

Apprenticeship Requirements and Expectations

A prospective riding instructor not licensed or certified as a riding instructor by another approved riding instructor certification entity must serve an apprenticeship as described below. Please contact the Equine Program Coordinator if the student has any certification such Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship (PATH), American Riding Instructors Association (ARIA), Certified Horsemanship Association (CHA), or similar prior to initiating an apprenticeship.

Apprenticeships must be declared within thirty (30) days of the start time and a Declaration of Apprenticeship must be received by the Department. Apprenticeships will be a minimum of six months in length. Time spent observing the mentor and assisting students is an important part of the apprenticeship program but, does not count toward the apprentice's 60 hour teaching requirement where the apprentice's actual teaching of mounted students is observed by the mentor, critiqued, and refined.

The Mentor must be and remain licensed by this Department as a Riding Instructor during the entire time of the apprenticeship. The facility where instruction of mounted students takes place must be licensed by this Department as a Stable or Riding School during the entire time of the apprenticeship.

The apprentice must pass the Riding Instructor's examination administered by this Department prior to being allowed to teach mounted students. The required 60 or more hours of observed instruction to mounted students cannot occur until after the apprentice has passed the exam.

Observing or assisting the licensed instructor in a lesson, planning or reviewing a lesson with the mentor, training a student to care for or tack up a horse, unmounted lessons and exercises, cooling down and cleaning the animal after a lesson are all important tasks however ONLY the apprentice teaching mounted students, under the direct supervision of the mentor, count toward the 60 teaching hours.

It is expected that safety will be the guiding doctrine in the evolution of this program and the choices that are made by mentors and future instructors. Horseback riding has inherent risks. People can and do get injured while riding horses. The ability of a well-trained professional to eliminate or mitigate risks during instruction and impart appropriate tips and techniques to their students may greatly reduce the number and severity of avoidable injuries. It is expected that mentors will provide a sufficiently rigorous apprenticeship to ensure competence of the trainee once completed. Mentors should accept only students that have sufficient horsemanship skills that the mentor feels will allow them to complete the apprenticeship successfully within the allotted time frame. At the end of the minimum six month time frame and with sixty hours of observed teaching of mounted students, the apprentice should be ready to independently teach horseback riding in a safe and professional manner. The six month apprenticeship, and the sixty (60) hours of supervised teaching of mounted students are minimum standards applicable by regulation (330 CMR 16.00). There are apprentices and mentors that either by choice or necessity have dedicated sufficiently more time and effort that far exceeded these minimum standards on their journey to becoming licensed riding instructors. Mentors shall only endorse an apprentice for licensure when that apprentice is safe, competent and ready to teach independently.