



3: Knowledge & requirements for the *Freifechter* grade

Context and goals

Collegium in Armis currently has 4 grades which describe a student's achievements, knowledge and practical skills base within the medieval and Renaissance *Kunst des Fechtens* (*Art of Fencing*) with the longsword. The grades are:

- *Neuling* (Novice)
- *Fechter* (Fencer)
- *Freifechter* (Free Fencer)
- *Vorfechter* (Provost).

All students who join the school and continue training beyond an initial probationary period become a *Neuling* by default. *Fechter* is the first grade with a testing requirement, *Freifechter* the second. The *Freifechter* grade establishes measurable standards and provides each student a path of structured progression with clear and attainable goals.

Minimum requirements

To be awarded the grade of *Freifechter*, a candidate:

- has been attending classes regularly for a minimum of 3 years as a *Fechter*
- Possesses and maintains the necessary equipment in good condition
- Satisfies the knowledge and skill requirements below during an examination.

Knowledge and skills

Key knowledge areas and skills are drawn from the sources known as *Hanko Doebringer*, *Sigmund Ringeck*, *Peter von Danzig*, *Peter Falkner* and *Joachim Meyer*, with additional input from other relevant sources where useful. A candidate testing for this grade must demonstrate all items below to the satisfaction of the examiner/s.

Privileges and responsibilities

A *Freifechter* holds all the privileges and responsibilities of a *Fechter*. *Freifechter* is the last grade based on longsword coursework and fencing ability alone: the next grade, *Vorfechter*, is based on coaching and research ability. A *Freifechter* is expected to coach students at *Neuling* and *Fechter* level, and play a significant role in running and promoting the school and contributing to research and interpretation.

Assessing candidates

Each distinct item is assessed as 'competent' (tick) or 'not yet competent' (cross) marks. Candidates require competent assessments for all items to pass the overall examination. Examiners may prompt the candidate for a corrected or extended response (including more information or further demonstration) within reason.

1.	Possess & maintain suitable equipment for practice	Result
1.1	Candidate possesses and maintains their equipment as per the <i>Fechter</i> grade	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.2	Candidate possesses and maintains a suitable blunt steel longsword	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.3	Candidate's equipment is inspected for cleanliness, safety & suitability for practice	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	Demonstrate a thorough commitment to health & safety	Result
2.1	Candidate exhibits an awareness of hazards and exhibits care for the safety of their fellows at all times	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.2	Candidate holds a current, recognised first aid certification in Queensland (e.g. "Apply First Aid")	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	Place <i>Liechtenauer's</i> tradition in the broader context of European fencing history	Result
3.1	Discuss the relationship (e.g. similarities, differences) between <i>Liechtenauer's</i> art & similar European arts	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.2	Discuss how social & technological change contributed to the rise & decline of <i>Liechtenauer's</i> art	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	Explain the mechanics of efficient movement, contraction & extension	Result
4.1	Explain the principle of contraction & extension and how it can apply to movement mechanics	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.2	Demonstrate efficient contraction and extension while executing set 1 of Meyer's 4 openings drill	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Explain the 3 key modes & ranges of defence with example techniques		Result
5.1	Defences via distance evade the attack by retreating with or without blade contact (e.g. <i>Nachreisen</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.2	Soft defences use the weak of the blade, let the opponent's attack flow off (e.g. <i>Ablauffen</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.3	Firm defences use the strong of the blade, arrest the opponent's attack (e.g. <i>Absetzen</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.4	Demonstrate each mode of defence against an <i>Oberhau</i> with the techniques named above	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Demonstrate the 3 balances or scales (<i>Drei Waage</i>) from <i>Paulus Hector Mair</i>		Result
6.1	<i>Ober waage</i> 'upper balance' largely upright with the feet narrow and centre of gravity high	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.2	<i>Mittel waage</i> 'middle balance' knees bent, feet shoulder width apart and centre of gravity low	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.3	<i>Unter waage</i> 'low balance' knees well bent, feet very wide and centre of gravity at the lowest point	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.4	Demonstrate each balance and how they can apply to the different phases and ranges of a fight	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Demonstrate the 17 longsword <i>Hauptstücke</i> (primary pieces) from memory		Result
7.1	<i>Zornhau</i> 'wrath hew' <input type="checkbox"/>	7.10 <i>Absetzen</i> 'setting off' <input type="checkbox"/>
7.2	<i>Krumphau</i> 'crooked hew' <input type="checkbox"/>	7.11 <i>Durchwechselln</i> 'changing through' <input type="checkbox"/>
7.3	<i>Zwerchhau</i> 'thwart hew' <input type="checkbox"/>	7.12 <i>Zucken</i> 'pulling' <input type="checkbox"/>
7.4	<i>Schielhau</i> 'squinting hew' <input type="checkbox"/>	7.13 <i>Durchlauffen</i> 'running through' <input type="checkbox"/>
7.5	<i>Scheitelhau</i> 'scalp hew' <input type="checkbox"/>	7.14 <i>Abschneiden</i> 'slicing off' <input type="checkbox"/>
7.6	<i>Vier Leger</i> 'four layings' <input type="checkbox"/>	7.15 <i>Händ Trucken</i> 'hand pressing' <input type="checkbox"/>
7.7	<i>Vier Versetzen</i> 'four oppositions' <input type="checkbox"/>	7.16 <i>Hängen</i> 'hanging' <input type="checkbox"/>
7.8	<i>Nachreisen</i> 'travelling after' <input type="checkbox"/>	7.17 <i>Winden</i> 'winding' <input type="checkbox"/>
7.9	<i>Überlauffen</i> 'over running' <input type="checkbox"/>	7.18 Demonstrate each <i>steucke</i> from memory <input type="checkbox"/>
8. Demonstrate a free form longsword parat (solo form) with footwork & fluidity		Result
8.1	Perform an extended free form parat with a steel blunt, from memory and with appropriate footwork. The parat should exhibit a high level of fluidity, balance, mechanics and multi-directional movement.	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Demonstrate composure & a high level of skill in free fencing bouts		Result
9.1	Fence in 10 free fencing bouts against qualified challengers, displaying a high level of skill. Demonstrate control of the weapon, recognizable postures & strikes, footwork, balance, all 3 phases of the fight (<i>Zufechten</i> , <i>Krieg</i> , <i>Abzug</i>) and effective use of the <i>After Blow</i> from the Belgian fighting guilds. Modified <i>Belgian Longsword Rules</i> (BLR) apply to each bout as follows:	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cuts & thrusts ('hits') with 2-handed sword technique only – no kicks, head butts, punches etc ▪ Limited grappling is allowed – disarms, sword and arm trapping is permitted ▪ When grappling, if either fencer fails to establish dominance within 5 seconds, separate and reset ▪ The whole body (suitably covered in clothing and protective equipment) is 'in target' ▪ Candidate remains in the middle for each bout, & faces each challenger in turn ▪ Each bout is played until one fencer or the other attains 3 points from 3 separate exchanges ▪ To score points a hit must land cleanly without an '<i>After Blow</i>' negating the point ▪ A successful grapple, resulting in a disarm or superior position over the opponent, earns 1 point ▪ One immediate <i>After Blow</i> (<i>Naerschlag</i>) can be struck by a fencer who has just been hit ▪ To count, the <i>After Blow</i> must land immediately & take no more than one step ▪ A successful <i>After Blow</i> negates the point that was just scored by the original hit ▪ A successful hit earns 1 point ▪ In case of an apparent 'simultaneous' double hit (i.e. "both dead"), both fencers lose 1 point. 		