



USA WORKING EQUITATION
Professional Instructors Program Guide



USAWE
PROFESSIONAL INSTRUCTOR PROGRAM GUIDE

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USA WORKING EQUITATION Professional Instructors Program Guide



PREFACE

The purpose of the Professional Instructor Program is to identify, recognize, and support a roster of educated, professional, and talented instructors to benefit the sport of working equitation in the U.S. The Professional Development Committee (PDC) achieves this goal through the development and maintenance of a rigorous recognition process, testing protocol, and continuing education.

Updates to this program will be effective upon publication.

Contact the Professional Development Committee (ProDev@usawe.org) with any questions, comments, or suggestions.



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ADDITIONAL FORMS

- A. [Reference Form / Advancement Reference Form](#)
- B. Licensed Judge Log
- C. [Shadow Judge Log](#)
- D. [Scribe Log](#)
- E. Shadow/Volunteer Log
- F. [CE Credit Tracking Log](#)



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1. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

1.1 Program Description

USAWE Professional Instructors are experienced and dedicated to furthering the education of riders of all levels and disciplines, while also promoting the welfare and integrity of the horse and sport.

USAWE members in the Professional Instructors program will have attended USAWE approved training events, seminars, be successful competitors, and have passed rules testing to ensure the highest quality instruction is provided. In addition, the Professional Instructors are required to renew their status annually by meeting continuing education requirements, as well as ethical practices that foster the welfare of the horse. The Professional Instructor Program also provides Division Designations for the divisions of instructors based on relevant requirements appropriate to teaching the different levels of working equitation provided by USAWE. The USAWE Professional Instructors will meet the program requirements to ensure quality education and knowledge is provided to those interested in professional instruction in the sport.

The annual USAWE organizational requirements are due no later than January 31. If any of the organizational requirements are not met by this date, the instructor will be placed on a 28-day suspension, at which time their PI bio will be hidden from the Professional Instructors listing webpage. They will be required not to use the title of USAWE Professional Instructor in a public forum, and they will not be allowed to participate in any PI events. Any PI with incomplete annual requirements as of March 1 will be removed from the PI Program immediately.

The annual PI program requirements are due no later than July 1 of each year unless otherwise expressed by the committee chair(s). This includes paying the program renewal fee, submitting the instructors' individual CE Log, a copy of insurance, and a liability release.



2. PROGRAM APPLICATION

2.1 General Requirements

- a) Be 18 years old or older at the time of application.
- b) Hold a current membership with USAWE.
- c) Pay the PI Program Application fee.
- d) Must meet current insurance requirements.
- e) Must fulfill current program requirements.
- f) Sign a USAWE PI **Code of Ethics** statement.
- g) Sign a USAWE PI **Code of Conduct** statement.
- h) Agree to abide by the USAWE **Social Media Policy**.
- i) Pass a USAWE PI open-book rules test with a minimum score of 90%.
- j) Cleared by the Ethics Committee.
- k) Must participate in an oral interview.
- l) Pay the Program membership fee after acceptance.

2.2 Application Process

New applications will only be accepted twice annually (January 1 or July 1).

- a) Request Application <https://forms.gle/TEFbUpjBrmFLoxoS8>
- b) Pay the Program Application Fee when Invoiced
- c) Receive the Entire Application, Forms, and Committee Contact
- d) Utilize Your Committee Contact for Questions and Attend Educational Zoom Meetings
- e) Return Completed Application with Support Documents and References within 3 Yrs.
- f) Take and pass the Open Book PI Rules Test (specific to this application)
- g) Schedule Oral Interview with PDC
- h) Upon PDC Approval, Pay the Annual PI Program Membership Fee
- i) Receive Your Welcome Package as an Officially Recognized PI
- j) Submit Bio/Photos for USAWE Website

Applications must be submitted in their entirety. Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted.

After paying the application fee, you will receive the entire application package. Additionally, after the applicant pays the application fee, he or she will be appointed a ProDev Committee Member as their liaison as they proceed through the requirements of becoming a Professional Instructor. The application fee payment date will be the official date the application process began. Payment of the application fee will enable the PDC to include applicants on relevant notices and program updates and keep them informed of



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upcoming education opportunities. Depending on the applicant's qualifications, the application process may take a year or more to complete.

Applications are valid for 3 years. If the application is not completed within 3 years of the start date it will be considered closed. Should the applicant wish to continue, they will have to reapply with a new application, application fee, and start the process again from the beginning.

All applications contain a statement to be signed by the applicant, indicating that the applicant has read, understands, and agrees to abide by the policies and rules governing the USAWE Professional Instructors Program and set forth by the Professional Development Committee.

The Professional Instructor Program application form will be sent to the applicant, and they must submit all requirements at the same time on the appropriate official forms provided within the 3-year period. Only fully completed applications will be accepted.

Once all requirements have been submitted, the completed application and requirements will be reviewed by the ProDev Committee. The applicant will be assigned a PI Division Designation based on experience and references contained in their application. Minimum scores for both dressage and EOH are 62%, and the rider must complete all phases. Scores may come from a student. All scores must be verifiable. Scores from a similar sport such as Dressage may count. The committee reviews applications and schedules oral interviews in December and June of each year. If any requirements are incomplete, the application will be returned, and the applicants will be advised of what is still needed. The applicant may resubmit as soon as completed.

After the applicant has submitted a complete application with preliminary ProDev committee approval, an oral interview with the ProDev committee will be scheduled (scheduled in December and June). Upon completion of the oral interview and completion of any additional requirements, the committee will then notify the applicant within 30 days of their acceptance status into the program. If denied acceptance, they will be provided information on what else is needed or why they were not accepted at this time.

2.3 Application Requirements

Application requirements will be listed on the most current published version provided to all applicants. Sections 2.3.1 – 2.3.6 are a **GENERAL GUIDE** to the application requirements, but complete requirements at a given time are defined by the most current application provided to the applicant.

All application requirements must be completed but there is not a limit on time except for when using official education events such as an LOC educational seminar or a Train to Win event which would require, they be within the 3-year period prior to the application submission date.



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Application credits gained through activities in the LO program by qualified LO members may qualify for the PI program also. Any fees for these educational opportunities will be charged through the LOC according to their current fee list. No additional charges from the ProDev committee will be incurred for those paid educational credit opportunities.

Any applicant who feels they have the desire and merit to be considered a Professional Instructor but is not currently able to ride or compete to fulfill any of the riding application or renewal requirements may request an exemption or dispensation for such. The applicant may be required to provide alternative requirements to fulfill the credit quota for any exemptions. Exemptions and dispensations can only be given for application item 4.

Applicants must attend all mandatory events identified by the PDC.

Activities that qualify for application credits are described below.

Applicants will be assigned to an instructor division according to their experience and applicable references.

2.3.1 Insurance Requirements (Application Item 2)

A copy of your current Equine Public Liability Insurance policy in your name must be provided. A certificate of added insured is not required. A copy of the liability release form you use for lessons and clinics must also be provided.

2.3.2 Instruction Experience (Application Item 3)

- a) List history as an Equestrian and/or Working Equitation Instructor. (*this history will be utilized as part of the PI Division Designation process*)
- b) Complete and document participation in an online or live learning seminar relevant to Working Equitation rider instruction (such as foundations of dressage/western dressage/working equitation/cattle handling, etc.). The seminar must be approved by the PDC.
- c) Oversee in person a working equitation outreach activity such as a horse expo or equestrian organization convention. Provide lectures, demonstrations, exhibition clinics, and/or tradeshow booths to educate attendees on the sport of WE and the USAWE.
- d) Attend and assist in the production/execution of an approved USAWE Recognized Officials or International Committee event as a volunteer or staff member. e. Create/publish a comprehensive WE lesson plan, live or online activity, video, or webinar. The plan should focus on a specific level and/or phase. The plan may focus on a specific dressage test movement, EOH obstacle, test strategy, etc., for the Professional Instructors Program educational archives.
- e) Rider Safety Instruction. Training must be approved by the PDC.
- f) Riding Instructor certification. CPR Training certificate, i.e., qualified Red Cross or



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other recognized CPR training, FAST/CERT training, qualified Red Cross, or other recognized training, First Aid for Severe Trauma, etc. Certificate of competition required. Certification must be approved by the PDC.

- g) Youth/Young Riders Instruction certification, e.g., Pony Club. Certification must be approved by the PDC.
- h) Riders with Disabilities Instruction certification. Certification must be approved by the PDC.
- i) Cattle Handling experience, including clinics, competitions, events, or practical experience, participated in. Describe further in the attachment if needed.

2.3.3 Working Equitation Competition and Training Experience (Application Item 4)

- a) USAWE recognized competition experience serving as a Scribe, Technical Delegate (TD), or Judge, or shadowing a Judge. The PI must participate in the entire live event. The event must be a USAWE- or WAVE-recognized live event.
- b) Competed in a live recognized USAWE or WAVE working equitation competition in L2 or above. Successfully complete all 3 or 4 phases with a qualifying average score (dressage and EOH averaged) of 62% or above. Must include 6 scores from at least 2 judges from qualifying competitions. *(these scores will be utilized as part of the PI Division Designation process.)*

2.3.4 USAWE Education/Training (Application Item 5)

- a) Ride in or audit a clinic with a USAWE "R", "S", or WAVE Judge. PI must participate in the entire event.
- b) Attend an approved USAWE Recognized Officials seminar or online training. May be an attendee or auditor.
- c) Ride in or audit a clinic with top-level professionals relevant to Working Equitation rider instruction, e.g., upper-level dressage, western dressage, cattle handling, etc. d. Attend an approved USAWE International Committee Train to Win seminar/clinic or online training event. May be a rider or auditor.
- d) Attend in person all phases (the entire competition) of a WAVE-recognized competition in a WAVE member nation outside the U.S.
- e) Participate in the USEF/USDF "L" program for dressage judges. Attend as a participant or auditor.

2.3.5 References (Application Item 6)

Must provide a minimum of one Judge Reference from a USAWE licensed 'r', 'R', 'S' judge, a minimum of one Professional Reference from a 'r', 'R', 'S' judge, TD or USAWE Professional Instructor, must provide a minimum of two Client References *(these references will be utilized as part of the PI Division designation process)* such as event or clinic hosts and a minimum of two Equine Industry Professional References familiar with your instruction abilities. All references must be submitted



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on the PI Program Reference Form provided and submitted with a completed application.

2.3.6 Post Application Submission Requirements (Application Item 7)

- a. Pass a Rules Test after the application has been submitted and accepted.
- b. Oral Interview after all the application items are complete.
- c. Upon Approval, Pay the Program Fee.
- d. Submit the [PI Website Bio Google form](#).

2.4 PI Division Designations

Beginning 15 August 2025, the Professional Instructor Program will distinguish instructors in 4 Divisions. The criteria for these divisions and the requirements are reported by the PI on their renewal for 2025 or by application for advancement that will be due by end of year 2025 and starting in 2026 twice yearly, once on Jan 1 and once on July 1. Division Designations for candidates applying will be determined by the information provided. All applicants and existing PIs are automatically assigned to the Basic Division until they provide information for advancement. All PIs who are unable or choose not to supply advancement information will be assigned to the Professional Instructor Basic Division designation. Minimum scores averaged for dressage and EOH are 62% and completion of all phases. These scores may be earned by the PI or their students. There is no limit on dates as long as they are verifiable. Also, similar sports that require similar skills, such as Dressage, may count toward advancement.forms

Every division requires six total competition scores (a combination of client and PI competition scores are allowed). Every Division requires total competition scores earned under two judges. Two of the six scores must be at the highest level for the Division.

Score can come from:

- All 6 PI earned scores
- All 6 Client earned scores
- All 6 may be a mix of Client and PI scores

If using only client scores you must have scores from a minimum of three clients. Any client scores used must be accompanied by a reference stating that scores were earned as a result of your membership/teaching.

Basic Division L1/L2. All existing PIs are automatically accepted at Basic Division.

Medium Division L3/L4.



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Advanced Division L5/L6.

Masters Division L7.

Scores at a level above the requested PI Division can be used to supplement scores at the lower level. Example: (2) L4 scores and (2) L5 scores of 62% or higher provide the necessary scores for advancement to the Medium Division. They would NOT be adequate for advancement to the Advanced Division as two of the scores are below L5.

Advancement also requires a mandatory interview with at least three Professional Development Committee members. Once your advancement application is received an interview will be scheduled.

Advancement also requires attendance or participation in all days of an approved USAWE Recognized Officials seminar or an approved IC Train to Win event within the last 3 years by the PI.

Applications must be submitted in their entirety. Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted.

2.5 Program Appeals Process

Any person whose application for enrollment or renewal has been denied or whose recognition has been revoked, placed on probationary status, or suspended may request a review by the ProDev Committee to reconsider the decision. The request must be in writing and include a rationale. The request must be received within 14 days of the PDC ruling.

The PDC will issue a written notice to all parties within 14 days of the request for review; the notice will contain a brief statement of the facts regarding the position of the PDC and specify the time and place at which the review is to be held. The person requesting the review may attend and may bring witnesses or other evidence on his/her behalf.

The PDC will review the request for reconsideration. If the original decision is upheld, the person has the right to appeal to the Appeals Committee, which will review the case and make a final determination. The USAWE President, President Elect, At Large Director 1, and At Large Director 2 serve on the Appeals Committee for the Professional Development Committee.



3. PROGRAM RENEWAL REQUIREMENTS

3.1 Organization Requirements

Annual organization requirements are due yearly, including:

- a) Holding a current membership with USAWE.
- b) Pass a USAWE open-book rules test with a minimum score of 90%.

The organizational requirements are a part of this program, and those items renew from January 1 to January 31.

Once the rules test is available and a link is sent to you, the test must be taken within 30 days. This test must be taken each year the rulebook is revised, or at a minimum of every two years. The test will be administered when the individual's USAWE membership has been renewed, and their application or organizational renewal requirements have been met. Instructors or instructor candidates who do not pass the rules test on their first attempt will have the opportunity to immediately retake the exam. If the test is failed on the second attempt, there will be a 14-day waiting period before the test may be re-taken.

3.2 PI Program Requirements

In July of each year, the PI renewal requirements are due, including:

- a) Pay the PI program recognition renewal fee.
- b) Agree to abide by the USAWE **PI Code of Ethics** statement.
- c) Agree to abide by the USAWE **PI Code of Conduct** statement.
- d) Agree to abide by the USAWE **Social Media Policy**.
- e) Meet and provide current insurance requirements.
- f) Provide a current liability release.
- g) Submit completed Continuing Education requirements.
- h) Provide supporting documentation for PI Division advancement if desired (effective 2025).

Recognition in the Professional Instructors program must be renewed every year. The Professional Instructors program renewal period is June 1 to July 1 unless otherwise expressed by the ProDev Committee Chair(s).

The [2025 PI renewal form](#) will include questions that will allow PIs to qualify for the newly developed PI Divisions 1, 2, 3, and 4. If PIs choose not to complete this portion of the renewal, they will be automatically assigned to Division 1.



3.3 Consequences of Renewal Requirements Not Met

In January of each year, the annual organization requirements are due. They must be completed and submitted by January 31. If not completed by January 31, the instructor will be placed on a 28-day program suspension. Their bio will be hidden on the PI Listing page of the website, and they will not be allowed to participate in PI program events.

Furthermore, the PI must cease using the title Recognized Professional Instructor until all outstanding items are brought current. If still incomplete after the 28-day suspension, the applicant or Professional Instructor will be removed from the PI Program immediately and must reapply as a candidate with the application fee to regain acceptance in the program. All application requirements must be met for previous PIs to be considered as a recognized PI again.

In July of each year, the program renewal requirements are due, which include the Program fee and the CE Credit Log form. The PI will be invoiced on June 1 for their program dues and reminded that all CE requirements must be completed. Both must be completed and submitted no later than July 1 unless otherwise expressed by the committee chair(s). If not completed by July 1, the instructor will be placed on a 30-day program suspension and assessed a \$25 late fee. Their bio will be hidden on the PI Listing page of the website, and they will not be allowed to participate in PI program events. Suspended PIs must cease using the title Recognized Professional Instructor until all outstanding items are brought current. If still incomplete after the 30-day suspension, the Professional Instructor will be removed from the PI Program immediately and must reapply as a candidate with the application fee to regain acceptance in the program. All application requirements must be met for previous PIs to be considered as a recognized PI again.

Any candidate who, for health or personal reasons, needs to request an extension for program requirements may also apply to do so through the committee prior to the initial deadline.



4. CONTINUING EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

4.1 Program Renewal Requirements

Continuing Education (CE) is tracked on a 1-year basis from June 1 to July 1 of the first year the instructor qualifies for the program, unless otherwise stated by the committee chair(s). To renew, the Professional Instructor must submit documentation showing he/she has completed the minimum (15) CE credits required. A copy of insurance and liability release must also be submitted.

PIs are responsible for keeping track of and providing proof of all CE activities. A CE log will be available to each instructor to aid in tracking their activities. The CE credit requirements must be current for the year they are being used. CE credits may not be counted for more than one annual renewal requirement year.

4.2 Options and Credits

Application and CE education opportunity credits gained through the LO program by qualified LO members may qualify for the PI program. Also, any fees for these educational opportunities will be charged through the LOC according to their current fee list.

Activities that qualify for continuing education credits are described below. Credit allowances for each are indicated in Table 1. (15) Total credits required.

1. USAWE recognized competitions experience serving as a Scribe, Technical Delegate (TD), or Judge, or shadowing a Judge. The PI must participate in the entire live event. The event must be a USAWE- or WAVE-recognized live event.
2. Ride in or audit a clinic with a USAWE "R", "S", or WAVE Judge. PI must participate in the entire event.
3. Ride in or audit a clinic with top-level professionals relevant to Working Equitation rider instruction, e.g., upper-level dressage, western dressage, cattle handling, etc.
4. Attend an approved USAWE Recognized Officials seminar or online training. May be an attendee or auditor.
5. Attend an approved USAWE International Committee Train to Win seminar/clinic or online training event. May be a rider or auditor.
6. Compete in a live recognized USAWE or WAVE working equitation competition in L2 or above. Successfully complete all phases with a leaderboard-qualifying score.
7. Attend in person all phases (the entire competition) of a WAVE-recognized competition in a WAVE member nation outside the U.S. and write up a summary of "insights gained" to share with other USAWE Instructors. Must be written to be retained in the Professional Instructors Program educational archives.
8. Complete and document participation in an online or live learning seminar relevant to Working Equitation rider instruction (such as foundations of dressage/western dressage/working equitation/cattle handling, etc.). The



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- seminar must be approved in advance by the PDC.
9. Attend a symposium, clinic, or conference taught by equine experts in fields relevant to working equitation rider instruction and write up a summary of “insights gained” for the Professional Instructors Program educational archives.
 10. Participate in the USEF/USDF “L” program for dressage judges. Attend as a participant or auditor.
 11. Oversee in person a working equitation outreach activity such as a horse expo or equestrian organization convention. Provide lectures, demonstrations, exhibition clinics, and/or tradeshow booths to educate attendees on the sport of WE and the USAWE.
 12. Attend and assist in the production/execution of an approved USAWE Recognized Officials or International Committee event as a volunteer or staff member.
 13. Create/publish a comprehensive WE lesson plan, live or online activity, video, or webinar. The plan should focus on a specific level and/or phase. The plan may focus on a specific dressage test movement, EOH obstacle, test strategy, etc., for the Professional Instructors Program educational archives.
 14. Cattle Handling experience, including clinics, competitions, events, or practical experience, participated in. Describe further in the attachment if needed.
 15. Attend all mandatory events identified by the PDC.
 16. Attend PDC educational meetings. These meetings are separate from the quarterly PI meetings.
 17. Obtain Rider Safety instruction. Training must be approved by the PDC.
 18. Obtain a Riding Instructor certification. CPR Training certificate, i.e., qualified Red Cross or other recognized CPR training. FAST/CERT training, qualified Red Cross, or other recognized training, First Aid for Severe Trauma, etc. Certificate of competition required. Certification must be approved by the PDC.
 19. Obtain a Youth/Young Riders Instruction certification, e.g., Pony Club. Certification must be approved by the PDC.
 20. Obtain a Riders with Disabilities Instruction certification. Certification must be approved by the PDC.
 21. If you would like to participate in a different professional learning opportunity to enhance your continuing education, please submit a description of the training a minimum two weeks in advance and describe how it relates to WE rider instruction. Submit the request via email to ProDev@usawe.org. Approval of these items is at the discretion of the Professional Development Committee.



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Table 1. Continuing Education Credits

Continuing Education Option		Credits Available			Max Allowed
		Participant	Attendee	Instructor	
1	Scribe, TD, shadow judge, judge USAWE live competition	2			6
2	Ride in/audit live clinic with "R", "S", or WAVE Judge	2	1	2	10
3	Ride in/audit clinic w top-level professional relevant to WE	2	1		6
4	Attend approved USAWE Recognized Officials seminar	3	2	3	10
5	Attend an approved IC Train to Win event	3	2		10
6	Compete in live USAWE or WAVE recognized competition	1			6
7	Attend WAVE competition outside U.S., write summary		1		2
8	Complete online learning relevant to WE rider instruction	1		2	2
9	Attend live event taught by rider instruction experts	1		2	4
10	Participate in USEF/USDF "L" Program	2	1	2	4
11	Oversee a WE outreach event (horse expo/convention)	1		2	4
12	Assist in production/execution of LO/IC educational event	1			4
13	Publish a WE lesson plan or activity			1	4
14	Cattle Handling experience, clinics, competitions	2 ²¹	1	2	6
15	Attend all mandatory events identified by PDC	Varies	Varies	Varies	Varies
16	Attend PDC quarterly educational meetings		.50		2
17	Obtain rider safety instruction CPR/FAST/CERT		1	2	2
18	Obtain Riding Instructor certification		1	2	4
19	Obtain Youth/Young Rider instruction certification		1	2	4
20	Obtain Riders with Disabilities instruction certification		1	2	4
21	PI Roundtables		.50		2
22	Individual professional learning opportunity	Varies	Varies	Varies	Varies



5. FEE AND PAYMENT PROCEDURE

5.1 Professional Instructor Program Fees

PI Program Application of \$22 is due to declare your intention to pursue the PI program.

PI Program Membership of \$70 is due once all requirements have been met.

PI Annual Renewal of \$60 is due annually (Due July 1).

PI Late Renewal Fee of \$25 is applied to any renewal not completed in full by July 1.

Once requirements have been met and all applicable forms and/or applications for each stage in the process (e.g., intent to pursue, initial approval, annual renewal, etc.) have been submitted to the PDC, the PI will receive an invoice that can be paid by PayPal, credit card, or debit card.