



International Horsemanship Association

Recommended Instructor & Trainer
Application Requirements

Current as of
April 25, 2019

All fees are in USD.

What is a Recommended Professional?

The IHA currently uses three categories to define its Recommended Professionals: Recommended Instructors, Recommended Trainers, and Recommended Practitioners. Professionals in these categories engage in one or more of the following equine industry activities:

| Recommended Instructor | Recommended Trainer | Recommended Practitioner |
|--|---|--|
| Teaching horsemanship and riding skills | Training equines for any skill or discipline | Offering an equine health or wellness service |
| Delivering instruction in an equine discipline | Performing with equines in demonstrations and shows | Using equines for a human health or wellness service |

This document outlines the application requirements for Recommended Instructors and Recommended Trainers. To learn about Recommended Practitioners, please visit [our website](#) to view the appropriate document.

In the next few years, the IHA will develop a more in-depth credentialing protocol which will *certify* professionals. After the Certification Program is released, existing Recommended Professionals will have 365 days in which to complete the additional requirements for full Certification. If after this date a Recommended Professional has 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, but rather will be short courses such as helmet safety certification, horse husbandry exam, proof of CPR certification, etc.

How do I become a Recommended Professional?

- **Join the IHA** by becoming a member of any of the following types:
 - Digital
 - Professional
 - Hard Copy
 - Lifetime
- **Submit your completed application** which includes the application document, at least two videos, and the assessment fee.
- Once your application has been approved, and you hold or have upgraded to a Professional membership, you will **receive all benefits** associated with IHA Recommended Professional status.

We're waiving the \$325 application and Ground Skills assessment fee for a limited time!

Be one of the first 30 applicants to register your intent. Don't worry if your application is not yet complete; you'll have 365 days to submit your videos, documents, and insurance information.

What are the skill requirements to become Recommended?

IHA Recommended Instructors and Recommended Trainers earn their valuable credentials by demonstrating that they have a high degree of skill in one or more areas of horsemanship. To evaluate these skills, applicants are required to film themselves performing certain movements in the Grades of Horsemanship Skill Sets of their choice.

The six Grades of Horsemanship Skill Sets include:

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

To be Recommended in a particular Skill Set, the applicant must demonstrate relevant skills at a minimum of Grade 6 in the Grades of Horsemanship in a short video. Full video requirements may be viewed in Appendix I at the end of this document.

Each applicant must apply for Ground Skills assessment. Otherwise, they are free to apply for as many other Skill Sets if they so wish, either at the time of their original application or at any time in the future. Please note that assessment of multiple Skill Sets incurs an additional fee (as outlined below), which **cannot** be waived for the first 30 applicants.

How much does it cost to become Recommended?

The IHA strongly believes in making valuable horsemanship credentials accessible to those individuals with a high amount of skill. This is why our credentialing process is done completely remotely, making it easier for talented professionals to become Recommended without spending a fortune or traveling extensively. The fees required to become a Recommended Professional and to retain this status as a Professional **or** Lifetime member are outlined below.

| Application Fees | | IHA Membership Fees | |
|---|------------------------------|---|-------------------|
| Application and Ground Skills assessment fee (waived for first 30 applicants) | \$325.00 | Professional membership fee (annual) | \$350.00 |
| Assessment fee for additional Skill Sets (optional) | \$45.00 per Skill Set | One-time Lifetime membership fee (limited availability) | \$2,000.00 |

Fees are payable by check, credit card, or PayPal upon submission of the full application. Applications will not be assessed until payment is received.

What are the application process and requirements?

If you have all of the required videos and documents ready, please submit your application online [here](#). Otherwise, we encourage you to register your intent, indicating that you will submit a full application within 365 days, [here](#).

All applicants submitting a completed application (as outlined below) will receive comments and a status update (approval or requires improvement) within 45 days of application receipt. If the application is not approved upon first attempt, it may be re-submitted within 180 days of the IHA's response without additional fee.

A completed application for a Recommended Instructor or Recommended Trainer includes:

1. Agreement to the IHA Code of Ethics

The terms of the Code of Ethics may be agreed to online, or printed, signed, and mailed to IHA upon request.

2. Video Submissions

The Ground Skills assessment video (see above) must be submitted first. All other Skill Set assessments are optional, and may be completed at any time. However, if the applicant's Ground Skills video does not meet the required degree of skill, the other Skill Sets will not be assessed until the Ground Skill assessment is passed.

Please submit one Skill Set per video. Each video should be at least 5 minutes long and no longer than 10 minutes. Videos should be unedited except for when changing locations.

- **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/horse** portraying the normal course of your business (i.e. teaching or training). Please follow this format:
 - Introduce yourself, the student, and/or the horse.
 - Briefly explain the topic you will demonstrate in the video.
 - Show the execution of the topic with the student and/or horse, with an explanation of the steps.
 - Discuss your next plan of action.

3. Photograph of Applicant

Upon the approval of your application, this photograph would be used on the Recommended Professionals directory along with your contact information on the IHA website. Photos may include your equine partner if you wish and should be high-resolution.

4. Letters of Reference

Please provide two (2) letters of reference from professionals in the horse industry who appreciate your talents, such as a mentor, instructor, service provider, etc., as well as three (3) letters of reference from students or clients (must be over 18 years of age). For more information about asking for reference letters and the information required, please [click here](#).

5. Liability Release

Please provide a copy of the liability release form that you use in the regular operations of your business.

6. Proof of \$1,000,000 (USD) Professional Liability Insurance Coverage

Once approved, the successful applicant must submit proof of the IHA being named as additionally insured in their liability insurance policy.

Thank you for your interest in becoming an IHA Recommended Professional. The IHA, applying its standards as defined by the Grades of Horsemanship, values professionals who demonstrate exceptional understanding of horse psychology, healthy biomechanics, and Relationship-Based Horsemanship. We look forward to your application!

Please note that the IHA reserves the right to reject or revoke Recommended Professional status based on unsafe or inhumane teaching and/or training.

Appendix I

Grades of Horsemanship Assessment Requirements

The requirements below outline the minimum degree of skill in each Skill Set required to achieve Recommended Professional status (equivalent to Grade 6 of the Grades of Horsemanship in each Skill Set). Movements in each Skill Set may be completed in any order.

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| General Goals | To develop trust, understanding, and strengthen the horse/human bond. To create situations 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 focused on the human. |
| Attributes of the Human | Stays in the appropriate position. Maintains horse's confidence and rewards effort. Has a 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

Ground Skills assessment is 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.

- a. Turns the forequarters and hindquarters using feel
- b. Walk (1 circle), trot, canter with correct leads (at least 2 circles each)
- c. Change direction on a circle at a canter (drop to trot or flying change)
- d. Sidepass toward and away for 20' both directions (over an object or without a fence)
- 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 scratch or rub.

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. A double bridle is 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.

- 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 with its head low
- m. Go over, under or through obstacles. Refer to the obstacle list below and choose three.

3. Liberty

There are no ropes attached to your horse in a minimum 120-foot area. A stick is allowed.

- 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. Refer to the 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. All skills that can be done to the right and left must be demonstrated in both directions. The tasks below are equivalent to Grade 7 of the In-Hand Skill Set of the Grades of Horsemanship.

- 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 (can be large circle)
- f. Collected canter, counter canter
- g. Half steps
- h. Scratch horse in a place he likes.

6. Long Lining

Use two reins approximately 20' in length. A halter, bridle, cavesson, bitless bridle, and stick are allowed.

- 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

Feel free to use the obstacles below in your video, or get creative — *i.e.*, plastic bag full of empty cans, gallon milk jugs, pool noodles, etc.

- Gate
- Flag
- Bridge
- Pedestal
- Tarp
- Ball
- Barrels
- Jump
- Ditch
- Tire
- Trailer.