GB SELECTION POLICY

2025 VIRTUS WORLD PARA DRESSAGE CHAMPIONSHIPS - **EQUESTRIAN**

21ST to 25th July 2025

Published Policy
Including GB Rules & Regulations for Entry 2025

REVISED 13.6.25

GB Athletes by Invitation only

WWW.SPORTEXCELUK.ORG

2025 Virtus World Para Dressage Championships
21-25th July Sparsholt, Winchester

SELECTION POLICY

Definitions of Terms used within this Policy:

Sport Excel UK GB Team Performance or Qualifying Standard
The standard that an athlete must achieve to be considered for the GB Team to the Virtus Championship. Consideration is not a guarantee of selection.

Programmed/Scheduled events.
The tests required to be performed by athletes as set out by Virtus for the 2025 Championships.

Virtus classes (eligibility and classification)

- II1 – for athletes with an intellectual disability
- II2 – group for athletes with a more significant intellectual impairment* (includes athletes with Down syndrome Trisomy 21) *
- II3 – for athletes with autism

Note: The term 'Intellectual Impairment' includes athletes with intellectual disability, down syndrome, and autism.

Sport and Selection Committee (SSC)
This is the SportExcelUK Committee. The Committee comprises experienced judges, coaches, and officials. The SSC sets the Selection Policy and criteria for selection or invitation for GB athletes. Athletes will be considered for selection by the named selectors on the SSC.

Sport Excel UK (formerly the UK Sports Association)
The official Virtus member nation for Great Britain. The recognised national charity, operating UK wide, facilitates and supports talented sports people with intellectual impairment in the UK to train, compete and excel in national and international sport.

Sport Excel UK manages the eligibility and classification system across all sports for athletes with intellectual impairment. Sport Excel UK is also a member of the British Paralympic Association and is recognised by UK Sport.

Please note that to be considered for the 2025 Virtus World Para Dressage Championships in the UK all GB athletes must have competed in at least one (preferably more) of the following Virtus video championships October 2024, February 2025, or April 2025

There is no minimum age for video competitions. For face-to-face competitions, all athletes need to be a minimum of 14 years of age. [At the point of entry].

SELECTION POLICY

1. Introduction

Sport Excel UK, in partnership with British Dressage is keen to develop a performance pathway to the Virtus European and World Championships, through to the Virtus Global Games. This Policy is to guide the selection of a GB Team and individual athletes in a fair, equitable and transparent way.

To compete for Great Britain at the Championships athletes must first be classified at a Virtus international level and must have achieved an appropriate level of consistent performance expected to represent Great Britain at the highest levels.

Entries to the Virtus Championships are only possible through Sport Excel UK. Individuals cannot entry directly with Virtus. Entries cannot be made through Virtus staff, volunteers or others associated with the event. Please enter via the official Sport Excel UK process only.

All athletes are expected to be in training and competition levels that demonstrate their ability, progression, and commitment to progressing in the sport. Athletes who do not meet these expectations will not be considered or invited to compete.

2. Eligibility and Classification

a) Only athletes who have a valid international classification for Virtus class II1, II2 or II3 can be considered to represent Great Britain for the Championships. Athletes for the 2025 event must hold 'international Virtus classification/eligibility'. The classification process is managed by Sport Excel UK.

b) Any athlete invited to the GB Team must have achieved an eligible status at the appropriate level, paid their Sport Excel UK and Virtus annual license fees for 2025, be up to date with insurances and fees and appear as active on the Virtus Master List in the appropriate class.

c) If in any doubt as to the classification of an athlete, an athlete, and/or their coach, and/or their support network should contact Sport Excel UK as soon as possible on classification@sportexceluk.org

3. GB Team Performance Standards and Criteria for Consideration and Selection

a) To be considered for Performance events, athletes must have competed at the
   i) RDA Grade 6 and/or 7, at the British Dressage Gold, Silver and Bronze Summer Championships and achieved a score of 62% or greater or
   ii) Grade 6 and/or 7, RDA National Championships 2024 and achieved a score of 62% or greater or
   iii) The Virtus Para Dressage Video Championships, 2023 Virtus Global Games, or the 2024 Virtus European Dressage Championships and achieved a score of 62% or greater.

b) Results from the following events will be considered for selection for the 2025 World Championships:
   i) 2024 Virtus European Para Dressage Championships, Sparsholt
   ii) 2024 and 2025 Virtus Video Competitions

c) The SSC reserves the right to request athletes to attend any other pre-selection event they deem appropriate.

d) A minimum score per combination of 62% must be achieved for selection consideration at the nominated events.

e) The nominated events for the 2025 World Championships are:
   i) 2024 Virtus Open Regional Games
   ii) 2024 Video Competition Round 3
   iii) 2025 Video Competitions Round 1 and 2

f) Results do not have to be gained at all of the events.

g) Athletes with multiple horses may only be on one team at a live competition. The SSC reserves the right to invite a non-competing reserve from any athlete as well as one with multiple horses.

h) The SSC will select any combination of athletes from any eligible class to a GB Team of up to 4 athletes to a live competition where multiple athletes of a sufficient number and standard and who are eligible for consideration for selection are available. [Revised]

i) Depending on the Local Organising Committee (LOC) of the event it may be possible to ride a second hors as an individual only. The SSC reserves the right to select or not select a second horse based on other eligible combinations. Priority in this instance may be given to those with just one horse who meet the minimum eligibility criteria.

j) Athletes MUST ride the relevant test for their eligibility class on both days of the competitions. Failure to do so will result in the loss of any previous placings and prizes awarded unless a veterinary or doctor certificate is provided showing valid grounds.

k) An athlete's experience and ability to attain consistent high performance will be considered. Sport Excel UK, SSC, may discuss or request information from the athletes, coaches, or others to gain a full picture of the athlete and abilities.

l) Additional information provided on the 'Entry Form' will also be taken into consideration. An athlete's experience and ability to attain consistent high performance will be considered. This may be discussed further with the athletes' coach to gain a full picture of the athlete and abilities.

m) Consideration is not a guarantee of selection and/or invitation for <u>any</u> athlete.

4. Other Selection Criteria and Considerations

a) Any invitation is on the basis that athletes agree to and comply fully with Sport Excel UK policies and procedures and Virtus rules, including Codes of Conduct, Social Media Policies and Safeguarding protocols.

b) All athletes who are selected to represent Great Britain will be bound by the Sport Excel UK and Virtus Codes of Conduct. If it is deemed any athlete has breached either or both Codes of Conduct, Sport Excel UK reserves the right to remove athletes from Team Selection at any point in time.

c) Athletes are expected to demonstrate and maintain the highest levels of respect for other competitors, staff, officials, volunteers, support networks, owners and trainers and demonstrate sportsmanship appropriate to an athlete representing Great Britain before, during and after the Championships.

d) Athletes and their support/advocates are expected to promote positively and consistently the Virtus Championship programme, Sport Excel UK and any associated parties or organisations to foster good relationships, inspire trust and confidence and support the development of the para-dressage pathway.

e) Athletes and their coach/trainer must on request provide information to demonstrate:

i) That the athlete is following a regular trainer led training programme and the content of that programme if required.

ii) Evidence that the athlete and horse are injury/illness free. It is the responsibility of the athlete to inform the Sport Excel UK Chief Executive and Chief Selector of any illness/injury prior to and after selection. If an injury or illness is not declared and is found to be hindering an athlete or horse on arrival at or during the event, the Chief Selector and Chief Executive reserve the right to remove that athlete from the competition. Sport Excel UK reserves the right to reclaim from the athlete any costs that it has incurred in this situation that could have been avoided if a declaration had been made. Each will be considered on its own merits. Refunds of any payments made will not be possible in these circumstances.

iii) That the athlete can travel and compete as part of GB Team and meet the demands and pressures of a high-performance sport environment.

f) It is the responsibility of an athlete and their Home Nation Team to ensure that all horses are medically fit to compete, have suitable fitness and the correct vaccinations in line with FEI policies and protocols.

g) A GB Team Manager will be appointed by Sport Excel UK. All athletes and their support workers, or other associated individuals, must follow the instructions and requests of the GB Team Manager. This may include matters relating to equine welfare, riding times or durations, team behaviour, code of conduct, meeting points and plans and any other matters relating to the GB Team or individual on or associated with the GB Team whilst under the jurisdiction of the GB Team, the Championships, at the venue or at GB Team accommodation.

h) It is advisable and preferred that athletes do not take holidays immediately prior to the Championships. Holidays should be discussed with the Chief Selector and GB Team Manager before booking. Anything, including holidays, which may affect a training plan leading up to the Championships, which might, in the opinion of the Chief Selector and Team Manager, be detrimental to their performance at the Championships, may result in consideration for de-selection.

i) The Chief Selector reserves the right to advise an athlete to postpone holidays where it is considered it may impact adversely on their preparation and performance for the GB Team.

j) Athletes are expected to keep in regular contact with the Sport Excel UK GB Team Manager from selection through to the Championships to ensure their preparation is at the right level and on track. There is equal responsibility for both the GB Team Manager and the athlete to maintain this contact.

5. De-selection

a) An athlete may be de-selected from the Team at any time if, in the reasonable opinion of the Chief Selector, in consultation with the SSC and the CEO of Sport Excel UK.

i) An athlete or horse is not at an appropriate fitness level or is not at the expected competitive level to appropriately represent Great Britain at the Championships.
ii) An athlete breaches the Sport Excel UK policies and procedures or Virtus rules, including Codes of Conduct, Social Media Policies and Safeguarding protocols.
iii) An athlete or person associated with the athlete (including, without limitation, owners, partners, coaches, and grooms) has or has the potential to bring through actions or words the reputation of any member of the GB Team, Sport Excel UK or Virtus, into disrepute or does not comply with section 4 above.
iv) An athlete does not demonstrate the appropriate level of respect and sportsmanship outlined in section 4(b) and 4 (c).
v) The overall conduct of the athlete and people associated with the athlete (including, without limitation, owners, partners, coaches, and grooms) in the lead up to, during and post Championships raises concerns or is deemed to have the potential to have an adverse impact on creating a positive team environment both on and off the field of play.
vi) If the athlete ceases to meet the eligibility requirements, standards, and requirements set out in this policy, or any breaches or alleged breaches of this policy, rules, or regulations. In such circumstances a decision on de-selection will be taken regardless of whether the relevant process has been concluded or any other risk management or disciplinary sanctions have been imposed at this point.

b) The decision to deselect an athlete is not open to appeal and the decision is final. An athlete can make written representation within 48 hours of the de-selection which will remain on file for future SSC and selection discussions.

c) Any invitation to the Team, is done also on a basis

i) That the athlete and/or their escort or advocate where appropriate, is liable for, and accepts the costs as laid down by Sport Excel UK.

ii) That the athlete and/or their escort or advocate where appropriate can meet the full costs and within the timelines set out by Sport Excel UK and the athlete, advocate or support network will ensure these will be paid in full by the Sport Excel UK deadlines.

iii) That the athlete and their respective escort or advocate where appropriate accept that, in the event athletes' costs remain unpaid at the time final payments are due, and expenditure is unrecoverable through other means, Sport Excel UK will pursue full recovery from the athlete.

iv) That the athlete can apply for and receive a visa to visit the host country, where needed.

d) If an athlete's payment is late, or defaulted, then this may lead to the athlete being de-selected, unless the athlete or the athletes advocate/escort has made appropriate arrangements with Sport Excel UK.

e) An athletes advocate or support network accepts that at the point an athlete accepts an invitation, this includes the guarantee that in the event of emergency whilst part of the GB Team, including repatriating the athlete and horse back to the UK (if overseas), or home if in the UK, The athletes advocate and support network *will actively support logistics and provide the financial means, in advance*, to support repatriation in the event the athlete is unable to do so.

f) If an athlete or the athletes advocate/escort or support network is unable to accept and provide the support outlined above, a declaration should be made at the point where an invitation is received, after which an athlete may not be selected.

6. Other Considerations

a) Unless advised to the contrary, athletes and if appropriate their support staff and all GB Team associated staff are expected to travel out and return together, staying on-site at the event if accommodation is provided or at the GB Team nominated local accommodation.

7. Invitations and Selection

a) The Sport Excel UK Sport and Selection Committee (SSC) will consider the information available and decide on invitations for athletes to compete. The decision of the SSC is final.

b) The Sport Selection Committee at their discretion reserve the right to specify additional criteria. As and when, or if this arises, the selection criteria may be amended. The Committee will have the right to amend or change selection policies where necessary at any time to fulfil the objectives of the Selection Policy. Changes and amendments will be communicated on the Sport Excel UK website.

c) The decision regarding the GB Team and GB Team running order will be made with absolute discretion, honesty, and integrity upholding the objectives and principles of this Selection Policy. The decision will be final and it will not be contestable.

8. Schedule and Deadlines

a) *Invitations and Entry Forms:* All athletes who have been invited to Sport Excel UK to compete and are classified (Virtus international level) and have met the consideration and selection criteria should send their entry form and payment to Sport Excel UK no later than 11.59pm, on 15th June 2025.

SSC Invitation to athletes	Between 7th and 13th June 2025
Entry Form and Deposit to Sport Excel UK	5pm, 17th June 2025 (REVISED)
Payment 2, to Sport Excel UK	30th June 2025
Any other payment (eg. Kit)	in line with invoice advice

b) The GB Team Manager and any support staff will be invited at the discretion of Sport Excel UK and the Chief Selector. Where payments are required, such invitees are expected to follow the schedule in 8a above.

c) *Payments and Entries:* Entries must only be made through Sport Excel UK and must be accompanied by the entry fee at the time of entry. An email to finance@sportexceluk.org should be sent with *proof of payment*. Your entry is not confirmed until payment is received.

d) *Announcement:* Only Sport Excel UK has the right to make the formal announcement of the GB Team. Athletes and any person associated with an athlete are expected to maintain confidentiality until the formal announcement has been made. Sport Excel UK will make the announcement as soon as possible once the full Team has been confirmed.

9. Post Selection and Appeals

a) Any appeals against selection in relation to this Championships Selection Policy must be made in accordance with the Sport Excel UK Appeals procedure. The Policy is available on request.

10. Force Majeure

a) In the event of exceptional circumstances beyond Sport Excel UK's control, for example, but not exclusively, disease outbreak in horses or humans, war or terrorism, the Sport Excel

Committee reserves the right to make the decision either to change the selection policy or procedure which might include withdrawing the Teams from competition or cancelling the competition.

11. Veterinary/Medical

a) Selected athletes must notify the SSC of any change in their own health or fitness status, or their horse/pony health status or veterinary/medical management immediately.

12. Sport and Selection Committee (SSC) (Selection Panel)

a) The SSC for these Championships shall comprise:

- Independent Chair of selectors (non-voting) : Tracey McCillen, CEO Sport Excel UK
- Chief Selector (voting) : Amanda Heath Equine Lead, Sport Excel UK
- Selector (voting) : Nicola Du Plessis
- Selector (voting) : Hannah Ward

b) The SSC may conduct selection remotely, in person, or via any other means deemed appropriate or necessary by the Independent Chair and Chief Selector.

c) The Chair will ensure that the process is followed and will maintain a register of any conflicts of interest. If a voting Selector has a conflict they will not partake in the decision making process in relation to any athlete where the conflict may arise.

d) Decisions will be reached by a majority vote of those eligible to vote. If there is an equality of votes, the Chief Selector will have the casting vote. In the event the Chief Selector is required to abstain due to a declared conflict, the Chair may appoint a representative or cast the deciding vote.

e) The Sport and Selection Committee reserves the right to

i) Not send a team or individual to any competition, video or otherwise

ii) De-select athletes and/or staff as outlined in this policy or where such an individual brings or has the potential to bring Sport Excel UK, the GB Team or sport, into disrepute or under any aspect of section 4 and 5above.

iii) Remove or alter its entry, in full or in part where given consideration to all the circumstances and in Sport Excel UK's reasonable opinion the viability of the Team in relation to welfare (person or animal), competitiveness, competency, or other undertakings are at an unacceptable risk level or where an athlete, their advocate, support network or any other associated party to the athlete other does not fully meet and act upon their obligations under this policy.

iv) Review and revise the Sport Excel UK Selection Policy and 2025 Rules and Regulations relating to entries to the Championships based on information available to them at any given time.

Please read this policy alongside the following Rules and Regulations.

RULES & REGULATIONS FOR BRITISH ATHLETES
2025 Virtus World Para Dressage Championships

Please read the full selection policy alongside these Rules and Regulations.

Entries:

1. This is an invitation only event. Only GB athletes who meet the standards have the appropriate classification level and meet all the criteria in the Selection Policy will be considered.

Rules:

2. This event is organised in accordance with the Virtus Para Dressage Rules, January 2024 (updated) available and in accordance with the FEI Code of Conduct for the Welfare of the Horse

   https://www.virtus.sport/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/VIRTUS-Equestrian-Dressage-Rules-V4-9-jan-2024.pdf

Tests:

3. **Performance level** athletes are expected to compete in both tests on both days.

   For II1 and II3 athletes:
   - FEI Grade 4 Novice A
   - FEI Grade 4 Intermediate A

   For II2 athletes:
   - FEI Grade 3 Novice A
   - FEI Grade 3 Intermediate B

4. In all tests the Halt in the first movement is skipped.

Dress and Tack:

5. Competition gear should be worn as issued by the GB Team and as stated in the FEI Para Dressage Rules, but athletes may wear Jodhpur boots and black or brown half chaps. Gloves must be worn.

Bridles and Tack:

6. Whilst double bridles are allowed, please note that snaffle bridles are preferred. No auxiliary reigns are allowed. Use of auxiliary reigns will lead to disqualification.

7. For the use of spurs, whips and compensating aids please refer to the Virtus Para Dressage Rules. Please pay particular attention to section 6.2 and compensating aids and contact Sport Excel UK if any non-standard compensating aids are being considered.

Payments:

8. Payment should be made via internet banking/or at a bank:
   - Account Name: UK Sports Association, UKSAPLD or UKSA.
   - Account Number: 71594567, Sort Code: 40-04-09,
   - Use the competitors name + EQ + EFee as a reference.

9. Please email finance@sportexceluk.org with proof of payment. Entry Fees cannot be refunded once an entry is accepted. Payment must reach Sport Excel UK in line with the published schedule and in line with the conditions of the Selection Policy.

10. All GB entries and payments must be made through Sport Excel UK, the Virtus member. Please do not enter directly to Virtus.

Invitations and Acceptance:

11. Accepting an invitation to enter or submitting an entry constitutes acceptance of the rules, regulations, and selection process and policy, including full acceptance of the Virtus Dressage rules.

12. Accepting an invitation to enter or submitting an entry also means the athlete agrees to Virtus and Sport Excel UK using pictures and videos in marketing and promotion such as press releases, social media, and websites.

Communication:

13. All queries and questions relating to the GB Team and British entry should be made to Sport Excel UK only either by telephone or email. Specific queries via text, WhatsApp, or any other method will not be responded to as we are unable to retain a communication trail.

14. The Sport Excel UK Equestrian WhatsApp Group is for general, minor queries, not specific or detailed questions about the event. Please observe our request no.16 above.

15. Contact details are as follows:

    Email Tracey McCillen (Chief Executive) tracey.mccillen@sportexceluk.org and Amanda Heath (Sport Excel UK Equine Lead & Chief Selector) amandajheath@gmail.com

    Sport Excel UK telephone 0203 633 6460. As we do not have full time staff, you may reach our answer phone. If you do, please leave your name, message and telephone number and we will return your call. Please note that we are unavailable on Fridays.