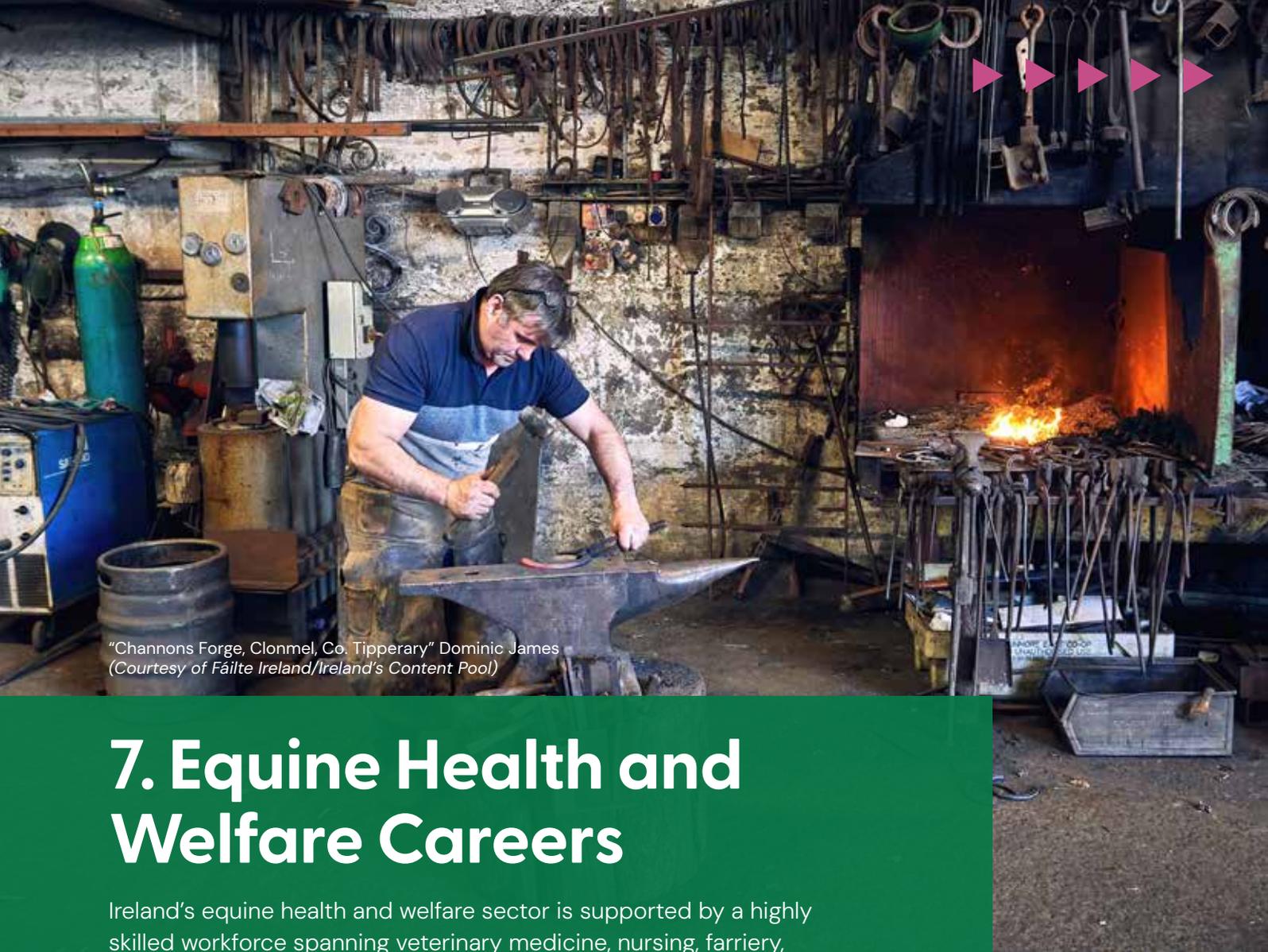
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### **What Makes You Stand Out in Tourism and DMC Work**

- Reliability – show up, follow through, take initiative
- Curiosity – ask questions, listen deeply, look behind the obvious
- Client etiquette – luxury service skills go a long way
- Team mentality – everyone pulls together
- Calm under pressure – things will go wrong
- Creativity that’s rooted in reality

### **Start Like They Did**

- Begin with internships – young or mature, it doesn’t matter
- Build hospitality experience, especially in 5 star environments
- Develop customer service, discretion, and problem solving
- Gain operational skills – logistics, planning, timing
- Expose yourself to equine culture
- Cultivate your storytelling ability – every experience has a narrative
- Work hard, lean into opportunities, and say yes early in your career



“Channons Forge, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary” Dominic James  
(Courtesy of Fáilte Ireland/Ireland’s Content Pool)

## 7. Equine Health and Welfare Careers

Ireland’s equine health and welfare sector is supported by a highly skilled workforce spanning veterinary medicine, nursing, farriery, rehabilitation, and welfare advocacy. These careers form the backbone of equine wellbeing across sport, leisure, breeding, racing, riding schools, and rescue environments. Professional standards are overseen by national regulatory bodies including the Veterinary Council of Ireland (VCI), Teagasc Equine, Farriery Ireland, and specialist welfare organisations such as the ISPCA and World Horse Welfare.



### Equine Veterinarian

Equine veterinarians diagnose and treat illness and injury, provide ambulatory and emergency care, support athletic performance, and lead on biosecurity, herd management, reproduction and surgery. In Ireland, anyone practising veterinary medicine must be registered with the Veterinary Council of Ireland under the Veterinary Practice Act 2005.

#### Benefits

- Work at the forefront of equine health and performance
- Opportunities to specialise (surgery, internal medicine, imaging, reproduction)
- High demand across racing, sport horse, and leisure sectors

### How to become

1. Complete a veterinary medicine degree.  
[See course list → Chapter 10.](#)
2. Register with the VCI before practising legally.
3. Complete an equine internship or residency.
4. Maintain mandatory CPD through VCI Continuing Veterinary Education Regulations.



## Equine Nurse

Registered Veterinary Nurses (RVNs) play a crucial role in equine practices, supporting diagnostics, anaesthesia, inpatient care, welfare monitoring and client communication. Veterinary nursing is a protected and regulated profession in Ireland, and RVNs may only practise if registered with the VCI.

### Benefits

- Hands-on medical care and welfare support
- Highly employable across equine and mixed practices

### How to become

1. Complete an approved Veterinary Nursing qualification. [See course list → Chapter 10.](#)
2. Register with the VCI.
3. Maintain skills through VCI Continuing Veterinary Education (CVE) requirements.
4. Develop specialist equine skills via placements.



## Farrier

Farriers are essential to equine soundness and welfare, providing trimming, shoeing, hoof care and remedial work. Ireland's farriery profession is supported by Farriery Ireland and the Irish Master Farriers' Association.

### Benefits

- High demand across the sport horse, racing, and leisure sectors
- Practical, physical work with autonomy
- Opportunities to specialise in therapeutic shoeing or performance horses
- Strong earning potential and self-employment opportunities

### How to become

1. Secure an apprenticeship with an approved Master Farrier (registered with Farriery Ireland).
2. Complete the SOLAS apprenticeship, including training at the Irish School of Farriery. [See course list → Chapter 10.](#)
3. Achieve the QQI Level 6 Advanced Certificate in Farriery.
4. Join the Irish Farriery Register and pursue ongoing CPD.



## Physiotherapy, Massage, and Rehabilitation

Rehabilitation professionals help horses recover from injury, manage chronic conditions, optimise performance, and maintain mobility. Chartered physiotherapists working with animals typically follow additional veterinary-specific training through professional bodies such as the Irish Society of Chartered Physiotherapists – Animal Practice Niche Group (CPAPNG).

Massage and soft-tissue therapists also work under veterinary-aligned best practice, particularly within performance and welfare programmes, and must comply with competition and welfare codes such as the FEI Permitted Equine Therapists Codex.

### Benefits

- Direct impact on comfort, performance, and wellbeing
- Collaboration with vets and farriers
- Fast-growing field within Irish sport horse and racing sectors

### How to become

1. Qualify as a chartered human physiotherapist.
2. Complete a recognised postgraduate programme in veterinary physiotherapy (ACPAT/ISCP pathway or MSc).
3. Work under veterinary referral and maintain required CPD.
4. Gain equine clinical experience through placements, mentorship, and hands-on practice.



"Channons Forge, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary" Dominic James (Courtesy of Fáilte Ireland/Ireland's Content Pool)



## Animal Welfare Organisations

Ireland's welfare organisations work across rescue, rehabilitation, education, advocacy, and enforcement. Many collaborate with public authorities and industry bodies. Common roles include equine care assistants, welfare inspectors, rehabilitation staff, rehoming officers, education/outreach officers, and fundraising or volunteer-coordination roles.

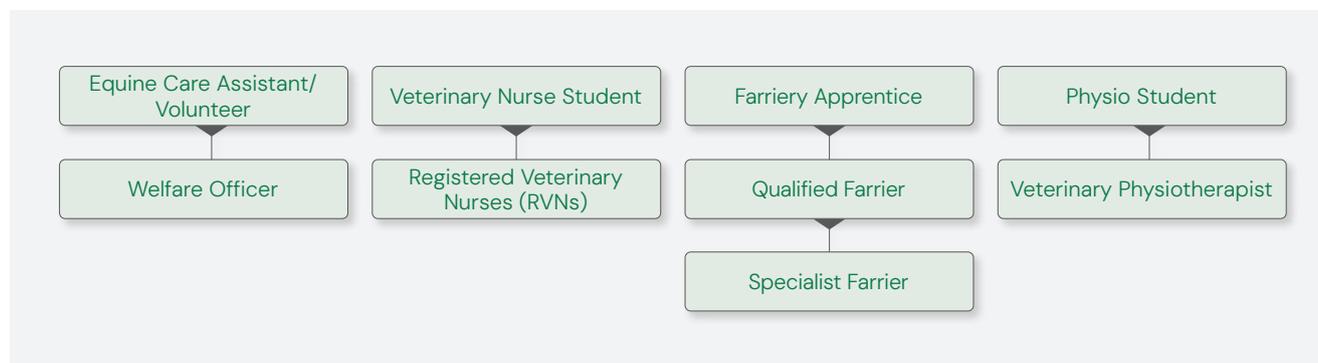
### Benefits

- Impactful welfare-driven work
- Opportunities in rescue, rehoming, education and advocacy
- Roles across frontline care, investigations, and policy

## How to become

1. Gain experience in equine handling, welfare, or veterinary settings.
2. Volunteer with welfare organisations (ISPCA, IHWT, WHW).
3. Complete training relevant to enforcement, care, behaviour or rehabilitation.
4. Build skills in communication, assessment, and welfare legislation.

## Career Progression Map: equine health and welfare



## Working in equine health and welfare

### Working conditions

- Mix of indoor/outdoor work
- Travel for ambulatory and farriery work
- Vets: Emergency callouts
- Physical, hands-on roles
- Strict adherence to welfare, safety, and regulatory standards (VCI, FAWAC, FEI)

### Transferable skills gained

- Clinical reasoning and decision making
- Communication and client education
- Welfare assessment and regulation compliance
- Collaboration
- Problem solving and record keeping

### Typical employers

- Veterinary practices and equine hospitals
- Farriery practices and remedial specialists
- Rehabilitation and physiotherapy clinics
- Welfare organisations (ISPCA, WHW)
- Government and regulatory bodies (DAFM, local authorities)

### Entrepreneurial opportunities

- Farriery business
- Specialist veterinary or physiotherapy consultancy
- Rehabilitation clinics
- Welfare education and yard assessment services
- Owner focused workshops or CPD programmes



## Case Study: Dr. Marcus Swail – Veterinarian

### Blending Horsemanship, High Performance & World-Class Veterinary Skill

Growing up, Marcus Swail was a rider before he was anything else. Horses shaped the Swail household. He and his brother, Conor Swail, both competed on ponies, and his brother has since risen to the world's top 30 showjumpers. That early immersion in competition shaped Marcus' future long before he realised it.

His first spark of interest in veterinary medicine came the night one of his ponies developed colic. The vet arrived, calm, confident, skilled, and treated the pony with reassuring ease. "He was brilliant at his job... and he also had a fast car. I thought, that looks interesting."

It was a simple moment, but one that set the foundation for a career defined by precision, performance, and lifelong learning.

### Training, Qualifications and Early Steps

Marcus followed the UK A level system and needed high grades to enter Veterinary School, two As and a B. His mock grades were far from that, but he worked hard when it mattered.

He chose Glasgow for college, a decision made partly on instinct, partly on adventure.

His early career mixed structure and chance:

- A mixed practice in Dumfriesshire, secured through an external examiner
- Glasgow University Veterinary Practice, where he took on more equine work
- A period of locum work in Australia, travelling and learning in new environments

One fax from Tasmania and a payphone full of coins later, he landed a role in Kildare in 1998, bringing him into the centre of Ireland's elite equestrian world.

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*"A lot of your career is half plan, half chance – but you have to show up when opportunity arrives."*

---

### Taking the Entrepreneurship Path

Marcus became a partner in Anglesey Lodge Equine Hospital in the early 2000s. But as time went on, he found himself increasingly drawn to performance horses – lameness, orthopaedics, competition management, and supporting elite equine athletes.

The structure of a large practice no longer fit the direction he wanted to go.

In 2008, he made the difficult decision to step away and form EquiVET, a practice centred fully on competition horses. "It would have been easier to stay... but it wasn't what I wanted to do anymore."

EquiVET grew gradually: first one vet, then two, then four. Today, it is recognised for high performance orthopaedic work, advanced imaging, and its close links with international sport.

Marcus is quick to credit his team:

---

*"You're only as good as the group of people around you."*

---

### Joining Team Ireland: A Role Built on Trust and Time

His involvement with Horse Sport Ireland began almost by chance. In 2001, a senior eventing rider asked him to support the Junior and Young Rider teams. That led to senior Eventing, then Showjumping, then Dressage.

He has now worked at multiple:

- European Championships
- World Championships
- Olympic Games ((including Athens, London, Rio, Tokyo, and Paris)

The competition workload for the practice can hit 150–180 days in major seasons, but the motivation isn't financial. "Being tested under pressure at the highest level – somehow I enjoy that."

Today he remains the vet for Ireland's senior Showjumping team, with colleagues covering Eventing and Dressage.

---

*"If you want a 9–5 job, equine veterinary work isn't it – it's vocational."*

---

### What His Work Really Involves

Marcus specialises in lameness investigation and performance loss. Horses arrive with problems they can't describe, so the job requires clinical skill, intuition, and an understanding of sport specific physical demands

There is also the strategic side: helping team managers select teams for championships by advising whether horses are fit, safe, and sound for international competition.

### Skills and Qualities for Future Equine Vets

Marcus is clear about what young people need: motivation, mental toughness, adaptability, and a real connection with horses.

He stresses that equine veterinary work has evolved dramatically, digital X ray, advanced ultrasound, MRI, and now AI based gait and image analysis are shaping the future. But the fundamentals haven't changed. "If you don't enjoy horses, this job will feel very hard very quickly."



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*"There's always something new to learn. That's what keeps the job interesting."*

---

### **Advice to His Younger Self**

He reflects honestly: *"There was probably a time where I thought I knew more than I did. Maybe I should have backed myself more. But that's part of everyone's evolution."*

The humility he learned from a mentor stayed with him: the idea that even after a full career, there is always more to understand.

### **Final Advice for Students**

Marcus' message for young people is simple:

- Have a strong connection to horses
- Understand the commitment
- Be ready for a job that is demanding but deeply rewarding
- Put in the work – because you get out what you put in

---

*"It's a very rewarding career for anyone willing to put the effort in."*

---

### **What Makes You Stand Out as an Equine Vet**

- Genuine connection with horses
- Mental toughness and willingness to work hard
- Curiosity and continuous learning
- Calmness under pressure
- Strong observational skill
- Adaptability to new technologies
- Teamwork and communication
- Reliability – turning up every day, even when it's tough

### **Start Like He Did**

- Spend time around horses – real horsemanship matters
- Be open to opportunities, even those that seem accidental
- Travel and work abroad if you can
- Build broad experience early (mixed practice can be a great foundation)
- Learn from mentors and stay humble
- Develop resilience – it's a demanding but rewarding career
- Embrace new technology and keep evolving
- Back yourself, even before you feel "ready"



# 8. Equine Science Research and Technology

Ireland's equine science ecosystem spans universities, applied research centres, and industry labs, combining biology, data, and engineering to improve horse health, welfare, and performance. Graduates enter genetics, nutrition, physiology, biomechanics, bioinformatics, diagnostics and product R&D, often collaborating with UCD, UL, Teagasc, the Irish Equine Centre, Horse Sport Ireland and technology partners.

## Research roles



### Research Scientist (Equine Science)

Research Scientists investigate genetics, nutrition, physiology, welfare, behaviour, and performance. They design studies, analyse data, and contribute to scientific understanding across breeding, sport, and health.

#### Benefits

- Lead scientific projects shaping equine welfare, performance, and sustainability
- Opportunities to publish, teach, and collaborate internationally
- Work across lab, field, and analytical environments

### How to become

1. Complete an equine/animal science degree.  
[See course list → Chapter 10.](#)
2. Build strong skills in research methods, data analysis, and scientific writing.
3. Progress to an MSc or PhD in equine/animal science, genetics, nutrition or biomechanics.
4. Gain experience through research assistantships, internships, or summer studentships.
5. Develop a publication record and apply for postdoctoral or research scientist roles.



## Research Support Roles

Research Assistants and Field Technicians support scientific projects through sample collection, data gathering, trial management, laboratory preparation, and field-based measurements using sensors, GPS and imaging technologies. These roles operate in research farms, laboratories, vet hospitals, or commercial yards.

### Benefits

- Hands-on involvement in lab, clinical, and field research
- Opportunity to specialise in biomechanics, nutrition, genetics or welfare
- Strong entry route into postgraduate study or senior technical roles
- Work closely with scientists, vets, nutritionists, and technologists

## How to become

1. Complete a QQI Level 7/8 degree in equine science, biology, animal science or biomedical science.  
[See course list → Chapter 10.](#)
2. Build practical skills (sampling, lab techniques, data collection).
3. Gain experience through university research modules or placements.

# Laboratory and diagnostic roles



## Diagnostic Laboratory Technician

Diagnostic Lab Technicians work on parasite testing, microbiology, molecular diagnostics (PCR), blood analysis, and surveillance programmes.

### Benefits

- Structured technical role with direct impact on equine health
- Work in accredited laboratory settings with modern equipment

## How to become

1. Complete a science qualification (biomed, animal science, equine science, biology).  
[See course list → Chapter 10.](#)
2. Train in core lab methods (PCR, ELISA, microscopy, aseptic technique).
3. Gain experience through placements at laboratories or private diagnostics.
4. Pursue CPD in parasitology, molecular diagnostics or quality assurance.



## Laboratory Scientist/Analyst

Laboratory Scientists analyse results, develop assays, contribute to surveillance programmes, and support research on pathogens, biomarkers, and disease trends.

### Benefits

- Advanced scientific work with real world impact
- Involvement in research, innovation, and publication
- Progression to senior scientist or laboratory manager

## How to become

1. Hold a relevant bachelor's degree and MSc/PhD.  
[See course list → Chapter 10.](#)
2. Build advanced technical experience in diagnostics or molecular biology.
3. Develop analytical and reporting skills.
4. Progress to specialist roles in diagnostics, research labs or biotech.

# Genetics, genomics, and data roles



## Equine Geneticist

Geneticists analyse heritable traits, develop breeding indices, support genomic selection, and interpret SNP based datasets.

Horse Sport Ireland's SNP genotype research illustrates the importance of genomics in modern equine breeding.

### Benefits

- Influence long-term breed improvement and sport horse development
- Work with cutting edge genomic tools and datasets
- Collaboration with studbooks, breeders, and research institutes

### How to become

1. Complete a degree in equine/animal science, genetics or biology. [See course list → Chapter 10.](#)
2. Progress to a MSc/PhD in quantitative genetics, animal breeding or genomics.
3. Develop skills in statistics, coding (R/Python), and large dataset analysis.
4. Gain experience in research groups or breeding programmes.

# Nutrition, microbiome, and physiology roles



## Equine Nutritionist

Nutritionists design feeding plans, support gut health, run diet trials, analyse forage, and advise studs, yards, and feed companies.

### Benefits

- Direct impact on performance, welfare, and long-term health
- Opportunities in research, commercial feed companies, and consultancy
- Increasing focus on gut microbiome and personalised nutrition

### How to become

1. Complete a degree in equine/animal science or animal nutrition. [See course list → Chapter 10.](#)
2. Progress to a MSc in animal nutrition which is recommended for specialist roles.
3. Gain experience through feed companies, nutrition labs or research trials.
4. Continue CPD in gut health, forage analysis, and behavioural nutrition.



## Exercise Physiologist/ Performance Scientist

Performance Scientists monitor training load, fatigue, conditioning, heart rate and recovery to support athletic horses in racing or sport.

### Benefits

- Ideal for those interested in applied sport science
- Opportunities in high performance racing and sport programmes
- Blend of fieldwork, data analysis, and scientific testing

### How to become

1. Complete a degree in equine science, sports science or physiology. [See course list → Chapter 10.](#)
2. Continue training in exercise testing, metabolic measurement and analysis tools.
3. Gain experience with performance horses in racing or equestrian sport.



# Equine technology and innovation roles



## Biomechanics Analyst

Biomechanics Analysts evaluate movement, symmetry, conformation, and performance using IMU sensors, high speed video, pressure systems, and gait analysis tools.

### Benefits

- Combine science, movement, and technology
- Work with performance, welfare, and clinical teams
- Opportunities in research, diagnostics, and sport science

### How to become

1. Complete a degree in biomechanics, equine science or sports science. [See course list → Chapter 10.](#)
2. Train in motion analysis and sensor technologies.
3. Build experience through research projects or tech companies.
4. Progress to specialist or senior biomechanics roles.



## Tech R&D Scientist (Equine Technology)

R&D Scientists develop new tools such as wearables, lameness detection systems, welfare sensors, diagnostics and training analysis software.

### Benefits

- Shape the future of equine health and performance tech
- Work in multidisciplinary teams (engineering, UX, vet science)
- High innovation and commercialisation potential

### How to become

1. Complete a degree in science, engineering or equine science with tech modules. [See course list → Chapter 10.](#)
2. Develop skills in prototyping, testing, and user focused design.
3. Gain experience in R&D projects or tech start ups.
4. Progress to product lead, innovation manager or senior R&D scientist.



## Equine Data Scientist/AI Specialist

These specialists build predictive models for lameness detection, training optimisation, welfare monitoring, and performance forecasting.

### Benefits

- High value, high demand role
- Opportunities across equine, agri, and sports tech sectors
- Remote work possible

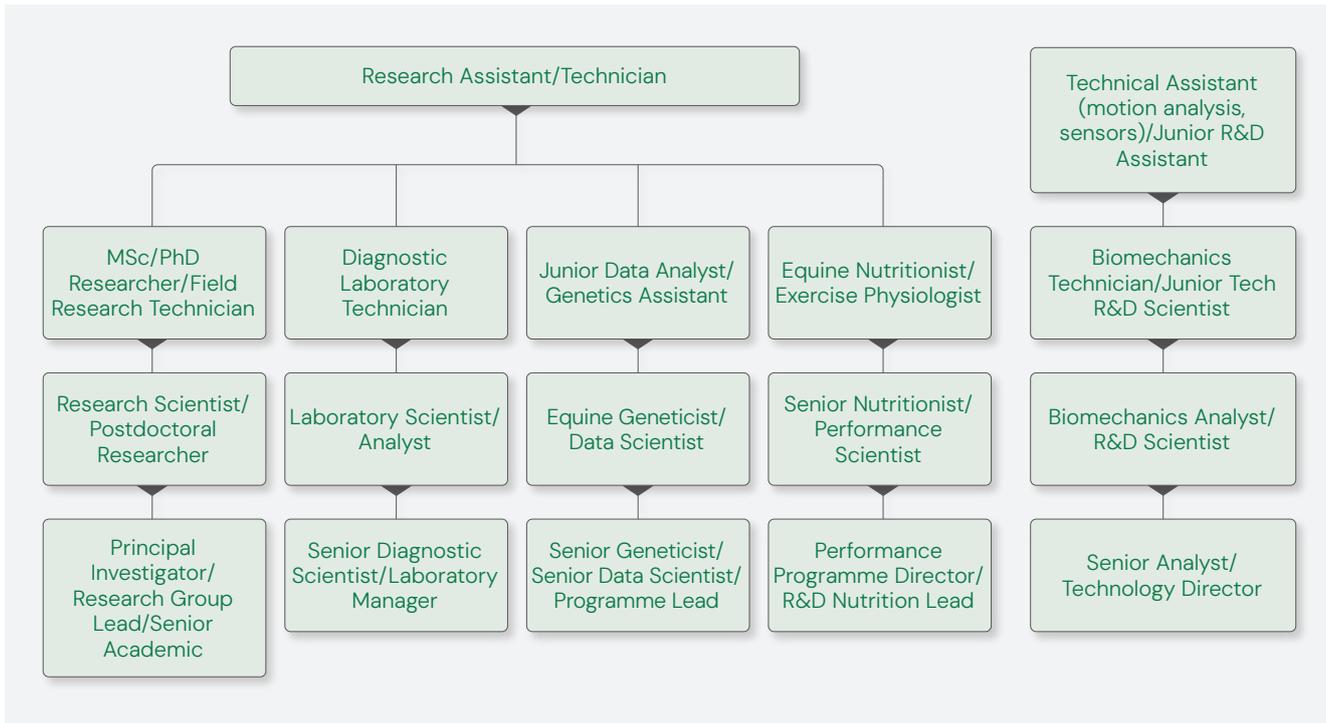
### How to become

1. Complete a degree in data science, computing, AI or equine science with advanced data skills. [See course list → Chapter 10.](#)
2. Develop machine learning and modelling expertise.
3. Build a portfolio of equine data projects.
4. Progress to senior or specialist AI roles.



Photo: Irish Equine Centre

## Career progression map: equine science, research, and technology



### Working in equine science, research, and technology

#### Working conditions

- Blend of lab, field, and desk-based analysis
- Scientific and data-driven workflows
- Collaboration with vets, coaches, breeders, and engineers
- Project-based timelines and seasonal data collection

#### Transferable skills gained

- Scientific reasoning and experimental design
- Laboratory and diagnostic skills
- Data analysis (R, Python, statistics)
- Communication and stakeholder engagement
- Innovation, prototyping, and tech validation

#### Typical employers

- UCD School of Veterinary Medicine and Equine Research Groups
- University of Limerick Equine Science Department
- Teagasc Equine Research and ECHO Programme
- Irish Equine Centre diagnostics labs
- Horse Sport Ireland genetics and breeding programmes
- Equine technology developers and start-ups

#### Entrepreneurial opportunities

- Diagnostics and sensor-based technologies
- Biomechanics and training-analytics platforms
- Nutrition and microbiome products
- Equine data consultancy and welfare science services



Photo: Irish Equine Centre



## Case Study: Nicole Groyer, Equine Nutritionist – Connolly’s Red Mills

### From Pony on the Farm to Feeding the World’s Horses

Nicole Groyer is an equine nutritionist with Connolly’s Red Mills, working with stud farms, trainers, and sport horse yards across Ireland. Her role blends science, problem solving, communication, and hands-on horsemanship. It’s a career that brings together her childhood passion for horses and her analytical mind, one that now sees her creating tailored diets, solving complex feeding challenges, and supporting horses from foals to elite athletes.

### Early Interest and Background

Nicole grew up surrounded by animals on her family’s farm. Her mother loved horses, her grandfather and uncle farmed, and Nicole was lucky enough to have her own pony. Riding was always part of her life, alongside football and Irish dancing, but horses were the consistent thread.

She chose her degree in Agricultural Science at UCD. The first two years were general science with agriculture and for the third year she specialised in Animal Science (Equine), which opened doors to specialist modules and an equine placement.

---

*“Everything worked out the way it was meant to. I love my job.”*

---

She spent her placement with Coolmore in Kentucky, an experience that broadened her knowledge and deepened her interest in equine health, welfare, and performance.

### Education That Mattered

While many parts of her degree proved useful, certain modules became core to her professional life: Equine nutrition, Ruminant nutrition, Animal physiology, Grassland and Crop management.

Nutrition was a natural fit for Nicole’s analytical mindset. She loved the detail, the small margins, and the way subtle dietary changes could make a huge difference to a horse’s wellbeing and performance.

### Developing as an Equine Nutritionist

Nicole joined Red Mills through their graduate programme, gaining hands-on training across nutrition, raw materials, manufacturing, and lab testing. From there she moved into a role that combines:

- On yard assessments
- Forage analysis
- Tailored diet plans
- Technical advice
- Account management
- Attendance at industry conferences

- Collaboration with vets, managers, riders, and stud owners

Her job is varied. Some days she’s driving to Cork at dawn to visit stud farms; other days she’s analysing forage reports, troubleshooting diet issues, or attending conferences to stay ahead of new research.

---

*“Every day is different – you’re meeting people, seeing horses, solving problems.”*

---

### How She Builds a Nutrition Plan

Every diet starts with questions. Lots of them. What age, breed, height of horse is it? What workload are they in? Is it a broodmare? A stallion? A young horse? Are they living in or out? What’s the forage quality like? Is there a performance or health issue? Are they recovering well? Eating well? Lacking energy?

Horses are sensitive and individual, so Nicole builds plans tailored to each one, balancing energy requirements, vitamins, minerals, protein, gut health, temperament, recovery, and management systems.

### Working With People and Building Trust

Nutrition isn’t just about horses, it’s about the people too.

Nicole works closely with long-term direct customers as well as one off callers looking for quick advice. Racing yards, stud farms and sport horse stables often have multi year relationships with Red Mills, with seasonal reviews and constant communication around specific horses.

The biggest challenge? Changing traditional mindsets.

Feeding practices are often done “the way it’s always been done,” and introducing modern research-based approaches, especially around gut health and high fibre diets, can take time and trust.

But once clients see the results, the change is worth it.

### What Makes the Work Rewarding

For Nicole, the best part is simple: seeing horses thrive.

Whether it’s a broodmare producing a healthy foal, a racehorse winning after a tailored diet change, or a sport horse finally finding the right energy balance, she loves the moment when a client sends a photo or message saying: “This is working, thank you.”

It’s a blend of science, horsemanship, and genuine care for the animals she supports.



### Skills That Matter in Equine Nutrition

- Curiosity and willingness to learn
- Good communication (the role is face to face)
- Comfort with science and analysis
- Problem-solving
- Industry knowledge – grassland, forage, management
- Ability to build trust with clients
- Teamwork

Red Mills exports to over 80 countries, so cultural awareness and adaptability are also part of the job.

### Advice to Her Younger Self

Nicole followed her dream to work with horses. Now she'd tell her younger self:

- There are many paths into the equine sector.
- Explore widely, work in different yards, different systems, different countries.
- Experience builds confidence, skills, and clarity.
- People in the industry are more approachable than you think, ask questions.

And ultimately:

“Don't panic if the first plan doesn't work out. You might end up exactly where you're supposed to be.”

### What Makes You Stand Out in Equine Nutrition

- Curiosity and analytical thinking
- Strong communication skills
- Understanding of forage, grassland, and animal physiology
- Ability to problem solve calmly
- Willingness to travel and work varied hours
- Respect for tradition, but confidence in science

### Start Like She Did

- Consider an agricultural or equine science degree
- Seek placements in racing, sport horse, or breeding systems
- Build broad experience, yards, labs, stud farms, shows
- Learn to read forage reports and understand feed labels
- Attend conferences, seminars, and workshops
- Ask questions, observe everything, and keep learning



"Whitegate, Co. Clare" Eamon Ward, (Courtesy of Fáilte Ireland/Ireland's Content Pool)



## 9. Equine Business Management

Equine business careers span commercial management, enterprise services, professional communications, logistics, retail, media, events, and entrepreneurship, all essential to the functioning and growth of Ireland's equestrian economy.

### Equine business, enterprise, and support roles



#### Equine Retail or Product Business Owner

Business owners develop products or retail offerings such as tack, supplements, clothing, equipment or technology through physical shops or online platforms.

#### Benefits

- Growing opportunities in both online and in store retail
- Ability to build a brand aligned with equine market needs
- Opportunities across sport, leisure, and equine technology

#### How to become

1. Get experience in equine retail or brand rep roles.
2. Research your target customer and choose a retail or product model.
3. Source reliable suppliers and learn basic stock/inventory systems.
4. Set up shop and build visibility through social media and events.



## Equine Consultancy and Professional Services

Consultants support equine SMEs with brand strategy, customer experience, operations, digital transformation or business planning.

### Benefits

- High value, expert service offering
- Work with a variety of equine businesses
- Strong opportunities for long-term client relationships

### How to become

1. Build specialist expertise (operations, brand, customer experience, digital).
2. Start with small projects and gather testimonials.
3. Package your services clearly (audits, strategy, ongoing support).
4. Grow through networking, referrals, and long-term client retainers.



## Equine Tourism and Experience Provider

Equine tourism providers create horse-focused visitor experiences, from guided treks to retreats, workshops, and farm tours, serving both domestic and international tourists.

### Benefits

- Creative niche combining horses and tourism
- Opportunities to design unique visitor experiences
- Growing international interest in equine focused tourism

### How to become

1. Understand safety, insurance, and tourism regulations.
2. Create a unique, safe visitor offering (treks, retreats, workshops).
3. Partner with venues, guides, B&Bs or adventure tourism providers.
4. Promote using social media, travel platforms, and collaborations.



## Equine Business Manager

Equine Business Managers oversee commercial operations in equine SMEs, sport organisations, retail chains, breeding enterprises, or service businesses. They work across finance, strategy, HR, customer relations, planning, sponsorship, and commercial development.

### Benefits

- Strategic role with high autonomy
- Diverse responsibilities (operations, finance, planning, marketing)
- Opportunities across sport, retail, breeding, logistics, media

### How to become

1. Study business, equine business, marketing or a related discipline.
2. Gain administration or operations experience in an equine or agri-business.
3. Build skills in finance, HR, planning, and customer systems.



## Operations and Logistics

Operations and logistics specialists coordinate the movement of horses, equipment, staff, and resources for competitions, transport companies, breeding enterprises, and sales yards.

### Benefits

- Fast paced and varied role in a growing industry
- Opportunities in transport, events, retail, sales, and studbook services
- Ideal for organised, people-focused, problem solvers

### How to become

1. Start in administration, stable support or event operations roles.
2. Build scheduling, communication, and problem-solving skills.
3. Learn equine transport rules, welfare, and compliance to progress.



## Equine Insurance, Finance, and Compliance

These professionals support clients or businesses with insurance, risk management, VAT, customs, financial planning, and regulatory compliance. Transport and international trade require significant paperwork, making this a growing field.

### Benefits

- High demand among studs, transporters, competition yards, SMEs
- Stable career with strong earning potential
- Opportunities in insurance firms, financial offices, and specialist consultancies

### How to become

---

1. Achieve a qualification in finance, insurance, business or accounting.
2. Gain experience in equine, agricultural or rural enterprise settings.
3. Complete CPD in insurance, tax, or regulatory frameworks.



## Equine Events and Sponsorship

Events Coordinators plan and execute shows, competitions, sales, launches, corporate hospitality, and sponsorship activations.

Ireland's sport horse industry relies heavily on event activity, marketing, and industry engagement.

### Benefits

- Creative, people-focused role central to equine sporting culture
- Opportunities across competitions, sales, conferences, brand activations, and federations
- Strong networking opportunities

### How to become

---

1. Obtain a degree or experience in events, marketing or business administration.
2. Volunteer or intern at equestrian events to build experience.
3. Gain skills in planning, risk assessment, hospitality, and sponsorship.



Photo: iStock

# Marketing, media, photography, and communications



## Equine Marketing and Communications

Marketing and Communications Specialists promote equine brands, events, and riders through strategic campaigns, digital content, branding, and PR. They work across agencies, federations, and equine companies, helping shape messaging and audience engagement.

### Benefits

- Creative and strategic work across digital, content, brand, and PR
- Work with top-level events, sponsors, riders, and equine companies
- Opportunities in agency or freelance settings

### How to become

---

1. Obtain a degree/training in marketing, media, design or communications.
2. Build portfolio work (social content, branding, campaigns).
3. Gain experience through internships with equine brands or agencies.



## Equine Photographer/Videographer

Photographers and videographers capture imagery for competitions, sales, portraits, media, and commercial campaigns. Many work freelance, supplying content to events, studs, businesses, and publications.

### Benefits

- Work at competitions, sales, farms, and brand shoots
- Highly flexible freelance career
- Opportunity to specialise in portraits, branding, sport or sales media

### How to become

---

1. Complete photography/videography training (college or self directed).
2. Build an equestrian portfolio (events, sales, portraits).
3. Network with events, studs, and agencies.
4. Offer specialised packages (branding, social, commercial shoots).



## PR and Media

PR Officers manage communication between equine organisations and the public, overseeing press releases, media outreach, storytelling, sponsorship communication, and reputation management.

### Benefits

- Work across press, media outreach, storytelling, sponsorship
- Strong links with equestrian publications and sporting bodies
- Opportunities to work with riders, brands, and events internationally

### How to become

---

1. Obtain a degree or experience in PR, journalism or communications.
2. Develop media writing, press release, and interview skills.
3. Apply for internships with equestrian PR or media agencies.



## Digital Content Creator/Social Media Manager

Digital content creators produce reels, short-form videos, graphics, and online campaigns for equine businesses, events and riders. They manage social channels, livestreams, and digital engagement strategies.

### Benefits

- Fast growing demand as equine businesses scale digitally
- Creative work across reels, campaigns, livestreaming
- Flexible freelance or in house opportunities

### How to become

---

1. Build skills in social media strategy, editing, artificial intelligence, and analytics.
2. Develop a strong online portfolio of equine content.
3. Work with riders, small equine brands, events or SMEs.



# Transport, Equipment, and ancillary services

## Equine Transport Operator/ Logistics Driver

Equine Transport Operators move horses safely for sales, racing, breeding, sport and international travel. They work with national transporters or specialist export companies, ensuring compliance with DAFM licensing and welfare regulations.

### Benefits

- Essential role across sales, racing, sport, and export markets
- Opportunities for national and international travel
- High demand due to Ireland's strong export industry

### How to become

---

1. Obtain DAFM Type 1/Type 2 transport authorisations.
2. Complete training in equine handling, welfare, and transport regulations.
3. Gain experience with licensed transport operators.

## Tack, clothing, and Retail Specialist

Retail Specialists support customers with expert product advice across tack, equipment, feed, clothing and saddlery supplies. Roles exist in tack shops, feed merchants, online equestrian retailers and mobile retail units at shows.

### Benefits

- Customer focused role in a growing retail sector
- Opportunities across physical and online stores
- Product knowledge highly valued by customers and brands

### How to become

---

1. Gain retail or equestrian product knowledge experience.
2. Develop sales and customer service skills.
3. Work with tack stores, feed suppliers or distributors.
4. Progress to retail management or product specialist roles.



Photo: iStock



## Saddlery Technician/ Tack Fitting Support

Saddlery Technicians assist with fitting, repairs, and adjustment of tack, supporting comfort and performance. Many work freelance or alongside specialist retail and saddlery businesses.

### Benefits

- Detail focused role supporting horse comfort and welfare
- Opportunities in repair, fitting support, and consultancy
- Flexible freelance career paths

### How to become

1. Train through saddlery workshops or courses.
2. Learn through apprenticeships with qualified saddlers or retailers.
3. Build practical skills in fitting and repairs.



## Equine Infrastructure and Facilities Services

These providers deliver arenas, stables, fencing, gallops, surfaces, and equine safe infrastructure. Roles exist with builders, contractors, equipment suppliers, and specialist equestrian construction companies.

### Benefits

- Work on yards, farms, and training facilities
- Opportunities with contractors, installers, and suppliers
- Growing demand for modern, safe, and functional infrastructure

### How to become

1. Gain experience in construction, agri engineering or equipment supply.
2. Build product knowledge (surfaces, stabling, lighting, fencing).
3. Work with equine or agricultural construction businesses.

## Working in Equine Business

### Working conditions

- Fast paced, project based and customer focused
- Mix of office, field, and event environments
- High seasonal variability (sales, shows, competitions)
- Digital skills increasingly essential

### Transferable skills gained

- Communication and customer experience
- Project and event management
- Marketing, digital, analytics, and content creation
- Finance, logistics, and business administration

### Typical employers

- Equine SMEs, retailers and product companies
- Transport companies
- Marketing and media agencies
- Equestrian events and show organisers
- Studbooks, federations and sport governing bodies



"Berney Brothers Ltd, Saddlery, Kilcullen, Co. Kildare" Sonder Visuals (Courtesy of Fáilte Ireland/Ireland's Content Pool)



# Starting and growing your own equine business

Ireland's equine industry is powered not only by sport, breeding, and riding centres but by hundreds of small businesses operating in marketing, media, logistics, retail, technology, consultancy, facilities, nutrition, product design, and tourism.

To support this, the Local Enterprise Office (LEO) is the first point of contact for any equine start up or small business seeking advice, funding, training or mentoring. LEO provides a step by step enterprise pathway, helping equine entrepreneurs move from early stage ideas to national and international growth.

## Stage 1 Early Stage and Feasibility

For individuals exploring an idea or preparing to launch

### Feasibility Grant

Funding to investigate the viability of new equine business ideas. This is ideal for product development, service testing, feasibility studies or prototype work.

### LEO Mentoring Programme

One to one sessions with expert business mentors offering guidance on market analysis, pricing, strategy, and early decision making.

### Start Your Own Business (SYOB) Programme

Structured training covering business planning, finance, marketing, compliance and market validation. This programme is essential for equine practitioners transitioning into entrepreneurship.

## Stage 2 Starting Up

For equine businesses in their first 18 months

### Priming Grant

Seed funding for early stage businesses to support employment, equipment, marketing or operational setup.

### Grow Digital (formerly Digital Start)

Support to integrate digital tools, improve workflows, modernise operations or adopt digital marketing.

### LEO Training Workshops

Short, practical workshops across financial management, GDPR, customer service, digital marketing, strategic planning and more.

## Stage 3 Expansion and Export Growth

For established equine businesses ready to grow, hire, scale or expand markets

### Business Expansion Grant

Funding for job creation, capital investment, equipment purchases or scaling operations.

### Management Development Programmes

Training (such as the LEO MDP) for owner managers preparing to scale, lead staff, and build long-term commercial structures.

### LEAN for Business

Expert consultancy on improving productivity, efficiency and competitiveness – ideal for transport companies, media agencies, retail businesses, product manufacturers, and equine service SMEs.

### Export Development Supports

Supports to prepare equine companies for international markets. This is particularly relevant for transport operators, retailers, tech developers and content/marketing agencies serving global equestrian clients.

### Progression Pathways

For high ambition equine businesses with potential to scale internationally, expand employment or develop innovative products, contact your Local Enterprise Office [www.localenterprise.ie](http://www.localenterprise.ie)

Businesses may progress into:

### High Potential Start Up (HPSU) Programme

For companies demonstrating international market potential and fast growth capacity.

### Innovation and R&D Supports

Funding for new equine technologies, nutrition products, equipment design, digital platforms or research led product development.

### Accelerator and Internationalisation Supports

Access to accelerators and international expansion programmes tailored to high growth companies.

### Export Market Entry Programmes

Support for trade missions, overseas expansion, and international market development. This is valuable for Irish equine brands selling into the US, UK and EU markets.

### Wraparound Supports (Available at Every Stage)

#### Mentoring

Access to business mentors with expertise in finance, digital strategy, operations, product development, and internationalisation.

#### Peer-to-Peer Networks

Opportunities to connect with other equine entrepreneurs and business owners through LEO networks, industry groups and enterprise events.

### Specialist Training

Courses covering leadership, digital marketing, e-commerce, financial planning, branding, customer experience and more.

### Ongoing Advisory Services

LEO is the go to government support for any equine start up or small business, ensuring every entrepreneur has access to structured guidance, funding and continuous development.

### Entrepreneurship Opportunities in the Equine Industry

The equine sector offers broad pathways for new and growing:

- Marketing, design and branding services
- Photography, videography, and digital content creation
- Transport and logistics services
- Retail (tack, equipment, feed, supplements, clothing, technology)
- Consultancy (operations, digital, brand strategy, customer experience)
- Event management and sponsorship activation
- Equine tourism and experience businesses
- Product innovation: tech, equipment, nutrition, welfare tools
- Administration, virtual assistance and business support services

Each of these areas can follow the LEO to Enterprise Ireland pathway depending on ambition, product development and export potential.

## Client Profile: EQUI-ED

Equi-Ed is a leading provider of science-led equine education, specialising in professional training programmes that support horse welfare, rehabilitation knowledge, injury prevention, and performance optimisation. The company delivers an expanding suite of structured education pathways for equine professionals, therapists, and horse owners, with courses covering integrative support therapies, equine health and nutrition, racehorse-specific care, and advanced specialist areas such as functional biting and bridle fitting.

Equi-Ed is recognised for its commitment to evidence-based learning and the development of comprehensive, academically grounded course material that bridges scientific theory with practical application. Alongside its professional training programmes, Equi-Ed also provides owner-focused education and continues to expand its catalogue of courses and specialist modules to meet the evolving needs of the equine industry. Led by owner Therese Murphy, an equine NMT specialist with over 15 years' experience and a strong reputation for rehabilitating off-the-track thoroughbreds, Equi-Ed blends science-led methods with applied anatomical expertise and practical skills.

Equi-Ed is proudly supported by the Kildare Local Enterprise Office.

#### Kildare County Council Local Enterprise Office

T 045 980838

E [localenterprise@kildarecoco.ie](mailto:localenterprise@kildarecoco.ie)

W <https://www.localenterprise.ie/kildare/>





## Case Study: Annemarie O'Brien, Founder of Equimetrics

### Turning a Lifelong Love of Horses into Life Saving Technology

Horses were never a hobby. They were work, responsibility and reality from the start. From mucking out before school to handling sharp young horses, Annemarie developed a practical understanding that only comes from years on the yard. There was no shortcut to experience. Every mistake taught something. Every setback reinforced the importance of better systems, better knowledge, and better care.

Those early, hard earned lessons did not stay at the farm gate. They became the driving force behind a move into equine technology and ultimately the founding of Equimetrics – a company built not from theory, but from lived experience, now helping veterinarians and owners monitor, protect, and improve equine health across Ireland and beyond.

### Where the Idea Began: A Problem That Needed Solving

The spark for Equimetrics came from a frightening and very real experience.

A horse had returned home after winning a major race – fit, healthy, and in great form. But overnight he suffered a severe colic episode that went undetected until morning. The outcome could have been devastating. Standing in the yard that day discussing what had happened, one question changed everything: "Surely technology has advanced enough to pick up early signs that something is wrong?"

That moment was the beginning of Equimetrics. The goal was simple but ambitious:

Use technology to identify problems earlier, improve clinical decision making, and ultimately save horses' lives.

### What Equimetrics Does

Equimetrics offers two smart wearable solutions: one designed for vets and one for trainers and performance yards. V:PRO, the veterinary product, delivers live equine health data and allows vets to monitor patients remotely, as well as run both resting and exercise ECGs. For trainers and yard teams, S:PRO breaks down every training session – tracking speed, stride, distance, and heart rate zones, and the app highlights recovery trends over time.

In simple terms, Equimetrics gives owners, vets, and trainers a clearer view of what the horse is experiencing, inside and out.

### Building the Company: Exciting, Terrifying, and Transformational

Starting the business meant stepping into a whole new world. With a background in training and breeding, she knew the equine side inside out, but building a tech company was different territory.

"It was exciting and terrifying in equal measure," she says. "But our dad was always inventing things, always trying to improve how things worked. That mindset definitely rubbed off. You don't have to accept the status quo."

Supports played a crucial role. The National Digital Research Centre (NDRC) helped at the earliest stage of development. Enterprise Ireland provided funding, mentorship, and industry connections.

The biggest lesson? Everything takes twice as long and costs twice as much as you expect, especially hardware. Patience and resilience are essential.

Still, a turning point came when vets began using the technology in real clinical settings and calling back with positive feedback that the data genuinely supported clinical decision-making. That validation made every long day worth it.

### A Day in the Life of a Founder

Like everyone in the equine industry, her day starts early.

A couple of hours of focused work happens before breakfast, followed by team check ins, product development meetings, and constant problem solving.

Running a high growth startup means wearing many hats. One minute she's reviewing data science research, the next she's talking to vets about case studies or troubleshooting a hardware update. The pace is relentless, but exciting.

### How Data is Changing the Equine Industry

The equine world is steeped in tradition, but it's undergoing a quiet revolution.

With major organisations like the British Horseracing Authority (BHA) and the American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP) publishing new research and exploring tech driven welfare measures, objective data is becoming central to decision making.

Data enables:

- Earlier detection of health issues
- Better conditioning and workload planning
- Improved welfare outcomes
- More informed veterinary decisions

### Skills and Opportunities for Young People

Equine technology blends two worlds:

- Traditional equine expertise
- Cutting edge skills like data science, engineering, AI, hardware design, and software development

Anmarie O'Brien and Scholastic.  
Photo: Healy Racing ([www.healyracing.ie](http://www.healyracing.ie))



The future of equine care will be a blend of traditional horsemanship and scientific insight, and young people who understand both will be in demand.

And Ireland, with its global reputation for producing top horses and top talent, is one of the best places to start an equine-focused business.

"For every five extra horses in training, another job is created," she explains. "Roles in the equine industry can range from school leavers who want to enter the workforce straight after school and work their way up, to professionals such as vets, accountants, HR specialists, farriers, and lorry drivers. The reach this industry has across so many different careers is just incredible."

### Inspiration and Defining Moments

Some moments stay with you. One of the most powerful was hearing that the device had identified a clinical issue early and ultimately helped save a horse's life.

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*"That is when you realise the technology is not just innovative, it is also meaningful."*

---

Like every founder, she faced moments of doubt, but belief in the mission, the support of her team, and seeing the product make a real impact in busy yards kept her moving forward.

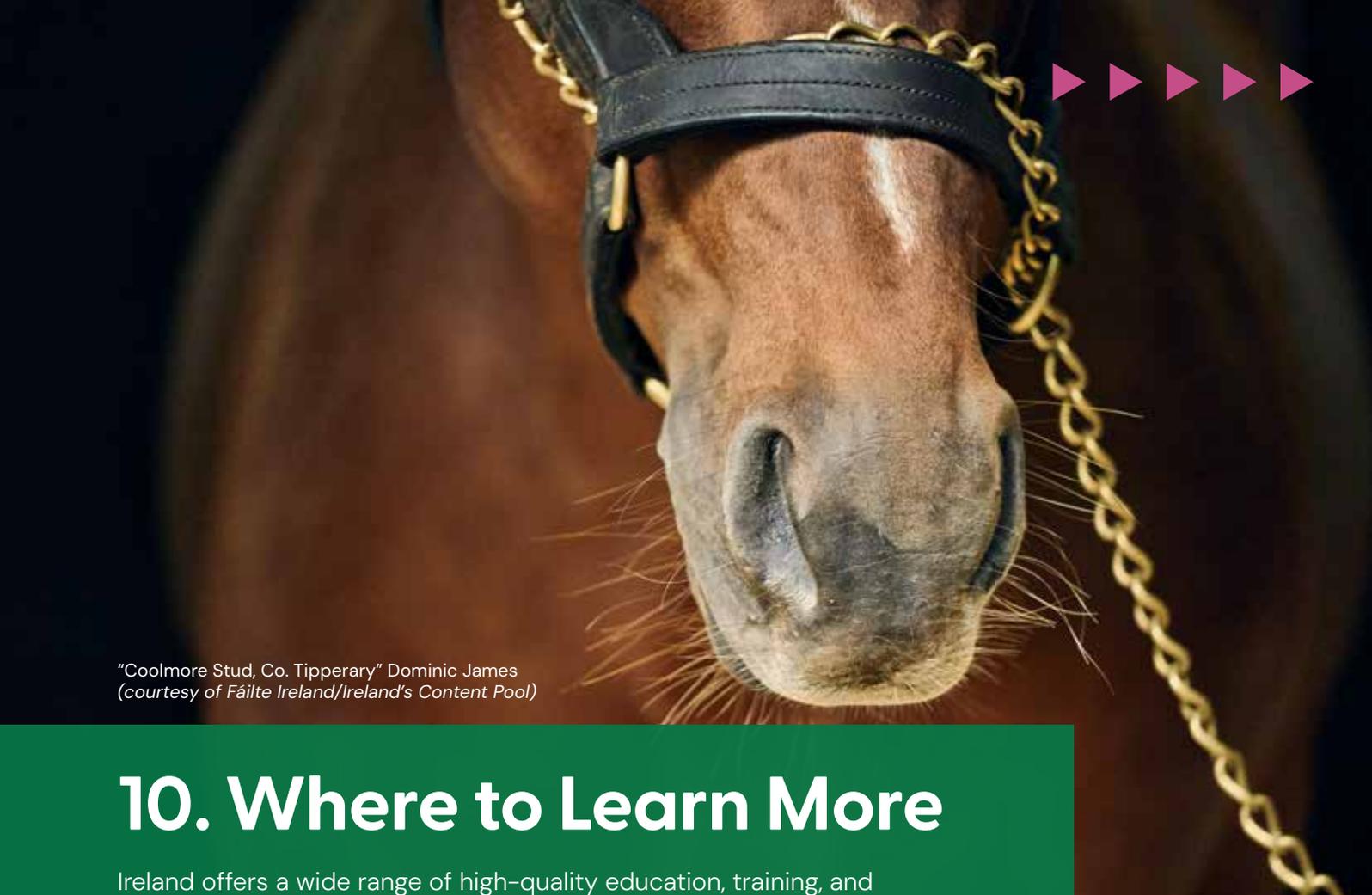
To her younger self, she would simply say: don't be afraid to take risks. The skills you build in one part of your life will often show up in ways you never expect.

### Advice for Future Founders

- Start with real yard problems, not with shiny technology
- Build products that work at 5am in the rain, not just in a lab
- Stay adaptable. Your first idea won't be your final idea
- Be optimistic. Resilience matters more than perfection
- Listen to vets, trainers, grooms, and riders. Their reality shapes what will succeed

### Start Like She Did

- Spend time in yards because real experience matters
- Spot real problems – the best ideas come from everyday challenges
- Always be looking for ways that things can be done better
- Learn beyond horses – tech, data, and science skills open doors
- Say yes early – opportunities that feel scary often lead to momentum
- Surround yourself with people who know what you don't
- Test in the real world – if it doesn't work at 5am in a busy yard, fix it



"Coolmore Stud, Co. Tipperary" Dominic James  
(courtesy of Fáilte Ireland/Ireland's Content Pool)

## 10. Where to Learn More

Ireland offers a wide range of high-quality education, training, and professional-development opportunities for those entering or progressing within the equine industry. Whether you are pursuing a career in coaching, breeding, science, welfare, business, or entrepreneurship, the organisations listed here provide structured pathways, recognised qualifications, and ongoing support.

This chapter highlights training providers, industry bodies, and useful links, allowing you to explore options that align with your interests and career goals.

### Training providers and colleges

These institutions offer practical, career focused training across horsemanship, equitation, racing, stud management and equine care.

#### Teagasc – Equine Education

National provider of QQI Level 5 and 6 equine programmes in Horsemanship, Equitation and Stud Management across agricultural colleges such as Kildalton and Gurteen.

Website: [www.teagasc.ie/education/courses/equine](http://www.teagasc.ie/education/courses/equine)

#### University of Limerick – Equine Science

Offers the BSc in Equine Science and related Certificate/Diploma programmes combining science, performance, welfare, and business.

Website: [www.ul.ie](http://www.ul.ie)

#### University College Dublin – Animal Science and Veterinary

Ireland's only accredited veterinary school, offering the Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine (MVB), internships, residencies, and specialist postgraduate training.

UCD also provides courses in Animal Science and Veterinary Nursing.

Website: [www.ucd.ie](http://www.ucd.ie)

#### CAFRE Enniskillen Campus (Northern Ireland)

Delivers equine-focused Higher Education, apprenticeships and practical programmes across Levels 2–3 and degree level. CAFRE Enniskillen courses use UK qualification levels (Level 2, Level 3, BSc Hons). These are Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) levels, not QQI/NFQ levels. (e.g., UK Level 3 ≈ QQI Level 5/6).

Website: [www.cafre.ac.uk/study/equine](http://www.cafre.ac.uk/study/equine)

### Racing Academy & Centre of Education (RACE)

National racing industry training centre offering jockey preparation, exercise-rider training and racing yard programmes.

Website: [www.racingacademy.ie](http://www.racingacademy.ie)

### Irish National Stud – Thoroughbred Breeding Management

A world renowned six month residential programme providing immersive training in breeding, foaling and stud farm operations.

Website: [www.irishnationalstud.ie/thoroughbred-breeding-management](http://www.irishnationalstud.ie/thoroughbred-breeding-management)

### Irish School of Farriery

Ireland's official farriery training centre, delivering the SOLAS approved apprenticeship and advanced training for practising farriers.

Website: [www.irishfarrieryauthority.com/school-of-irish-farriery](http://www.irishfarrieryauthority.com/school-of-irish-farriery)

### HSI Coaching Programme

National accredited coaching pathway across all FEI disciplines.

Website: [www.horsesportireland.ie/coaching-education-training](http://www.horsesportireland.ie/coaching-education-training)

## Industry bodies and associations

These organisations regulate, develop and promote the Irish equine sector. Exploring their resources helps you understand industry standards, regulations and professional development pathways.

### National Governing and Regulatory Bodies

#### Horse Sport Ireland (HSI)

National Governing Body for equestrian sport in Ireland; oversees coaching, sport development and major studbooks.

Website: [www.horsesportireland.ie](http://www.horsesportireland.ie)

#### Horse Racing Ireland (HRI)

Responsible for the administration, promotion and development of horse racing and thoroughbred breeding.

Website: [www.hri.ie](http://www.hri.ie)

#### Irish Horseracing Regulatory Board (IHRB)

Regulates racing integrity, licensing of racing staff, race day officials, and compliance.

Website: [www.ihrb.ie](http://www.ihrb.ie)

### Department of Agriculture, Food & the Marine (DAFM)

Responsible for equine regulation, welfare policy and animal movement legislation.

Website: [www.gov.ie/en/organisation/department-of-agriculture-food-and-the-marine](http://www.gov.ie/en/organisation/department-of-agriculture-food-and-the-marine)

### Veterinary Council of Ireland (VCI)

Regulates veterinary practitioners and veterinary nurses, including registration and CPD requirements.

Website: [www.vci.ie](http://www.vci.ie)

### Association of Irish Riding Establishments (AIRE)

Approves and promote riding, trekking and facility centres in Ireland.

Website: [www.aire.ie](http://www.aire.ie)

### Education, Research and Scientific Bodies

#### Irish Equine Centre (IEC)

Ireland's national equine diagnostics & biosecurity laboratory offering testing, research and disease monitoring.

Website: [www.irishequinecentre.ie](http://www.irishequinecentre.ie)

#### Teagasc Equine – Research & Knowledge Transfer

Provides research, rural development initiatives, breeder training and equine-focused knowledge transfer programmes.

Website: [www.teagasc.ie/rural-economy/rural-development/equine](http://www.teagasc.ie/rural-economy/rural-development/equine)

#### Irish Horse Board Co Operative Society

Supports breeders, manages studbook functions and contributes to national breeding policy.

Website: [www.ihb.ie](http://www.ihb.ie)

### Welfare Organisations

#### Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ISPICA)

National welfare body responsible for rescue, rehabilitation and enforcement.

Website: [www.ispica.ie](http://www.ispica.ie)

#### Irish Horse Welfare Trust (IHWT)

Works in rescue, rehabilitation, retraining and welfare education for equines.

Website: [www.ihwt.ie](http://www.ihwt.ie)

#### World Horse Welfare (Ireland)

International charity focused on welfare, research and advocacy.

Website: <https://eu.worldhorsewelfare.org>



## Sport and Coaching Bodies (HSI Affiliates)

### Eventing Ireland

National body for eventing competitions and training.

Website: [www.eventingireland.com](http://www.eventingireland.com)

### Showjumping Ireland

National governing body for showjumping competitions.

Website: [www.sji.ie](http://www.sji.ie)

### Dressage Ireland

Organisation promoting dressage competition and training.

Website: [www.dressageireland.ie](http://www.dressageireland.ie)

### Association of Irish Riding Clubs (AIRC)

Supports adult riders through club based training and competition.

Website: [www.airc.ie](http://www.airc.ie)

### Irish Pony Club (IPC)

Youth equestrian organisation offering structured training and tests.

Website: [www.irishponyclub.ie](http://www.irishponyclub.ie)

### Irish Pony Society (IPS)

National body for pony showing, training and competition.

Website: [www.irishponysociety.ie](http://www.irishponysociety.ie)

## Useful resources and links

### Course Listings

#### Qualifax – National Courses Database

Ireland's national Further Education and Higher Education course search tool.

Website: [www.qualifax.ie](http://www.qualifax.ie)

#### CAO – Central Applications Office

Application portal for Higher Education courses.

Website: [www.cao.ie](http://www.cao.ie)

#### Equip (HRI) – Careers, Training and Job Board

Training programmes, Jockey Pathway, racing careers hub and job listings.

Website: [www.equip.ie](http://www.equip.ie)

### Grants, Funding and Business Supports

#### Local Enterprise Office (LEO)

Training, mentoring and start your own business supports.

Website: [www.localenterprise.ie](http://www.localenterprise.ie)

### Enterprise Ireland

Supports innovation, product development and export growth.

Website: [www.enterprise-ireland.com](http://www.enterprise-ireland.com)

### Revenue/DAFM

Information on VAT, customs, transport rules and agricultural schemes.

Website: [www.gov.ie](http://www.gov.ie)

### Fáilte Ireland

Tourism development supports for equine tourism providers.

Website: [www.failteireland.ie](http://www.failteireland.ie)



# Course list

University/Institute	Course	Duration	Website
Atlantic Technological University (ATU)	Level 7 BSc Veterinary Nursing	3 years	<a href="http://www.atu.ie/courses/bachelor-of-science-veterinary-nursing">www.atu.ie/courses/bachelor-of-science-veterinary-nursing</a>
Bray Institute of Further Education	Level 5 Equine Studies	1 year	<a href="http://www.bife.ie/full-time-courses/animal-care/equine-studies">www.bife.ie/full-time-courses/animal-care/equine-studies</a>
Cafre Enniskillen	BSc (Hons) in Equine Management	3 or 4 years including Diploma in Professional Practice	<a href="http://www.cafre.ac.uk/study/equine">www.cafre.ac.uk/study/equine</a>
Cafre Enniskillen	FdSc (Foundation) in Equine Management	2 years	<a href="http://www.cafre.ac.uk/study/equine">www.cafre.ac.uk/study/equine</a>
Cafre Enniskillen	Certificate of Higher Education in Equine Science and Management (Online course)	part-time, 2 years	<a href="http://www.cafre.ac.uk/study/equine">www.cafre.ac.uk/study/equine</a>
Cafre Enniskillen	Level 3 in Equine Management	2 years including placement	<a href="http://www.cafre.ac.uk/study/equine/">www.cafre.ac.uk/study/equine/</a>
Cafre Enniskillen	Level 2 in Equine Care	1 year including placement	<a href="http://www.cafre.ac.uk/study/equine">www.cafre.ac.uk/study/equine</a>
Cafre Enniskillen	Level 2 in Equine Care with Forgework	1 year	<a href="http://www.cafre.ac.uk/study/equine">www.cafre.ac.uk/study/equine</a>
Cafre Enniskillen	Level 3 Apprenticeship in the Equine Industry	part-time, 2 years (approx)	<a href="http://www.cafre.ac.uk/study/equine">www.cafre.ac.uk/study/equine</a>
Cafre Enniskillen	Level 2 Apprenticeship in the Equine Industry	part-time, 2 years (approx)	<a href="http://www.cafre.ac.uk/study/equine">www.cafre.ac.uk/study/equine</a>
Cafre Enniskillen	Level 3 Award in Business Management for the Environment and Land-based Sector	12 weeks	<a href="http://www.cafre.ac.uk/training-courses/equine">www.cafre.ac.uk/training-courses/equine</a>
Cafre Enniskillen	Equine Business Peer Learning Group	6 months	<a href="http://www.cafre.ac.uk/training-courses/equine">www.cafre.ac.uk/training-courses/equine</a>
Cafre Enniskillen	Horse Racing Simulator Training for 13-15 year olds	1 day	<a href="http://www.cafre.ac.uk/training-courses/equine">www.cafre.ac.uk/training-courses/equine</a>
Cafre Enniskillen	Advances in Equine Parasite Management	4 weeks	<a href="http://www.cafre.ac.uk/training-courses/equine">www.cafre.ac.uk/training-courses/equine</a>
Cafre Enniskillen	Level 2 Certificate in Forgework	Part-time, 1 academic year	<a href="http://www.cafre.ac.uk/training-courses/equine">www.cafre.ac.uk/training-courses/equine</a>
Cafre Enniskillen	Horse Racing Simulator Training for Jockeys and Work Riders	1 day	<a href="http://www.cafre.ac.uk/training-courses/equine">www.cafre.ac.uk/training-courses/equine</a>
Cafre Enniskillen	Buying a horse? What you need to know	4 weeks	<a href="http://www.cafre.ac.uk/training-courses/equine">www.cafre.ac.uk/training-courses/equine</a>
Cafre Enniskillen	Level 3 Certificate in the Principles of Horse Care	12 weeks	<a href="http://www.cafre.ac.uk/training-courses/equine">www.cafre.ac.uk/training-courses/equine</a>
Cafre Enniskillen	Introduction to Lungeing and Long Reining	4 weeks	<a href="http://www.cafre.ac.uk/training-courses/equine">www.cafre.ac.uk/training-courses/equine</a>
Cafre Enniskillen	Level 2 Certificate in the Principles of Horse Care	9 weeks	<a href="http://www.cafre.ac.uk/training-courses/equine">www.cafre.ac.uk/training-courses/equine</a>



University/Institute	Course	Duration	Website
Cafre Enniskillen	Introduction to Groundwork and Safe Horse Handling from the Ground	4 weeks	<a href="http://www.cafre.ac.uk/training-courses/equine">www.cafre.ac.uk/training-courses/equine</a>
Cafre Enniskillen	Introduction to Common Equine Ailments Online	4 weeks	<a href="http://www.cafre.ac.uk/training-courses/equine">www.cafre.ac.uk/training-courses/equine</a>
Cafre Enniskillen	Certificate of Higher Education in Equine Science and Management	part-time, 2 years	<a href="http://www.cafre.ac.uk/training-courses/equine">www.cafre.ac.uk/training-courses/equine</a>
Cafre Enniskillen	Introduction to Equine Nutrition - Online	4 weeks	<a href="http://www.cafre.ac.uk/training-courses/equine">www.cafre.ac.uk/training-courses/equine</a>
Cafre Enniskillen	Equine Grassland Management (Online)	4 weeks	<a href="http://www.cafre.ac.uk/training-courses/equine">www.cafre.ac.uk/training-courses/equine</a>
Cafre Enniskillen	Equine Health (Online)	4 weeks	<a href="http://www.cafre.ac.uk/training-courses/equine">www.cafre.ac.uk/training-courses/equine</a>
Cafre Enniskillen	Level 2 Apprenticeship in the Equine Industry	part-time 2 years	<a href="http://www.cafre.ac.uk/training-courses/equine">www.cafre.ac.uk/training-courses/equine</a>
Cafre Enniskillen	Farrier Upskilling Programme	2 days/month over 2 years	<a href="http://www.cafre.ac.uk/training-courses/equine">www.cafre.ac.uk/training-courses/equine</a>
Cafre Enniskillen	Livestock Transportation - Short journey	one hour (assessment only)	<a href="http://www.cafre.ac.uk/training-courses/equine">www.cafre.ac.uk/training-courses/equine</a>
Cork College of FET	Level 5 Equestrian Studies	1 year	<a href="http://www.tramoreroadcampus.ie/our-courses/sport-recreation-outdoor-education/equestrian-studies">www.tramoreroadcampus.ie/our-courses/sport-recreation-outdoor-education/equestrian-studies</a>
College of Further Education & Training, Kilkenny	Level 5 Certificate in Horsemanship/ British Horse Society Foundation Coach	1 year	<a href="http://www.collegeoffetkilkenny.ie">www.collegeoffetkilkenny.ie</a>
College of Further Education & Training, Kilkenny	Level 6 Advanced Certificate in Horsemanship/British Horse Society Coach in Complete Horsemanship	1 year	<a href="http://www.collegeoffetkilkenny.ie">www.collegeoffetkilkenny.ie</a>
Croom College of Further Education	Level 5 Horsemanship	36 weeks	<a href="http://www.collegeoffet.ie">www.collegeoffet.ie</a>
Croom College of Further Education	Level 6 Equine Breeding	36 weeks	<a href="http://www.collegeoffet.ie">www.collegeoffet.ie</a>
Dunboyne College of Further Education	Level 5 Animal Care Assistant Animal Care	1 year	<a href="http://www.dunboynecollege.ie/animal-equine">www.dunboynecollege.ie/animal-equine</a>
Dunboyne College of Further Education	Level 5 Equine Studies Business Studies or Laboratory Techniques or Horsemanship	1 year	<a href="http://www.dunboynecollege.ie/animal-equine">www.dunboynecollege.ie/animal-equine</a>
Dunboyne College of Further Education	Level 6 Advanced Equine Studies Equine Breeding	1 year	<a href="http://www.dunboynecollege.ie/animal-equine">www.dunboynecollege.ie/animal-equine</a>
Dunboyne College of Further Education	Level 6 Advanced Animal Science	1 year	<a href="http://www.dunboynecollege.ie/animal-equine">www.dunboynecollege.ie/animal-equine</a>
Dundalk Institute of Technology	Level 7 Veterinary Nursing	3 years	<a href="http://www.dkit.ie/courses/bsc-in-veterinary-nursing">www.dkit.ie/courses/bsc-in-veterinary-nursing</a>

University/Institute	Course	Duration	Website
Festina Lente	Level 4 Equestrian Training Programme	2 years	<a href="http://www.festinalente.ie/qqi-courses/equestrian-training-programme-qqi-level-4">www.festinalente.ie/qqi-courses/equestrian-training-programme-qqi-level-4</a>
Festina Lente	Level 6 Therapeutic Coaching Programme	18 days (over 10 months)	<a href="http://www.festinalente.ie/qqi-courses/therapeutic-riding-coach-certification-course">www.festinalente.ie/qqi-courses/therapeutic-riding-coach-certification-course</a>
Festina Lente	Level 6 Equine Assisted Learning Facilitator Training Programme	18 days (over 10 months)	<a href="http://www.festinalente.ie/equestrian-learning-centre/equine-assisted-learning">www.festinalente.ie/equestrian-learning-centre/equine-assisted-learning</a>
Galway and Roscommon Education and Training Board	Level 5 Horsemanship: Care of the Connemara Pony	37 weeks	<a href="https://gretb.ie/further-education-training/course-finder/?sfcw-courseid=487900">https://gretb.ie/further-education-training/course-finder/?sfcw-courseid=487900</a>
Godolphin	International Thoroughbred Leadership Programme	2 years	<a href="http://www.godolphinridingstart.com/about/course-overview">www.godolphinridingstart.com/about/course-overview</a>
Gurteen College (Teagasc)	Level 5 Certificate in Horsemanship & Equine Course	1 academic year	<a href="https://gurteencollege.ie/course-detail/level-5-certificate-in-horsemanship-equitation/?id=11">https://gurteencollege.ie/course-detail/level-5-certificate-in-horsemanship-equitation/?id=11</a>
Gurteen College (Teagasc)	Level 6 Certificate in Horse/ Equine Course	1 academic year	<a href="https://gurteencollege.ie/course-detail/level-6-certificate-in-horsemanship-equitation/?id=13">https://gurteencollege.ie/course-detail/level-6-certificate-in-horsemanship-equitation/?id=13</a>
Horse Sport Ireland	Introduction to Coaching	1-day	<a href="https://www.horsesportireland.ie/coaching-education-training/hsi-coaching-programme/">https://www.horsesportireland.ie/coaching-education-training/hsi-coaching-programme/</a>
Horse Sport Ireland	Level 1 Apprentice Coach		<a href="https://www.horsesportireland.ie/coaching-education-training/hsi-coaching-programme/">https://www.horsesportireland.ie/coaching-education-training/hsi-coaching-programme/</a>
Horse Sport Ireland	Level 2 Coach	7 days	<a href="https://www.horsesportireland.ie/coaching-education-training/hsi-coaching-programme/">https://www.horsesportireland.ie/coaching-education-training/hsi-coaching-programme/</a>
Horse Sport Ireland	Level 3 National Coach	9 days	<a href="https://www.horsesportireland.ie/coaching-education-training/hsi-coaching-programme/">https://www.horsesportireland.ie/coaching-education-training/hsi-coaching-programme/</a>
Irish National Stud	Thoroughbred Breeding Management	6 months, residential course commencing in January each year	<a href="https://irishnationalstud.ie/thoroughbred-breeding-management/">https://irishnationalstud.ie/thoroughbred-breeding-management/</a>
Irish National Stud	Sales Preparation Course	2-week, residential	<a href="https://irishnationalstud.ie/ins-sales-preparation-course/">https://irishnationalstud.ie/ins-sales-preparation-course/</a>
Irish School of Farriery	Solas Apprenticeship – Advanced Certificate in Craft	4 years and 2 months	<a href="https://www.farrieryireland.ie/courses/solas-apprenticeship-qqi-advanced-certificate-in-craft-farriery">https://www.farrieryireland.ie/courses/solas-apprenticeship-qqi-advanced-certificate-in-craft-farriery</a>
Kildalton College (Teagasc)	Level 5 Certificate in Horsemanship Award	1 year	<a href="https://teagasc.ie/education/courses/equine/horsemanship-programme/">https://teagasc.ie/education/courses/equine/horsemanship-programme/</a>
Kildalton College (Teagasc)	Level 6 Advanced Certificate in Horsemanship/Equitation	1 year	<a href="https://teagasc.ie/education/courses/equine/horsemanship-programme/">https://teagasc.ie/education/courses/equine/horsemanship-programme/</a>



University/Institute	Course	Duration	Website
Kildalton College (Teagasc)	Level 5 Certificate in Horsemanship (Stud)	1 year	<a href="https://teagasc.ie/education/courses/equine/stud-management-programme/">https://teagasc.ie/education/courses/equine/stud-management-programme/</a>
Kildalton College (Teagasc)	Level 6 Advanced Certificate in Equine Breeding programmes	1 year	<a href="https://teagasc.ie/education/courses/equine/l6-advanced-cert-in-equine-breeding-stud-mgmt/">https://teagasc.ie/education/courses/equine/l6-advanced-cert-in-equine-breeding-stud-mgmt/</a>
Leitrim College of Further Education	Level 6 Advanced Equine Studies with BHS Qualification	37 weeks	<a href="https://leitrimcollege.ie/advanced-equine-studies-with-bhs-qualification/">https://leitrimcollege.ie/advanced-equine-studies-with-bhs-qualification/</a>
Munster Technological University (MTU)	Level 7 Veterinary Nursing	3 years	<a href="http://www.mtu.ie/courses/mt784">www.mtu.ie/courses/mt784</a>
North Connaught College	Level 5 Equine Studies	33 weeks	<a href="http://www.northconnaughtcollege.ie/equine-and-horsemanship/">www.northconnaughtcollege.ie/equine-and-horsemanship/</a>
North Connaught College	Level 6 Advanced Horsemanship	33 weeks	<a href="http://www.northconnaughtcollege.ie/equine-and-horsemanship/">www.northconnaughtcollege.ie/equine-and-horsemanship/</a>
Racing Academy & Centre of Education (RACE)	Level 4 Introduction to Thoroughbred Industry	4 weeks	<a href="http://www.racingacademy.ie/cms/courses-training/">www.racingacademy.ie/cms/courses-training/</a>
Racing Academy & Centre of Education (RACE)	Level 5 Thoroughbred Industry Traineeship	24 weeks	<a href="http://www.racingacademy.ie/cms/courses-training/">www.racingacademy.ie/cms/courses-training/</a>
Racing Academy & Centre of Education (RACE)	Level 5 Horsemanship for the Thoroughbred Industry	part-time, 1 year	<a href="http://www.racingacademy.ie/cms/courses-training/">www.racingacademy.ie/cms/courses-training/</a>
Racing Academy & Centre of Education (RACE)	Thoroughbred Industry Administration Course	5 weeks	<a href="http://www.racingacademy.ie/cms/courses-training/">www.racingacademy.ie/cms/courses-training/</a>
Racing Academy & Centre of Education (RACE)	Equine Transport (Certificate of Competence)	once/month	<a href="http://www.racingacademy.ie/cms/courses-training/">www.racingacademy.ie/cms/courses-training/</a>
Racing Academy & Centre of Education (RACE)	Schooling Progression Course	1-day	<a href="http://www.racingacademy.ie/cms/courses-training/">www.racingacademy.ie/cms/courses-training/</a>
Racing Academy & Centre of Education (RACE)	Pre-Licence Schooling Course	1-day	<a href="http://www.racingacademy.ie/cms/courses-training/">www.racingacademy.ie/cms/courses-training/</a>
Racing Academy & Centre of Education (RACE)	Work Rider Schooling Course	2 half days and 1 full day	<a href="http://www.racingacademy.ie/cms/courses-training/">www.racingacademy.ie/cms/courses-training/</a>
Racing Academy & Centre of Education (RACE)	Level 5 Equine Anatomy and Physiology	14 weeks, evenings	<a href="http://www.racingacademy.ie/cms/courses-training/">www.racingacademy.ie/cms/courses-training/</a>
Racing Academy & Centre of Education (RACE)	Level 5 Racehorse Care and Exercise	14 weeks, evenings	<a href="http://www.racingacademy.ie/cms/courses-training/">www.racingacademy.ie/cms/courses-training/</a>
St Conleth's Community College	Level 5 Horsemanship	1 year	<a href="http://www.stconlethsccl.ie/Page/Equine-Studies/20540/Index.html">www.stconlethsccl.ie/Page/Equine-Studies/20540/Index.html</a>

University/Institute	Course	Duration	Website
St Conleth's Community College	Level 6 Equine Breeding	1 year	<a href="http://www.stconlethsc.ie/Page/Equine-Studies/20540/Index.html">www.stconlethsc.ie/Page/Equine-Studies/20540/Index.html</a>
Technological University of the Shannon	Level 7 Veterinary Nursing	3 years	<a href="http://www.tus.ie/courses/us738">www.tus.ie/courses/us738</a>
University College Dublin	Animal Science - Equine	4 years	<a href="https://hub.ucd.ie/usis!/W_HU_MENU.P_PUBLISH?p_tag=COURSE&amp;MAJR=EQS1">https://hub.ucd.ie/usis!/W_HU_MENU.P_PUBLISH?p_tag=COURSE&amp;MAJR=EQS1</a>
University College Dublin	Veterinary Medicine	5 years	<a href="http://www.ucd.ie/vetmed/study/undergraduateprogrammes/veterinarymedicine">www.ucd.ie/vetmed/study/undergraduateprogrammes/veterinarymedicine</a>
University College Dublin	Veterinary Nursing	4 years	<a href="http://www.ucd.ie/vetmed/study/undergraduateprogrammes/veterinarynursing">www.ucd.ie/vetmed/study/undergraduateprogrammes/veterinarynursing</a>
University of Limerick	BSc in Equine Science	4 years	<a href="http://www.ul.ie/courses/bachelor-science-equine-science">www.ul.ie/courses/bachelor-science-equine-science</a>

### Emerging Veterinary Medicine Programmes (Pending Accreditation)

Atlantic Technological University (ATU) and South East Technological University (SETU) have launched new Veterinary Medicine degrees.

These programmes are currently undergoing accreditation by the Veterinary Council of Ireland and are not yet approved routes to registration as a veterinary practitioner.

Applicants should check the VCI website for the latest accreditation status before applying.

"Brittas Bay, Co Wicklow" Celtic Routes  
(courtesy of Fáilte Ireland/Ireland's Content Pool)







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