



UNIVERSITIES

Player Ability and Division Rules

We have created this document to help players, Team Managers and Coaches to understand the different levels that we offer at our university events. This document acts as a guide for choosing the correct division to enter players and teams into and use the diagram (see left) to help with the progression up through the sections and eligibility duration for each division.

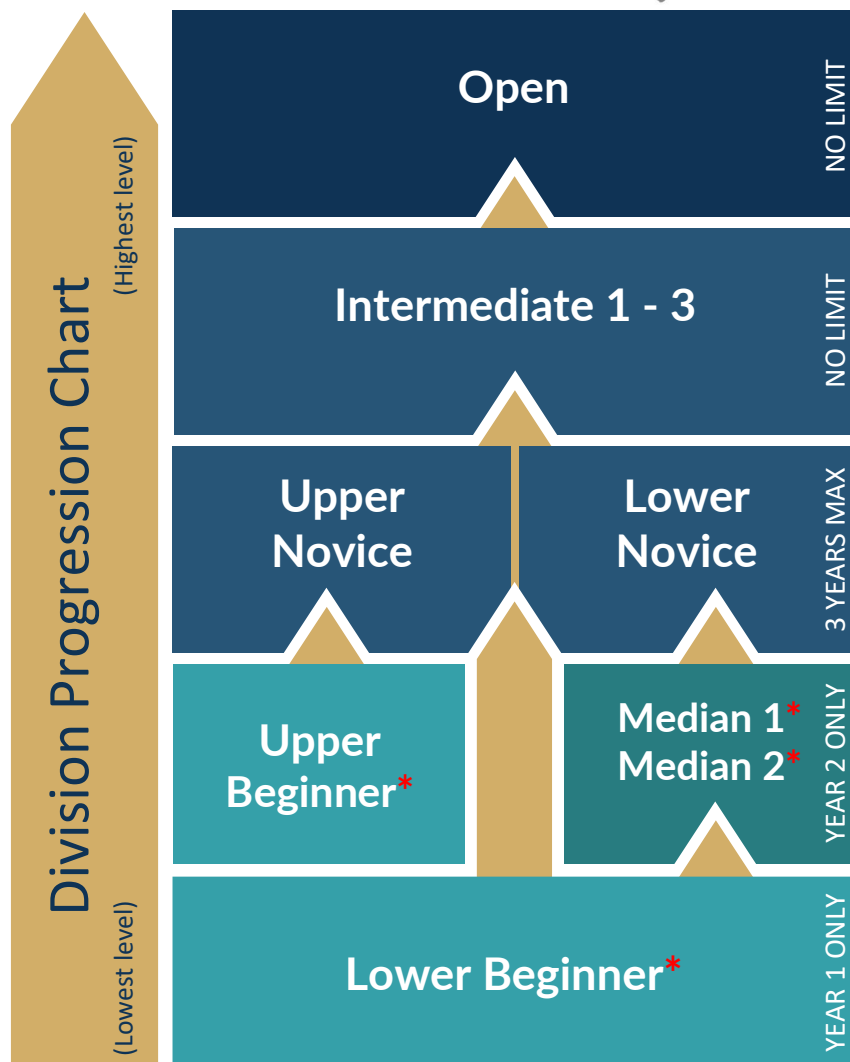
Everyone should read all the information included within this document, but especially for the Beginner and Median divisions which have specific rules to ensure these divisions are fair and safe for the players without previous riding experience or who are just starting out playing polo.

SUPA actively promotes upward mobility and player development, encouraging players to progress up through the divisions to reach the highest level possible during their time at university.

- We refer to academic years (September – August), not calendar years.
- When a team win the National Champion title at an event, this team (or 50%+ players from a winning team) must move up a division at the next tournament e.g. Lower Beginner to Upper Beginner etc.
- Please note that players should only enter one division up or down than their ability, e.g. Upper Novice or Lower Novice if the player is Novice ability. Players playing across a wider span of divisions will be challenged.
- If a player has ever tried/played polo, polocrosse or mounted games prior to the current academic year in any form, the lowest division they are eligible for is Novice**.
- Should a player move universities or come up from schools, their eligibility for divisions continues from where they left off.

Any infringements of these rules may result in SUPA moving teams into different divisions or being disqualified at events.

If you have any questions or are unsure about what division a player should be playing in, please email universities@supa.org.uk.



*A player can only play in Beginner or Median divisions for a maximum of one academic year respectively regardless of any breaks after they first started polo, or how many fixtures they compete in that academic year.

All Upper Beginner players must move up to Novice in their second academic year whereas only Lower Beginner players are eligible for the Median division the following academic year. Players who started polo before the start of the current academic year but have not competed or are not ready for Novice can also compete in Median.

<https://www.supa.org.uk/universities/supa-rules-for-universities/>



Section	Division	Description/Rules of Entry	No of Players in Team		Handicap (Grass)	Combined	Return to middle (after goals)	How long can I play in this Section
			Arena	Grass				
Beginner	<p><u>The beginner section is only for players who have started playing polo this current academic year</u> and is split according to whether players have got any previous riding experience or not.</p> <p>**You can only play in the Beginner section for one academic year (regardless of when you began during that academic year), then you MUST move up to Novice or Median. Please note that ONLY Lower Beginner players are eligible to play in the Median section in their second year, Upper Beginner players must move up to Novice in their second academic year.</p>							
	Upper Beginner (Beginner 1 for entries) Previously Beginner 1/ Beginner 2	This division is are for players who have just started playing polo in this current academic year but may have participated in another equestrian discipline (not including polo, polocrosse, or mounted games).	3	4	No Handicap allowed	No	Yes	For 1 academic year (September to August) regardless of when you begin polo within that year. This can only be your first academic year of starting polo
	Lower Beginner (Beginner 3 for entries) Previously Beginner 3/ Beginner 4	These divisions are only open to players who have not ridden a horse before this academic year and have not participated in any other equestrian disciplines before. This allows players to be safe as they are learning to ride whilst also learning to play polo.						

**Players who play or have played polocrosse will play off the equivalent handicap given and assessed by their approved HPA coach/instructor using the HPA approved scale of: A = 1/2, B = 0/1, C = -1, D = -2

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			Arena	Grass				
Median	Median is only for players who played in Lower Beginner the previous academic year or started polo in the previous academic year but did not compete, so are not yet at the level required for Novice. *You can only play in Median for 1 academic year (only in your 2nd academic year of polo) then <u>must</u> move to Novice. * You cannot play in Median if you played Upper Beginner in a previous academic year. Please note that if a player has ever played polo, polocrosse** or mounted games prior to this academic year, they are not eligible to play in the Median Section and must move straight to Novice**.							
	Median	This division is only open to players in their second academic year of polo who competed in Lower Beginner the previous year or who trained the previous year but did not compete, and whose coaches do not feel are ready to move up to Novice yet.	3	4	No Handicap allowed	No	Yes	For 1 academic year (September to August). This can only be your second academic year of polo regardless of any breaks between or how many tournaments you have competed in.

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			Arena	Grass				
Novice	The Novice section is split into four divisions based on ability. Lower Novice is for players who have moved up from Beginner or Median, Upper Novice is for more advanced Novice players and these divisions have maximum handicap of -2 to ensure the level is safe and fair for those who are playing more polo outside of university.							
	We expect players to aspire to move up through Novice divisions rather than staying in the same division for years so the step up into the Lower Intermediate division is now an easier transition from Upper Novice.							
	Upper Novice (Novice 1 for entries) <small>Previously Novice 1/ Novice 2</small>	This division is for any player with a maximum of a -2 handicap or deemed suitable by their approved coach/instructor.	3	4	Max -2	No	No	For 3 academic years maximum, (regardless of which Novice divisions you have played in)
Lower Novice (Novice 3 for entries) <small>Previously Novice 3/ Novice 4</small>	This division is for players who have gained experience through playing in Median and Beginner and are now confident enough for Novice. You can also play in this division if you are a beginner with strong riding experience from another equestrian discipline and your approved coach/instructor verifies that you would be better suited playing at this level.	No Handicap allowed			Please aspire to move up through the Novice divisions rather than remaining in the same division for multiple years.			

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			Arena	Grass				
Intermediate	The Intermediate section is for players who have progressed up from Novice or have played polo with a handicap before. It is split into 2 divisions, to offer a range of opportunities to progress up through the divisions and want to continue to play polo outside of university at their clubs.							
	Upper Intermediate (Intermediate 1 for entries)	This section is for teams comprising of any players up to and including a 0 handicap.	3	4	Max 0	Yes	No	No limit
	Lower Intermediate (Intermediate 2 for entries)	This section is a stepping stone for teams moving up from Upper Novice comprising of any players up to and including a -1 handicap.	3		Max -1	No		
Open		This division is for teams comprising of any players with a minimum handicap of -1 goal. <u>You must have a HPA or equivalent handicap to compete in the Open.</u> The Open division is combined so you can form teams across different universities.	3	4	Min -1	Yes	No	No limit

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			Arena	Grass					
Combined	The combined section is for teams made up of players from different universities, providing the opportunity for players without a polo club at their University or without other players at their level to compete. The combined divisions mirror their equivalent divisions in rules/player ability levels. If you are an individual player or have a space in your team, please get in touch with the Section Manager before you enter. All players in a combined team must provide the name of their teammates and team name in the box provided when entering.								
	Intermediate 2 Combined	Equivalent to Lower Intermediate, these divisions are for players with up to and including a -1 handicap.	3	4	-1	Yes	No	No limit	
	Upper Novice Combined	Equivalent to Novice 1/2 (check guidance), this division is for players with a maximum of -2 handicap.			-2			For 3 academic years maximum, regardless of which Novice divisions you have played in before.	
	Lower Novice Combined	Equivalent to Lower Novice (check guidance), this division is for players with no handicap.			No Handicap allowed			Yes	For 1 academic year (September to August) Can only be your 2nd year of polo regardless of breaks between.
	Median Combined	Equivalent to Median, please read the guidance for Median.				Yes	For 1 academic year (September to August). Can only be your 1st year of polo.		
	Upper Beginner Combined	Equivalent to Beginner, please read the guidance for Beginner.							
	Lower Beginner Combined	Please build teams with a mixture of player abilities.							

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SAPA		<p>This section is for players who have graduated from their respective universities/school or are on a gap year before starting University but still want to compete.</p> <p>Current students can only play in SAPA if they are already entered into another SUPA division in addition to SAPA. SAPA Teams must be made up of at least 2 alumni players.</p> <p>SAPA teams are made up with all players submitting individual entries themselves. Every player must provide their team's name and teammate names when entering so that the team can be assembled.</p> <p>If you are looking for teammates, please contact the SAPA subcommittee before entering.</p>	Arena	Grass				
	Open SAPA	Equivalent to Open/Upper Inters, this division is for teams with players of -1 handicaps and above, please read the Open/Inters 1 guidance.	3	4	Min -1	Yes	No	No limit
	Intermediate SAPA	Equivalent to Lower Intermediate/Upper Novice, this division is for players with up to/including a -1 handicap, please read the Lower Inters/Upper Novice guidance.			Max -1			
	Novice SAPA	Equivalent to Lower Novice, this division is for player up to/including a -2 handicap, please read the Lower Novice/Median guidance.			Max -2			For 3 years maximum, (regardless of which Novice divisions you have played in)

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