



International Horsemanship Association

***Requirements for Professional Trainer/Instructor
Recommendation***

January 31, 2019

Thank you for your interest in becoming an IHA Recommended Professional. The IHA, applying standards as defined by the Grades of Horsemanship (GOH), will recommend professionals who demonstrate exceptional understanding of horse psychology, healthy biomechanics, and Relationship-Based Horsemanship.

The IHA defines trainers and instructors as those professionals who engage in one or more of the following equine industry activities:

- Training horses
- Teaching horsemanship and riding skills
- Delivering instruction in an equine discipline
- Performing with equines

To Become a Recommended Professional:

- **Join the IHA** by becoming a member in any of the following categories:
 - Digital
 - Hard Copy
 - Professional
 - Lifetime
- **Submit a completed application** which includes the application document, two videos, and the assessment fee.

Special Discount: *For the first 30 professionals who apply for recommended status, the IHA will waive the normal \$325 application processing and Ground Skills assessment fee. If you are not ready to submit the total application but would like to take advantage of the special offer, you may do so. You have 365 days from sending in a completed application document and payment to provide your videos and other required documents.*

- Once your application has been approved, and you are or have upgraded your membership to Professional, you will **receive all the benefits** associated with IHA Recommended Professional membership status.

What You Need to Know

There are six total Skill Sets for which a professional may attain Recommended Professional (RP) status. They are:

1. Ground Skills
2. Bridle Riding
3. Liberty
4. Free Riding
5. In-Hand
6. Long Lining

Minimum Ground Skills Grade 6 required for recommendation.

Submission of any or all of the remaining five skill sets is totally optional and one or more may be submitted at any time in the future.

- Applicants generally must be 18 years of age or older. The IHA will take applications under the age of 18 special circumstances may apply.
- Fees:
 - Application processing and Ground Skills assessment - - - - - \$325
(Fee waived for initial 30 Professional Member applicants)
 - Assessment of Additional (Optional) Skill Sets: - - - - - \$45
(Maximum fee for all 5 remaining skill sets will be \$225).
- The fee is payable by check, credit card or PayPal at the time the application document is submitted to the IHA. Applications will not be assessed until payment is received.
- All applicants submitting a completed application will receive comments and a recommendation (approval and/or areas to improve) within 45 days of receipt by the IHA of the complete application.
- If the application is not approved, it may be re-submitted within 180 days of the IHA's response without additional fee.

- Eventually, the IHA will develop a more indepth credentialing protocol which will *certify* trainers and instructors. From the unveiling of the Certification program, current Recommended Professional Trainers and Instructors will have 365 days in which to complete the additional requirements for full Certification. After this date, if the Recommended Instructors have not completed these additional requirements, they will no longer appear on the Recommended or Certified Instructor Directory. Additional requirements will **NOT** be higher levels of horsemanship. They will be short courses such as helmet safety certification, horse husbandry exam, proof of CPR certification, etc.

Completed application for the IHA Recommended Professional must include:

1. **Signed IHA Equine Professional application** document which includes signed IHA Code of Ethics. This document may be completed and signed online or printed and mailed to IHA.
2. **Two video submissions:** All professionals interested in being recommended *must submit the Ground Skills Skill Set first*. All other skill set submissions are optional, and may be completed at any time. Additional skill sets may be submitted at the same time as the ground skill assessment if desired. However, if ground skills do not meet the required level, the other skill sets will not be assessed until the ground skill assessment is passed. Submit only one skill set per video please. Each video shall be 5-10 minutes in length, maximum of 10 minutes.
 - **Video 1: Ground Skills:** In the video, the professional maintains the leadership role and uses appropriate phases in all movements.
 - **Video 2: Session with student/client/horse** portraying the normal course of your business. Please do not exceed a time limit of 5-10 minutes, and follow this
Format:
 - Introduce yourself, the student, and/or the horse.
 - Briefly explain the topic you will demonstrate in the video.

- Show the topic with explanation of the steps and discuss your next plan of action.
- 3. **Photograph of applicant (may include equine partner) with a minimum of 5 X 7 at 300 dpi resolution.**
- 4. **2 letters of reference from professionals in the horse industry who appreciate your talents.**
- 5. **3 letters of reference from students or clients (over 18 years old).**
- 6. **Liability release form utilized in your business.**
- 7. **Proof of \$1,000,000 (USD) professional liability insurance coverage.** (Note: once approved, the professional must submit proof of IHA being named as additionally insured in the liability insurance policy.)

Please note that the International Horsemanship Association reserves the right to reject or revoke recommendations based on unsafe or inhumane teaching and training.

SKILL SETS

All movements in each skill set can be completed in any order. This will change as we develop specific tests for each skill set.

Goal of Skill Sets: To develop trust, understanding, and strengthen the horse/human bond. To create the situation where the horse is eager to respond to the human's request both on the ground and under saddle.

Overall Quality: Horse and human show mutual understanding and enjoyment and work together in a positive manner.

Attributes of the Horse: The horse must be happy, relaxed, confident, athletic, responsive to subtle cues without leaning on the rope/reins, and must be focused on the human.

Attributes of the Human: Stays in appropriate position. Maintains horse's confidence and rewards effort. Has positive focus to achieve goal with a minimum of physical effort. Is competent and fair in use of tools. Recovers easily from errors.

1. Ground Skills

Required for all applicants and is the prerequisite for assessment in all other skill sets

Show the movements using one rope/line at least 20' long attached to a halter or cavesson. A stick is allowed. Bits are not allowed. Showing these tasks will give you an eventual grade level assessment to Grade 6 (out of 9) of the GOH. This is an approximation until the GOH is completed.

- a. Turn on the forehand using feel
- b. Walk, trot, canter with correct leads
- c. Change direction on a circle at a canter (drop to trot or flying change)
- d. Sidepass toward and away for 20' both directions
- e. Back up to 20 feet away and recall at a trot or canter

- f. Trot a 4 or 6 cone weave (in a circle, arc, or line) with a change of direction at both ends
- g. Trailer load from 20' away
- h. Back up from the tail minimum of 10 steps
- i. Jump of 2', both directions
- j. Show confidence with objects (plastic bag, tarp, or other object)
- k. 4 feet on or in an obstacle (tarp, pedestal, tire, bridge)
- l. Demonstrate your horse enjoying a great scratching session.

2. Bridle Riding

Horse may wear a halter, bridle with snaffle or curb bit with no joint or with a roller joint (no twisted mouth pieces), bitless bridle, or hackamore. Double bridle allowed. Horse may be ridden in a saddle or bareback pad. Stick allowed. Horse is relaxed and obedient with balanced impulsion and demonstrates correct flexion. Light use of aids. Showing these tasks will give you a grade assessment to Grade 6 of the GOH. This is an approximation until the GOH is completed.

- a. Relaxation and impulsion at the walk
- b. Trot showing correct diagonals
- c. Sitting trot that looks relaxed and easy to ride
- d. Canter on a 10m circle with correct leads
- e. Extended canter or gallop
- f. Walk, canter, walk transitions
- g. Trot to back up to trot transitions
- h. Stretching trot for 20m on a circle
- i. Turn on forequarters 180 degrees, front feet in hula-hoop-sized area
- j. Turn on the Hindquarters 180 degrees at a walk or trot appropriate to your discipline
- k. Lateral maneuvers straight line towards camera (shoulder in, haunches in both directions) for 20m at a trot
- l. Mounted or unmounted, demonstrate unbridling and bridling horse

- m. Go over, under or through obstacles. Please refer to obstacle list* and choose three.

3. Liberty

There are no ropes attached to your horse in a minimum 120-foot area. A stick is allowed. Showing these tasks will yield an eventual grade level assessment to Grade 6 of the GOH. This is an approximation until the GOH is completed.

- a. Circle at walk, trot, and canter with correct leads
- b. Figure 8 at trot
- c. Back up 10 feet straight from in front of the horse
- d. Sidepass over a pole or barrel from in front of horse, both ways
- e. Send horse to pedestal, tarp or cone, then call back to you from 10 feet away
- f. Back up by tail 10 steps with rhythm
- g. Go over, under or through obstacles. Please refer to obstacle list* and choose three.

4. Free Riding

Nothing on the horse's head; a neck rope or cordeo and stick are allowed. Can be ridden bareback, with a bareback pad or a saddle. The less equipment that is used, the higher level of skill is being demonstrated and will be acknowledged in the assessment. Demonstrating these maneuvers will yield an eventual grade level assessment to Grade 6-7 of the GOH. This is an approximation until the GOH is completed.

- a. Demonstrate the rising trot, showing correct diagonals
- b. Demonstrate sitting trot, with the horse's head lower than his withers, and an even rhythm that looks easy and comfortable to ride
- c. Canter a circle each way on the correct leads
- d. Halt from canter
- e. Trot to back up to trot transitions

- f. Side pass over a pole both directions
- g. Turn on the forehand
- h. Turn on the hind quarters
- i. Go over, under or through obstacles. Please refer to obstacle list* and choose three.

5. In-Hand

In-Hand skills are advanced ground skills performed in close proximity to the horse. A bridle, bitless bridle, cavesson, or halter with reins and stick are allowed. Horse must demonstrate correct flexion and willingness. Showing these tasks will yield an eventual grade level assessment to Grade 7 of the GOH. This is an approximation until the GOH is completed. All skills that can be done to the right and left must be demonstrated in both directions.

- a. Proper vertical flexion in the standstill
- b. Shoulder-in at trot
- c. Haunches in at trot
- d. Half pass at walk
- e. Pirouette at walk
- f. Collected canter, counter canter
- g. Half steps.
- h. Scratch horse in a place he likes.

6. Long Lining

Equipment: Two reins approximately 20' in length. A halter, bridle, cavesson, bitless bridle, and stick are allowed. Showing these tasks will give you an eventual grade level assessment to Grade 6 of the GOH. This is an approximation until the GOH is completed.

- a. Trot and canter circles with correct leads, rein behind rump
- b. Trot a 4 cone weave 2 times
- c. Sidepass over a pole both directions from the tail position
- d. Trot forward, back up, then trot forward with impulsion
- e. Turn on the forehand (hooves in a hula hoop)
- f. Turn on the hindquarters or pirouette (human can pivot only)

- g. Go over, under or through obstacles. Please refer to obstacle list* and choose three.
- h. Show the horse being very confident with a scary object.

***Obstacle List:** Gate, flag, bridge or pedestal, tarp, ball, barrels, jump, ditch, tire, trailer, or get creative – *i.e.*, plastic bag full of empty cans, gallon milk jugs, pool noodles, etc.