

[Updated 5/17/17]

Students testing for the rank of Apprentice (Sword & Buckler) must:

1. Take (and pass) a knowledge-based test with applied portions
2. Pass a thrusting accuracy test
3. Pass a winding test
4. Pass a basic fencing demonstration
5. Demonstrate an understanding of proper safety at the sword

If the student fails at one portion, he or she may retake it later without being required to retake the entire test, so long as no more than 6 months have elapsed between the first and last portions of the test. If the entire process takes the student more than 6 months, he or she must retake the old portions in order to pass the Test.

Knowledge Test

1. Movements, Devices, Techniques, and Guards to be demonstrated solo:
 - a. Simple Step
 - b. Pass Step
 - c. 1st Ward [to be named]¹
 - d. 7th Ward [to be named]¹
 - e. Halbschildt
 - f. Lower Schutzen
2. Techniques to be demonstrated against a “live” opponent undertaking a specific action:
 - a. Thrusting from the Right Bind Above (to head) [against opponent resting in Langort]
 - b. Binding & Entering
 - i. Binding & Entering [against an opponent resting in Langort]
 - ii. Durchtreten [after Langort against an opponent binding & entering]
 - iii. Separating Sword & Shield [against an opponent transitioning into Schutzen after a bind with student above]
 - iv. Schiltslac [against opponent covering in Schutzen against student binding & entering]
 - v. Interrupting Thrust [against opponent cutting to head from bind above w/out Schiltslac]
 - vi. Pursuing an opponent fleeing the bind [against opponent fleeing to 1st]
 - vii. Mutatio w/ Nucken [against opponent binding above]
 - c. Falling Under [against an opponent resting in Halbschildt]
 - d. Stichslac from Bind [against opponent attacking head after student falls under]
 - e. Attacking 1st [from 7th against opponent in 1st]
 - f. Attacking 1st [from Halbschildt against opponent in 1st]

¹ For these items, the Scholar should ask the student what the name of the guard is (“Sub Brachio” / “Langort”). For a +, the correct answer must be given in German/Latin.

There are 18 total points at stake. Every part of the test is worth one point (+/-). When testing wards and steps, the tester should simply name the wards or step (preferably out of order), and the student should then perform the step or move into the ward.

All items are to be demonstrated/answered and scored (according to their value).

If the item is performed/answered:

- Perfectly or very well, with good form or explanation (as appropriate), and with success (for techniques), then a plus (+) is awarded.
- Performed poorly, or with bad form, or with major errors, or the technique fails, then a minus (-) is awarded.
- Performed well, and with success, but with clear niggling errors which prevent a plus (+) from being awarded, then a pass (✓) is awarded.
- Not at all, or entirely incorrectly (such as the wrong technique being demonstrated), then a fail (F) is awarded.

Each + is worth one point (+1).

Each - is worth negative one point (-1).

Each ✓ is worth zero points (0).

Each fail is worth negative three points (-3).

All points are added together. In order to pass the Knowledge Test, the student must attain a score of positive 10 or greater. Moreover, if more than two fails are accumulated, the student will automatically fail the Test outright.

Once the Knowledge Test has been passed, the student may take the Thrusting Accuracy and Covering tests

Thrusting Accuracy Test

1. The student will be given a set of different labeled targets.
2. The Scholar will call out random targets, one at a time (allowing the student time to thrust and transition guards between calls), until 10 targets have been called and thrust at.
3. Thrusts may be performed from any ward. A student will receive an extra + for each new ward beyond the first that they thrust from during the drill (new variations of the same guard don't count).
4. As soon as a target is called, the student must thrust at the relevant target, successfully striking into the opening provided. No penalty will be given if the student hesitates briefly (for 1 second, for example). For excessive hesitation, a minus (-) should be awarded for a successful thrust.
5. For each thrust at full speed with good form that strikes the target, the student will be given a +. Thrusts which strike the target but have poor form and/or are executed at less

- than full speed will be awarded a -. Thrusts that fail to strike the target will fail.
6. The fencer must achieve at least 5 points (+) to pass the test.

Winding Test

For the winding test, the student should be placed in a neutral bind in *Langort* against an opponent, preferably of Apprentice level or above. The student and the opponent should wind against each other, each seeking to threaten the other and establish protection for themselves using the principles of I.33, per a normal winding drill. This should be done for one full minute.

In grading the Winding Test:

Plus (+): The student remains protected throughout most of the exercise, and threatens their opponent more often than they become threatened.

Pass (✓): The student threatens their opponent approximately as much as they are threatened, having neither gained nor given away the upper hand.

Minus (-): The student is threatened more than they threaten their opponent, or remains exposed throughout most of the exercise, but still occasionally gains a favourable position.

Fail (F): The student is dominated, never or almost never threatening their opponent. If the student gives up or otherwise fails to complete the exercise, a Fail (F) should likewise be given.

Against an opponent of the Apprentice rank (or above), the Student must receive at least a Pass (✓) in the Winding Test in order to attain the rank of Apprentice. Against another Novice, the student must receive a Plus (+) in the Winding Test to attain the rank of Apprentice.

Basic Fencing Demonstration

For the Basic Fencing Demonstration, the student is to fence with an opponent (preferably of Apprentice rank or above) in a restricted fashion for two minutes. During this demonstration, both the student and their opponent must limit themselves to thrusts, winding, and parrying, in addition to the Apprentice-level techniques. All other cuts are forbidden. All fencing should occur at full speed, and strikes should be with intent.

To be clear, the only cuts allowed are the natural cuts belonging to the *Schiltslac*, *Durchtreten*, the separating cut from the bind against *Schutzen*, and *Nucken*.

In grading the Fencing Demonstration, the Scholar is looking for proficiency in the following areas:

1. Stance & Measure. Does the student remain low, with proper stance, buckler extended as appropriate, even when striking in or being driven back? Does the student maintain appropriate measure both to keep his/her lower openings safe, as well as to allow a proper stance and cover to be maintained?
2. Buckler Cover. Does the student keep sword & shield together at all times except when separation is absolutely necessary? Does the student cover their sword hand properly?

when it may be threatened?

3. Siege Awareness. Does the student use appropriate *obsessiones* against their opponent's wards? When in a ward, do they respond to their opponent's *obsessiones* appropriately?

For each of these three areas, the following grades may be given:

Plus (+): The student is clearly proficient in the skill or art in question, and never fails in it.

Pass (✓): While the student appears proficient in the skill or art in question, one or two small lapses may be observed, but do not detract from the student's clear proficiency.

Minus (-): The student continues to struggle with the skill or art in question, with multiple lapses, egregious lapses, or both being observed. The student is not yet proficient.

Fail (F): The student appears to have little mastery of the skill or art in question, failing to demonstrate it effectively more often than not. If the student gives up or otherwise fails to complete the demonstration, a Fail (F) should likewise be given.

To pass the fencing demonstration, the student must achieve a pass or better each of the three areas.

Safety

Having passed all tests, the student should have a brief discussion with the Scholar about proper safety (including grooming) relevant to fencing with the longsword, in which the Scholar should ask several relevant questions, *all* of which the student is expected to answer correctly. The scholar should quiz the student until the Scholar is satisfied that the students understand all relevant safety concerns quite well.

Sample questions (the Scholar may ask these and/or others, at his/her discretion):

1. Is grooming a safety issue?
2. What is an appropriate level of safety equipment for freeplay?
3. At what point does freeplay become unsafe?
4. To what extent does quality of equipment matter for safety?
5. What are some important safety rules when practicing with a sharp sword?
6. What do you do if someone yells "Stop!" or "Halt!"?
7. Is it appropriate to wear jewelry while fencing?