

Coaching Update: New Program, New Look, New Options

(For coaches, instructors, interested candidates, equestrians and parents.)

In recent years, the Equine Canada coaching program has been undergoing some changes. Five years ago, Equine Canada launched the new Instructor of Beginners certificates in English and Western disciplines, and began development of the new coaching certificate stream.

Equine Canada is very pleased to announce conditional approval of the new Competition Coach certificate. Together, the Instructor and Competition Coach certificate options replace the old Coach Level 1.

To celebrate the launch of the new stream, coaching and instructor certificates authorized by Equine Canada have a brand new look:



Equestrian sport is a significant player in the field of major sports representing Canada internationally. **Canada is a leader in establishing coaching standards.** The re-design of the Canadian Equestrian coaching program is about being able to stand with our sport peers and offer world class programs that promote best practices in sport coaching.

The EC Coaching program is part of the Canadian National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP) built on standards endorsed by Sport Canada, and 67 national sport organizations. The NCCP is recognized by the Canadian Olympic Committee, Sport Canada and Coaches of Canada. The EC coaching program is available to coaches in all provinces, either through Equine Canada or a designated delivery agent. Please contact Equine Canada for information on designated delivery agents in your area.

EC coaching certificates not only represent the highest standard for equestrian coaching certification in Canada, but are also recognized internationally by the Fédération Équestre Internationale (FEI) and International Group for Equestrian Qualifications (IGEIQ).

Coaching is about so much more than competitive sport. When Equine Canada says 'sport', EC means the broad practice of equestrian pursuit, in the same way that your child might be engaged in the 'sport' of soccer, whether it is competitive, or just kicking a ball around your yard.

EC certified coaches and instructors are in a privileged role of leadership and influence which has an impact on the equestrians and horses they work with. If you are a parent, equestrian, coach or instructor with recreational or amateur students, you know that good coaching is really about safety, character-building, and quality of life. Good riding, driving or vaulting happens when there is good coaching. **Excellence in coaching means safe riding and good horsemanship. Good horsemanship means the wellbeing of horses.** For a percentage of equestrians, good coaching and good practice may also mean competitive achievement.

In the new EC two-stream program, coach and instructor candidates select the certification stream which best describes their *teaching context*. Certification as a coach or instructor is recognition of coaching competence to teach athletes within a particular context. Progression through the coaching program takes the coach's demonstrated horsemanship and competitive achievements into account, but depends on their current teaching context.

Being an amazing athlete or horse-trainer, does not necessarily guarantee coaching skills, or them the right coach/instructor for you. Since a coach or instructor's certificate is not a rider or trainer certificate, you may find a very advanced horse-person or athlete, certified to teach beginners who do not compete, or introducing equestrians to competition. Think of the new program as similar to the teaching system: an elementary school teacher, high school teacher and University professor are equally competent professionals. They specialize in the teaching skills required for the context of the students they teach.

When seeking a coach or instructor, the goal is to find a teacher who is an expert at teaching students similar to your own level of ability, and type of equestrian involvement (recreational or competitive). **As a parent, you can trust that an EC certified coach/instructor has the appropriate knowledge, experience and teaching skills to be able to help your child develop to the next stage** in their equestrian journey.

As an equestrian or parent, you know that an actively certified coach/instructor is a professional and qualified to provide a safe and productive learning experience. They not only have the appropriate equestrian background and teaching skills, but also engage in regular professional development and maintain updated First Aid/CPR skills, cleared criminal record check, appropriate insurance and appropriate professional licensing/membership fees. They understand sport science as it relates to your equestrian development needs, and current best practice in sport coaching.

You can search for EC certified coaches and instructors on the EC website by clicking 'Find a Coach'. All coaching program alumni are listed with the certification they achieved. If the coach is not on the list, they either never received certification through Equine Canada, or have chosen to de-activate their certification status and are no longer teaching, and do not wish for their name to appear on the list. Due to the transition from our old three-level program to the new two stream program, you may see a mix of certifications represented. The following chart can help you understand what type of coach or instructor to look for, depending on your level of

equestrian development. It may also help you decide which certificate to obtain, based on the type of students you work with.



Note to Coaches Certified under the old system:

Coaching certification is an important achievement, and will always be honoured in the EC database, as well as in your transcript with the CAC. Going forward, Level 1 coaches will be transferred in status to Competition Coach, certified. Coaches and instructors will still be responsible for maintaining their coaching certification status, but it will be according to the NEW Policy and Procedures manual for the Competition Coach certificate, not the old Level 1.

Coach 1's with students that are mostly non-competitive amateurs, and who prefer to be recognized as an Instructor and therefore responsible to maintain certification according to Instructor policies, please notify Equine Canada. Equine Canada should be able to announce the transition plan this spring for coaches certified under the old system at Levels 2 and 3.

Want to become a coach or instructor?

While in some ways the new certificates represent even higher coaching standards than the old program, becoming a certified coach or instructor is actually more accessible now. The following features of the new EC coaching program bring the cost of certification down considerably as compared to the old system:

1. Evaluation is a one-day event in which you do not need to ride, or bring your own horse or student. (Evaluations for High Performance are more extensive.)
2. The preparatory courses available cover one weekend, candidates do not need to bring a horse, and while they are very strongly recommended, they are not mandatory.
3. Equine Canada strongly recommends hiring a mentor for some sessions to help prepare, but there is no longer a mandatory requirement of 20 mentoring hours.
4. The Making Ethical Decisions pre-requisite exam is free, and available online.
5. Candidates do not have to work up through levels. They can apply for certification in the certificate that best describes their context.

There are Equine Canada recognized course trainers and program evaluators who are able to deliver the EC coaching program across the country. To apply, contact Equine Canada for the authorized program delivery agent that has contracted with EC to deliver the EC national program in your area according to the national standards.

More information about the coaching program and how to become certified is available on the Equine Canada website. You can also contact Equine Canada.

Sincerely,

Heather Sansom
Manager of Coaching
Equine Canada