

## **New CCEFMHEP Eligibility Requirements**

The Commission for Certified Equine Facilitated Mental Health & Education Professionals (CCEFMHEP) is providing a means of certification for mental health and education professionals who work with the assistance of equines.

Best standards of practice laid out by the National Organization for Competency Assurance and the American National Standards Institute require that certifying organizations be independent of training organizations due to an inherent conflict of interest when one organization provides both training and certification. The Federal Government is also considering the same requirement. The CCEFMHEP credentialing process meets these standards.

All of the organizations in the field were invited to participate both in exam development and with finances. By making a contribution their members would receive discounted examination fees. EFMHA was the only organization to make a financial contribution and therefore EFMHA members receive a discounted examination fee (We encourage other organizations to make the same arrangements). EFMHA provided initial organizational structure and start up funds, but it does not have either direct or indirect input into operations, certification, or staffing. Commission members are also individual members of the other organizations so that a broad perspective of methods, techniques, and best practices has been brought to the table.

Examination development was accomplished with the aid of the Professional Testing Corporation, a group with extensive expertise in building credentialing procedures. First vocational profiles were developed for equine facilitated mental health professionals and equine facilitated education professionals. Then the required skills and knowledge areas were determined with input from experts who had a broad range of affiliations. The areas of knowledge required were organized into Content Outlines for the examinations: one for Education and one for Mental Health. The Content Outlines are available on our website. These outlines were the basis for soliciting questions from over 50 experts in the field, again from a broad range of affiliations. Following several reviews, the questions were accepted for the examinations, and a passing score was set. All questions cover only material in the Content Outlines.

The examination is only one part of the certification. Another part is mastery of the body of knowledge in horse/human interactions and the intersection between therapy and equine work, and/or education and equine work. Therefore, the Commission also requires a combination of training, experience, and licensure, which demonstrate applied knowledge in the fields of education and/or mental health. The examination does not cover these areas. Its focus is on the implications of providing safe and ethical clinical practice and/or education with the assistance of equines, as well as adequate equine awareness of safety issues for both the equine and human participants. The combination of background and passing the examination assures that those who earn certification are knowledgeable and experienced in this field. The result is a meaningful certification that provides confidence and assurance of competence and safety to the public. It may also lead to improved liability insurance, and insurance reimbursement for our services.

What's in it for mental health and education professionals? The certifications provide documented evidence that you have been examined by an independent professional certifying organization and found to possess a certain level of basic knowledge about the specialized field of equine facilitated mental health or education. Licensed mental health professionals can earn the Certified Equine Facilitated Interaction Professional-Mental Health (CEFIP-MH), and educators can earn the Certified Equine Facilitated Interaction Professional-Education (CEFIP-ED). The

designation will provide credibility to your marketing materials, and will reassure potential clients that you have attained a level of knowledge that is appropriate for our field. You will also be listed on the Commission database and eventually the website so that potential clients can find the professional they need.

It is hoped that the field of equine facilitated education and mental health will incorporate these standards of knowledge into training programs for experienced as well as entry level professionals. The Content Outline is available to any and all organizations to assist in that development. Since the Commission must be independent of all training, we will not be making recommendations for courses. The Content Outline is a good tool for assessing the quality of training programs by establishing the areas that should be covered. Compare it with the learning objectives of courses you're considering to assess whether they will help you learn what you need to know. It also gives you a roadmap for future professional growth as you assess your own areas of strength and need.

## ELEGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

In developing this certification procedure, great attention went into determining the pre-requisites for sitting the examination. None of the Commissioners believe that passing a test is enough to determine competence. Requiring education and experience as well broadens the level of skill and knowledge. In order to dispel confusion, we've clarified the requirements. We've also extended the grace period for those without a Masters or post graduate academic certificate to sit for the Education Examination through November of 2009.

### Eligibility Requirements for the Mental Health Examination:

- 1) Licensure: A copy of a current license to practice mental health services (counseling, social work, substance abuse counseling, pastoral counseling, psychology, etc.) in the state where you will be providing services. (In some states a Masters is required, in others a bachelors degree with proper training will qualify)
- 2) Experience and Education:
  - a. Three (3) years of professional service or full time equivalent experience in the field of mental health services. Include all hours involved in providing services (face to face work with clients, supervision, planning, meetings, evaluation, paperwork, etc. involved in providing services). Hours required for licensure in the state where you practice could be included.
  - b. At least 1,000 hours must be in equine facilitated mental health or learning (EFMH/L) (*can be part of the above 3 years of experience or previous training*). The 1,000 hours of EFMH/L experience could be broken down in the following manner:
    - i. At least 550 (55%) hours of the 1,000 hours listed above must be in delivery of mental health services that incorporates equines and would include all face to face work with clients, supervision, planning, meetings, and evaluation, etc. involved in providing services.
    - ii. As many as 450 (45%) of the 1,000 EFMH/L hours could be in seminars, coursework, workshops, academic courses, etc. Must have written documentation that at least 60 clock hours of that training is in equine facilitated mental health or education.

### Eligibility Requirements for the Education Examination:

- 1) Education: a current teaching certificate, or a Masters degree in human services or related field or post graduate certificate in teaching, training and development (Human Resource Organization Development, teaching, adult education, management and staff development, outdoor experiential education, faith based education and expressive arts education or certificate from a nationally recognized coaching institute).
- 2) Experience:
  - a. 3 years of professional experience or full time equivalent in the fields of education, adult education, management and staff development, outdoor experiential education, faith based education and expressive arts education.
  - b. at least 1,000 hours in equine facilitated learning (EFL) (*can be part of the above 3 years of experience or previous training*). The 1,000 hours of EFL experience could be broken down in the following manner:
    - iii. At least 550 hours (55%) of the 1,000 hours listed above must be in delivery of equine facilitated learning services and would include all face to face work with students, supervision, planning, meetings, evaluation, etc. involved in providing services.
    - iv. As many as 450 hours (45%) of the 1,000 EFL hours listed above could be in seminars, coursework, workshops, academic courses, etc. on EFMH/L Must have written documentation that at least 60 clock hours of that training is in equine facilitated mental health or education.

#### Alternative eligibility requirements for the Education Examination

People who do not have a Masters degree or post graduate certificate but have a broad depth of experience may qualify to sit for the Education Examination (not the Mental Health Examination) during a grace period which has been extended through November of 2009.

- 1) Experience: Five (5) years or full time equivalent experience in a human services or education related field (i.e. adult education, management and staff development, outdoor experiential education, faith based education and expressive arts education).
- 2) Equine Facilitated Learning Experience: at least 2,000 hours in direct equine facilitated learning services (*can be part of the above 5 years of experience*). These hours may be broken down in the following manner:
  - a. At least 1,100 hours (55%) of the 2,000 hours listed above must be in direct services as an educator. These hours would include preparation, planning, implementation, evaluation, meetings, etc. involved in providing direct education services, as well as face to face education.
  - b. As many as 900 hours (45%) of the 2,000 hours listed above may be in training, workshops, internships and academic study. Must have written documentation that at least 60 clock hours of that training is in equine facilitated mental health or education.

The first examinations will be held in November 2007 through LaserGrade computerized testing services, which maintains hundreds of sites in the US. The exam may be taken during a 2 week window from November 3 – 19, 2007. The exam will be offered again in June of 2008. Applications need to be received by September 15, 2007. Cost of the exam will be \$325, and \$300 for EFMHA Members (because of EFMHA's financial contribution to the start up expenses--Note—EFMHA accrues no financial benefit from members taking the exam). The Certification will be good for 3 years, and can be renewed through continuing education or through re-sitting the exam.

For questions please go to the Commission Website, at [www.equinefacilitatedprofessional.org](http://www.equinefacilitatedprofessional.org). Or contact Mimi Eckert at CCEFMHEP, 1350 Broadway,

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