

[Updated 7/18/17]

Students testing for the rank of Apprentice (Longsword) must:

1. Pass an oral pretest
2. Take (and pass) a knowledge-based test with applied portions
3. Pass a warding test against high cuts
4. Pass a thrusting accuracy test
5. Pass a feeling test
6. Present a 60-second flourish
7. Demonstrate an understanding of proper safety at the sword

If the student fails at one portion, he 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.

Pretest

Before the knowledge test can be properly taken, the student should be tested orally by the Scholar on the following:

- a. What are the Vier Blößen
- b. Explain Indes
- c. Explain Fühlen
- d. Explain Sprechfenster

A pass or better must be achieved on each item in order for the fencer to be allowed to take the full Knowledge Test.

Knowledge Test

1. Movements, Devices, Techniques, and Guards to be demonstrated solo:
 - a. Pass step
 - b. Simple Step
 - c. False Step
 - d. Lunge
 - e. Strong
 - f. Weak
 - g. Thrust¹
 - h. Right Oberhau to a low guard
 - i. Left Oberhau to a low guard
 - j. Oberhau/Oberhauen to Langenort²
 - k. Flügelhau/Flügelhauen

¹ For all strikes, the student should demonstrate the ability to strike with a minimum of telegraphing.

² It is critical that the fencer demonstrate control of the Oberhau here. If he is unable to offer a properly executed Oberhau with enough control to stop it in Langenort, he should not pass the test.

- l. Right Fendente to a low guard
 - m. Left Fendente to a low guard
 - n. Fendente/Fendenti to Posta longa³
 - o. Posta Breve
 - p. Posta Longa
 - q. Posta di Donna
 - r. (Posta di) Corona/Posta Frontale [instructor may choose which to call]
 - s. Posta di Finestra
 - t. Pflug
 - u. Langenort
 - v. Zornhut
 - w. Vom Tag
 - x. Einhorn
 - y. Ochs
 - z. Kron
 - aa. Hengen
2. Techniques to be demonstrated against a “live” opponent undertaking a specific action:
- a. Being Hard [against an opponent binding soft]⁴
 - b. Being Soft [against an opponent binding hard]
 - c. Abnemen [against a hard opponent at Punta de spada]
 - d. Strong attack [against a soft opponent at Punta de spada]
 - e. Mass [from a bind against a soft opponent]
 - f. Grabbing the blade [against a parried Strong Attack]
 - g. Duplieren [against a hard opponent]
 - h. Mutieren [following a bind]
 - i. Colpo di Villano [against a Fendente]
 - j. 1-handed Pommel Strike [against an opponent pressing hard]
 - k. Abschnappen [against an opponent pressing very hard in the bind]
 - l. Ober Abschneiden [against an opponent using Abschnappen after being pressed in the bind]
 - m. Unter Abschneiden [against an opponent in high Kron at the bind]
 - n. Die Acht Winden
 - i. Two from Right Ochs (against an opponent cutting into the bind softly, and then responding hard)
 - ii. Two from Left Ochs (against an opponent cutting into the bind softly, and then responding hard)
 - iii. Two from Right Pflug (from *meza spada*)
 - iv. Two from Left Pflug (from *meza spada*)

³ It is critical that the fencer demonstrate control of the Fendente here. If he is unable to offer a properly executed Fendente with enough control to stop it in Posta longa, he should not pass the test.

⁴ For this and the following two items, the fencer should not be informed which item will be taken by the opponent beforehand.

There are 44 total points at stake, plus four from the pretest. Every part of the test is worth one point (+/-). When testing guards and steps, the tester should simply name the guard or step (preferably out of order), and the student should then perform the step or move into the guard. (Ideally, the candidate will step with each change of guards.) When testing basic strikes, they should be performed as against an invisible opponent (at distance).

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.

The fencer must pass the Knowledge Test in order to be allowed to take the Warding, Thrusting Accuracy, or Feeling Tests.

Warding Test

1. An opponent will throw cuts (Oberhauen and Flügelhauen) from Vom Tag/Zornhut/Posta di Donna/Ochs at the fencer (at full speed). The fencer must parry safely using tight parries in the appropriate ward, and respond with a geometrically appropriate strike immediately in return.
2. 10 strikes will be thrown at the fencer in total.
3. A fencer that uses the appropriate ward, parries tightly, responds with an appropriate counterstrike, and avoids being hit, will receive ++ for that strike. A fencer that fails in one of the first of these, but succeeds in the other two and avoids being hit, will receive + for the strike. A fencer that succeeds in only one of these and avoids being hit will receive ✓ for the strike. A fencer that only manages to avoid being hit will receive - for the strike. A fencer that is struck will receive a fail for the strike.
4. The fencer must achieve 5 points (+) total to pass the test.

Thrusting Accuracy Test

1. The student will be given a set of different labeled targets.
 - a. If not using a stand with multiple targets, a student holding a target of the appropriate size, and moving it as the Scholar calls, may be used.
 - b. In this case, the target shall never be moved above the head of the student, nor below their waist.
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 guard. A student will receive an extra + for each new guard 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.

Feeling Test

1. The student will bind with an opponent (of Apprentice rank or above) at Punta de Spada. This opponent is not to retreat or strike, but is expected to parry and bind to avoid being struck to the best of their ability.
2. The student will fence 10 exchanges total. Each exchange is to last no more than 10 seconds.
3. The student may use any strike from the bind, but may not strike except from the bind. It is expected that the student shall employ Bleiben and Fühlen to determine the bind and will then throw a strike Indes to successfully counter their opponent's position in the bind.
4. The student may throw no more than 3 strikes during any exchange.
5. A student who hits on the first strike thrown will receive a + for that exchange. A student who hits on the second strike thrown will receive a ✓ for that exchange. A student who hits on the third strike thrown will receive a - for that exchange. A student who fails to hit their opponent after three strikes are thrown will receive a fail (F) for that exchange.
6. Each exchange will end when 10 seconds have passed, the student has thrown three strikes, or the student successfully hits their opponent, whichever occurs first.
7. The fencer must achieve at least 5 points (+) to pass the test.

The Flourish should only be performed after the Warding, Thrusting Accuracy, and Feeling Tests have been passed.

Flourish

The Flourish should be exactly 60 seconds in duration (though students will not be penalized if they go slightly over), and can be entirely memorized/choreographed, or ad-hoc. It should be at full or near-full speed, performed with proper intent, with good form, technique, and footwork. It should contain a variety of techniques and guards, and should not show significant repetition of a single sequence. The Instructor should pay particular attention to form and footwork.

In grading the Flourish:

Plus (+): The student performs for the full 60 seconds, with no significant breaks, and no significant repetition of a single sequence. His form and footwork are excellent or very good.

Pass (✓): The student performs for the full 60 seconds, with no significant breaks, and no significant repetition of a single sequence. His form and footwork are good. A student who would otherwise qualify for a Plus but who performs at less than $\frac{3}{4}$ speed may receive a Pass.

Minus (-): The student performs for the full 60 seconds, with no more than the occasional significant break. He may show significant repetition, poor technique, or bad footwork. A student who would otherwise qualify for a Plus or Pass, but performs at less than $\frac{1}{2}$ speed should receive a Minus.

Fail (F): The student fails to perform for the full 60 seconds, or whose performance contains so many significant breaks as to disrupt the Flourish should receive a Fail.

The student must receive at least a Pass (✓) in the Flourish in order to attain the rank of Apprentice.

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?