



# **Instructor Certification Testing Information**

**The American Riding Instructors Association  
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Bonita Springs, FL 34134-3337**

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**Phone: 239.948.3232**

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**High Standards - High Expectations**

**Safety - Knowledge - Integrity - Professionalism - Maturity**

# GETTING STARTED, & WHAT TO EXPECT

Want to be an ARIA-Certified Instructor and enjoy the benefits?  
Here's how to take part in ARIA's testing and certification program

## **1) Register well in Advance**

You may register on-line at [www.riding-instructor.com](http://www.riding-instructor.com)

**Or Call 239.948.3232 for quick registration with your credit card. Or Fax to 239.948.5053**

**Or Mail your application to:**

**ARIA**

**28801 Trenton Court**

**Bonita Springs, FL 34134-3337**

Enclose payment of \$595. by check or money order, or write in your MC/Visa/Discover/AmEx credit card number, expiration date, security code and the name and billing address on the card. Be sure to circle which level and specialties you want to challenge, and which test center you wish to attend.

## **2) Be Prepared**

Test Centers are usually held in a hotel meeting room. You will be notified before the Test Center date of the exact location. The day begins at 9:00 A.M.

Plan to arrive at approximately 8:45 A.M. Hand in the two essay tests which were enclosed with your acceptance letter and which you completed at home. (Be sure your name is on the cover of the tests!)

Also hand in your two required photographs (on head and shoulders photo, and one of you mounted) and DVD or video tape for each specialty you have applied for. (Level I candidates do not need to submit a DVD/video tape.) Be sure your name is on your pictures and DVD/video tape (on the side of the tape itself and on the box). Write the level and specialty applied for (i.e. Level II Dressage) on your DVD/videotape's label, along with the date and location of your Test Center.

9:00 A.M. - Welcome and introductions. Candidate Presentations. Testing begins. Each candidate for certification takes the Level I/II tests: The Horse, General Horsemanship and Level I/II specialty tests for each specialty applied for; i.e., Hunt Seat, Dressage, Western, etc.

Each test has an allowed completion time of one hour. Questions include true/false, multiple choice and fill-in-the-blanks. Some require a brief written answer.

Candidates for Level III first take the Level I/II tests; then the Level III tests. These are: The Horse, General Horsemanship and a Level III specialty test for each specialty you apply for.

For example, a candidate for Level II Recreational Riding takes 3 tests, while a candidate for Level III in Dressage and Show Jumping takes 8 tests.

Once a candidate has completed testing and his/her Candidate Presentation (CP), he/she may leave the Test Center.

## **3) Tips for Testing Success:**

- Make your quest for ARIA certification a **Priority**.
- Arrive on time, rested and at your best.
- Don't rush through your tests. Have your mind calm and focused.
- Leave any questions that you aren't sure of until the end of the test; then go back to them.
- Leave your barn and home in capable hands and forget them. Distractions or emergency calls will prevent you from doing your best.
- Take the time to do your DVD/video properly. Do it over two or three times if you have to. Be proud of it when you hand it in, as it should be an example of your best work. Keep a copy for yourself.

# **Introduction**

## **What is the ARICP?**

Established in 1984, the American Riding Instructor Certification Program (ARICP) is a nationally recognized and respected program offered by The American Riding Instructors Association (ARIA) to recognize and certify outstanding teachers of horseback riding who instruct their students in a safe, knowledgeable and professional way.

Who is it for?

ARIA Certification is meant for the serious, above-average instructor who teaches safely and in a professional, competent manner, with high standards of honesty and integrity. Minimum age and experience requirements apply for each level of certification. See section on Levels for details.

## **How does the Certification procedure work?**

ARIA certification is an important aspect of your career and requires that you make it a priority. The certification process is accomplished by evaluating your qualifications and teaching ability through written and oral testing, and, at Levels II and III, by a video tape which you submit when you come to the Test Center. (See section on Video Tapes for details) Instructors meeting the standards for a particular level will earn certification at that level.

ARIA offers certification to instructors in three levels of experience and in 14 teaching specialties. To ensure that ARIA Certified Instructors' standards remain high, re-certification is required at 5 year intervals, two more times after the original certification. You pay the original fee of \$595. only once - the first time you test. Anytime you test after that, the fee is just \$200. You may apply to re-test for higher levels or additional specialties at any time, as long as you qualify for the age and teaching experience for that level.

## **Where is the certification testing held, and what is the fee?**

The testing is conducted at one-day ARIA Test Centers held throughout the year at different locations around the country. Ask for a current list or check our website: [www.riding-instructor.com](http://www.riding-instructor.com) The fee is \$595.00.

When a group of at least 6 instructors at a single location desire ARIA Certification, special arrangements can be made for testing at their site. It is also possible to test individually by appointment at ARIA's office in Bonita Springs, Florida (between Naples and Fort Myers). The fee for private testing is an additional \$200.00.

## **What are the advantages of being an ARIA Certified Instructor?**

ARIA Certified Instructors have nationally recognized credentials. Students, parents, and potential employers respect and appreciate the time and work that went into earning ARIA certification.

ARIA is an association which promotes the quality of its instructors, not the quantity. ARIA does not hesitate to refuse certification to those who do not clearly demonstrate their excellence.

All ARIA Certified Instructors are listed on ARIA's internet site: [www.riding-instructor.com](http://www.riding-instructor.com) and are issued a certificate and wallet card. ARIA Certified Instructors may obtain insurance discounts through several major insurers.

ARIA Certified Instructors also receive the quarterly magazine *Riding Instructor* and automatically become members of ARIA.

## **How do I apply for Certification?**

Program size is limited, so it is important to apply early in order to assure yourself of a place. You should register at least 30 days in advance. Late registrations will be accepted only if there is sufficient room at the desired Test Center, and will be charged an office fee of \$50. which includes mailing materials overnight. You may register online at [www.riding-instructor.com](http://www.riding-instructor.com) or by calling 239-948-3232, and may charge your fee to your Visa, MasterCard, Discover or American Express card.

## How do I prepare for testing?

ARIA provides an intensive education experience, specifically for riding instructors, at its National Riding Instructors Convention each year. In addition, you will find the Recommended Book List available at the ARIA website, or you may request that it be sent to you by mail or fax.

You will also find it useful to attend college courses, work under the tutelage of an experienced ARIA certified instructor, and/or attend clinics and other educational opportunities with respected teachers.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### • **What happens if I can't complete my DVD/video in time for the Test Center?**

You may still take the tests for Level I certification, which does not require a DVD/video. Level I (Instructor in Training) does not require a video tape. As long as you pass the written exams with a score of 80 or above, along with the other required elements\*, you will earn the Level I certification. You may return to another Test Center to seek a higher level and/or additional specialties at any time for only \$200.00. Once you have paid the original fee to take the tests, you never pay the original price again, no matter how many times you return. In addition, you do not have to retake any tests on which you scored a passing grade, as long as you take them within one year from your original testing date.

### • **What happens if I can't attend the Test Center I have registered for?**

Your fee may be applied to any other Test Center in any location at any time. A change fee of \$100. will apply. Refunds are not given under any circumstances.

### • **I've registered for Level III. What if I don't pass at that level, but I do pass at Level I or Level II?**

You will receive certification at the level at which you do pass.

### • **Is there riding at a Test Center?**

No. It is your teaching ability and knowledge which are being evaluated.

### • **What Should I Study?**

See page 10 of this booklet. **Horses, 3rd Edition, by J. Warren Evans, Parts 1 & 2** is very important to read for the General Tests.

Call ARIA (239.948.3232) or go to [www.riding-instructor.com](http://www.riding-instructor.com) to order the recommended reading books.

Look through our "Recommended Reading" list for books about your specialty. Be familiar with the US Equestrian Federation Rule Book chapters on your specialty. (To order, call USEF at 859.258.2472, or access the rule book at their web site: [www.usef.org](http://www.usef.org))

### • **When do I receive results?**

It takes 6-8 weeks to carefully and fully evaluate exams and videos. Please do not call us for results. They are mailed to you as soon as we have them.

### • **What if I have questions about my results?**

A comprehensive and thorough evaluation is given to each applicant's tests and video tapes by members of the ARIA Panel. You will receive your test scores and a video evaluation score sheet, as well as your Candidate Presentation score and your PMAT (Professionalism, Maturity, Attitude and Temperament) score.

No further review is given.

Anyone not achieving the certification they desire may try again at the reduced rate of \$200.

• **What if I have to register late (after the 30 days in advance)**

We will accommodate you if there is room at the Test Center. A late charge of \$50. will apply.

• **May I submit my DVDs, essay tests or photographs after the Test Center?**

No. All materials must be received at registration on the morning of the Test Center.

Remember, It is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to take all the tests you are supposed to take! Ask the Test Center Administrator before you leave if you have taken all your tests.

• **Will I get my photographs back?**

No. They are retained as part of your permanent file.

• **If I want to discuss my test scores, or want additional help to score higher next time, should I contact ARIA?**

No. In fairness to all candidates, no further information is made available. A comprehensive and thorough evaluation is given to each applicant's tests and video tapes by members of the Evaluation Panel. No further review is given. Anyone not receiving the certification they desire may try again at the reduced rate of \$200.00. (Those tests which are passed need not be re-taken if candidate returns for re-testing by the end of the year following the date of the original Test Center.)

• **What are the "other required elements"?**

The American Riding Instructors Association takes great pride in the quality of the instructors certified by the organization. Therefore, along with passing the written tests, Candidate Presentation, (and video evaluation at Levels II and III), instructors must demonstrate, in every phase of their application for ARIA certification, clear maturity, professionalism, knowledge, attention to safety, and thoughtfulness and care in all details of their work. Sloppy work, not following directions, being late to the Test Center, not handing in required material at the requested time, etc. will all be taken into consideration in evaluation for ARIA certification. Your business telephone number voice mail/answering machine must have a professional message; your business cards and brochures must be of high quality, and your general attitude must be positive and pleasant.

• **Is it OK to hand in my materials (essay tests, photos, etc. in a folder or notebook)?**

No. While we greatly appreciate your professionalism and effort, folders and notebooks must be dismantled for shipping purposes. Please staple together all the pages of each one of your essay tests, and initial each page. Be sure your name is on the first page of each test! Also, please label each DVD/video (the box and the tape) with your name, Level and Specialty applied for, and the date and location of the Test Center you are attending.

• **I would like to test in more than two specialties. Can I do that?**

Yes. The initial testing fee covers your testing at any level at which you qualify, and in one or two specialties, or disciplines. If you want to apply for a 3rd or 4th discipline, you may do so at the extra fee of \$200. per discipline. You may not apply for more than 4 disciplines at any one Test Center.

• **I want to apply for certification at Level I. I won't reach the minimum age of 18 until 2 weeks after the Test Center. May I still test?**

Yes. Since you will receive results 4-6 weeks after the testing, by the time the results are ready, you will be 18.

• **I want to apply for Dressage at Level I, and Driving at Level 2. May I do that?**

Yes. As long as you meet the required minimum age and teaching experience for the Level you are applying for, you may apply for different levels for each specialty.

# Levels of Certification

ARIA OFFERS CERTIFICATION AT THREE LEVELS BASED UPON THE AGE AND EXPERIENCE LEVEL OF THE INSTRUCTOR:

- **Level I**            *Instructor in Training*
- **Level II**           *Instructor of Beginner through Intermediate*
- **Level III**          *Instructor of Beginner through Advanced*

*ARIA Certification is earned at one or more levels, and in one or more specialties.*

An instructor may have different certification levels for different teaching specialties (see next section for information about specialties). For instance, an instructor might hold a Level I in Hunt Seat and a Level II in Dressage. All specialties are available at all levels.

Certification at a particular level is determined by the candidate's test and video scores. Candidates for Level III must also take the Level II tests. In a case where an instructor does not get a passing grade at the level he/she has applied for but does pass the tests for a lower level, he/she will earn certification at the lower level. For instance an instructor who is testing for Level II in Hunt Seat would receive Level I in Hunt Seat if her test scores pass at Level I, but not at Level II.

## **Level I (Instructor in Training) Requirements**

- Minimum age: 18 years; no minimum teaching experience required.*
- Must pass all 4 general written tests with an averaged score of 80 or above.*
- Specialty test scores must be 80 or above.*
- No video tape of instruction is required.*

This instructor has a good foundation as a horseman, but because of age or limited teaching experience does not qualify for Level II. ARIA is recognizing a foundation and a desire to become a certified instructor. Upon reaching 21 years of age, and with 3 years of teaching experience, this instructor may challenge the Level II certification. At that time, the candidate must provide a video tape and must re-take the written exams. The candidate with a Level I certification receives a substantial discount (50%) when returning to take the program for full certification.

## **Level II (Instructor of Beginner through Intermediate) Requirements**

- Minimum age: 21 years; minimum of 3 years of teaching experience.*
- Must pass all general exams with an averaged overall score of 85 or above, and all specialty exams with a score of 85 or above.*
- Must pass video tape evaluation for Level II.*
- Must have a confident, secure and well-formed personal philosophy of riding instruction.*
- Must clearly know his/her own personal strengths and weaknesses.*
- Must have thorough knowledge of speciality taught.*
- Must have good understanding of safety procedures, and use them.*
- Has basic knowledge of horses and their care.*
- Has awareness of styles of riding other than own speciality.*
- Rides/has ridden at intermediate level or better.*
- Can teach beginner through intermediate students in a competent manner.*
- Has general knowledge of how horse and rider interact.*
- Understands psychology of the rider.*

This instructor enjoys teaching beginners and has the patience for the repetition necessary to develop new skills. The instructor does not rush his students or push them ahead of their physical ability, but allows time to form a solid riding foundation. A certified instructor is training a student to be a horseman, not just a rider. He is concerned with training his students to use proper safety practices and to continue using them as they develop in riding proficiency.

## **Level III (Instructor of Beginner through Advanced) Requirements**

*Minimum age: 25 years; minimum of 6 years teaching experience.*

*Must pass all exams with scores of 90 or above on each.*

*Must pass video tape evaluation for Level III.*

*Is an excellent communicator.*

*Has an outstanding personal philosophy of instruction.*

*Clearly knows his own personal strengths and weaknesses.*

*Has a thorough knowledge of speciality taught.*

*Has an understanding of safety procedures, and uses them.*

*Has a thorough knowledge of horses and their care.*

*Rides (or has ridden) at an advanced level.*

*Has advanced knowledge of training horses.*

*Knows the elements of styles of riding other than his own specialty.*

*Understands the psychology of the horse.*

*Has participated in competition, if competition is an integral part of the style taught.*

*Has knowledge of the practical application of stable management and horse care.*

The Level III instructor is able to teach the more advanced rider as well as the beginner and intermediate rider. The instructor has ridden at an advanced level and understands the problems of advanced riders. This instructor is concerned with solving problems, not just dealing with symptoms. The instructor can also help with the training of horses, and can deal with specific training problems of his/her students' horses. This instructor not only knows how horse and rider interact, but the "why's" behind it.

## **Specialties: The Areas of Certification**

ARIA CERTIFICATION IS AVAILABLE IN 15 TEACHING SPECIALTIES.

INSTRUCTORS MAY BE CERTIFIED IN ONE OR MORE OF THESE SPECIALTIES.

*(One or two specialties are included in the program fee; there is a charge of \$200. per additional specialty and no more than four specialties may be taken at any one program.) It is expected that attention will be paid to all safety aspects, i.e. approved protective helmets with chin strap fastened snugly, boots or shoes with a heel, protective vests in cross-country work, etc.*

## **DISTANCE RIDING: ENDURANCE & COMPETITIVE**

### **Level I**

Knowledge of training, horsemanship, safety and good conditioning practices; also pleasure trail riding and organized group trail rides. Must have ridden a minimum of 50 competitive miles.

### **Level II**

Same as above. Must have ridden a minimum of 200 competitive miles.

### **Level III**

Same through open competitive trail division - 50 mile endurance rides. ECTRA and AERC rules. Must have ridden a minimum of 500 competitive miles.

## **DRESSAGE**

### **Level I and II**

Concepts, exercises and movements through 1st level. Must know USEF rules.

### **Level III**

Concepts, exercises and movements through 3rd level. Video tape must show work at 2nd or 3rd level.

## **DRIVING**

### **Level I and II**

Knowledge of Pleasure Driving, correct and safe harnessing procedures, and training of horse and whip.

### **Level III**

Ability to coach for Competitive Driving. Please contact ARIA for a recommended book list.

## **EVENTING**

### ***Level I and II***

Knowledge of concepts & exercises of Dressage, Cross Country & Stadium Jumping through USEA novice level. Video for Level II must show ability to coach cross country work and relate flat work to jumping. We must see some work outside of a ring to pass an instructor as capable of teaching eventing.

### ***Level III***

Same as above, through USEA training and preliminary level Horse Trials (one day events). Video must show cross country lesson, and must address conditioning and preparation for this level.

## **HUNT SEAT**

### ***Level I and II***

Knowledge of equitation and exercises in flat work and jumping through 3' (Equivalent to USEF Limit Equitation), USEF rules for Equitation and Hunters. Counting strides, finding spots, simple changes, correct change over jumps, shortening & lengthening, etc.

### ***Level III***

Must show lesson relating flat work to jumping, suitable for riders who are capable of jumping 3'-3'6". (Note: It is not required that riders actually jump 3' to 3'6" in this lesson)

## **HUNT SEAT on the Flat**

*All Levels:* Knowledge of equitation and exercises in flat work only - no jumping.

## **MOUNTED PATROL TRAINING OFFICER**

### ***Level I and II***

Knowledge of equitation and exercises in flat work, related cavaletti exercises, basic concepts and exercises of horsemanship, safety and conditioning. Knowledge and skills in training officers in police work as well as re-schooling mounts. Department of Criminal Justice Standards (DCJS) certification as General Police Instructor recommended but not required.

### ***Level III***

Knowledge of equitation and exercises in flat work and related exercises, knowledge and skills in re-schooling and re-claiming of mounts; knowledge and skills in all related Mounted Police procedures, patrol procedures, and unit objectives. DCJS certification as General Police Instructor highly recommended. Video and lesson plan required, utilizing an ARICP approved Mounted Police topic. (List of approved topics will be sent upon request)

## **RECREATIONAL RIDING**

### ***Level I and II***

Teaches basic horsemanship to those who ride for pleasure and recreation with an emphasis on safety, a balanced seat, and a caring and responsible attitude toward the horse. May be English, Western or both. Includes instruction of beginners, the first-time horse owner, recreational pleasure and trail riding, and/or public or resort riding programs. (While instructors may teach students of different capabilities, the Recreational Riding Rating is not to be construed as a rating in Therapeutic Riding.) Safe trail riding and basic first aid procedures are emphasized.

### ***Level III***

Instructors who teach Recreational Riding beyond Level II are encouraged to seek Level II or higher certification in Hunt, Western, Saddle Seat or one of the other ARIA specialties. However, an instructor who teaches a program which exceeds Level II standards in Recreational Riding, but does not fall into any of the other recognized specialty areas, may apply for a Level III rating in Recreational Riding. The candidate must be prepared to show that the standard of his/her teaching and program are the equivalent of Level III requirements for other specialties.

## **REINING**

### ***Level I and II***

Must be able to instruct beginning to intermediate reining competitors.

### ***Level III***

Must be capable of instructing at all levels of reining and training horses as well as coaching for the USEF Reining Seat Medal, and should have some knowledge of other events which include reining.

## **RIDING TO HOUNDS**

Pre-requisite to the taking of these tests, candidates must provide the ARIA office with proof that they are currently (and have been for a minimum of three years) a member of, or subscriber to, a hunt recognised by, or registered with, the MFHA, and must have been awarded their colors. A letter from the hunt's Honorary Secretary or MFH will be considered proof. In the case of a candidate who is no longer a riding member of a hunt, a letter from the same source indicating previous participation and awarding of colors will be considered.

### ***Level I and II***

Must demonstrate the ability to prepare riders for riding as members of the "flat" or hill-toppers field, able to ride safely over natural terrain, to control their horses in a large group and around hounds, and to be aware of the courtesies and correct behavior expected of a member of the field.

### ***Level III***

Must be able to prepare riders to take part as members of the field in a more active way, able to think for themselves in an emergency; to prepare them as safe members of the jumping field; and to impart a degree of understanding of actual hunting and "woodcraft."

It is in no way expected, nor implied, that ARIA Riding to Hounds certified instructors should be able to train hunt staff.

## **SADDLE SEAT**

### ***Level I and II***

Teaching and training basics through USEF Limit Equitation and saddle seat pleasure classes. Know USEF Equitation rules. Knowledge of various breed rules helpful.

### ***Level III***

Same as above, also including Open Equitation and Park or 3 gaited (or breed) classes.

## **SHOW JUMPING**

### ***Level I and II***

Knowledge of flat and fence work, and USEF Jumper rules through ALL LEVELS. Teach through schooling jumpers (3'6"). Video for Level II must show jumping lesson relevant to this level.

### ***Level III***

Same through USEF preliminary and intermediate. (4'6"). Video must show jumping lesson relevant to this level.

## **SIDE-SADDLE**

### ***Level I and II***

Introduction to side-saddle. Proper position at all gaits, training of horse to side-saddle, correct fitting of tack and equipment, correct turnout of horse and rider for both formal and informal showing.

### ***Level III***

Competitive side-saddle riding, USEF rules, basic work over fences (to 2'6"). Knowledge of various styles of riding side-saddle (i.e. hunt seat, western, dressage, saddle seat) and correct equitation and dress for each.

## STABLE MANAGEMENT

An ARIA certification in Stable Management indicates that the holder of the certificate is certified in Stable Management. The holder of the Stable Management certificate may or may not also instruct others in Stable Management. Stable Management certification, just as all the specialties, may be earned at any one of the three levels.

### ***Stable Management DVD/Video***

(for Level II and Level III - DVD/video not required for Level I)

Applicant must provide a DVD/video tape of 20-30 minutes duration, giving the evaluators a “walk-through” of the barn for which the candidate is responsible and for which the candidate him/herself has done all the work which is seen in the video. The following should be included in the video:

- A listing of posted barn rules
- An explanation of how the stalls are prepared and how the barn is kept clean and organized.
- A demonstration displaying recognition and prevention of common ailments treated by a stable manager, such as thrush, saddle sores, and at least two others.
- A discussion of basic daily routines for grooming, feeding, watering and turn out of horses at the facility.
- A recognition of good and bad conformation in horses.
- An explanation of the use and purpose of common grooming implements.
- An explanation of stable dangers, such as barn fires, and what is done to prevent them.
- A description of how to recognize good and bad hay and feed.
- A discussion of various stable bedding methods and the benefits/drawbacks of each.
- A discussion of blanketing, summer sheets and other coverings used at your facility – when and why they are used.
- A discussion and demonstration of bandaging for travel and for at least two other purposes.
- A discussion of shots, worming, and keeping records.
- One other subject, of the candidate's choosing, which he/she feels is an important aspect of stable management.

## WESTERN EQUITATION/PLEASURE

### ***Level I and II***

Knowledge of Western equitation and Western pleasure, including USEF and/ or AQHA rules for these events.

### ***Level III***

Must show lesson suitable for riders who are capable of competing in Western horsemanship, and/or other performance events. (Lesson need not relate to competition, but must be taught to riders at this level.)

## Suggested Study Materials

*Please refer to ARIA's current book list for recommended reading for the various specialties.*

*ARICP is designed to confirm the instructor's knowledge of horsemanship, horses, riding instruction and the riding specialty that he/she teaches. Many candidates for certification will find it helpful to refresh their knowledge using the material below or similar material.*

Order online at [www.riding-instructor.com](http://www.riding-instructor.com) or e-mail orders to [aria@riding-instructor.com](mailto:aria@riding-instructor.com)

## Helpful for all Specialties

***Horses, 3rd Edition, by J. Warren Evans, \$34.95 + 4.00 shipping. Parts 1 & 2 are suggested for study reading.***

*Bear in mind that we don't expect you to be a vet - just to know what to do until the vet comes! Also when to call the vet and when you can safely handle the situation yourself. Available from The American Riding Instructors Association, 2880 Trenton Court, Bonita Springs, FL 34134. Tel. 239-948-3232. Fax 239-948-5053.*

*Any good saddlery book or catalog, or any comprehensive source of information about saddles, bridles & bits. This will help you in the parts of the test which ask you to identify various items of tack.*

*United States Equestrian Federation Rule Book (Current edition - read chapters on your specialty) USEF, 4047 Iron Works Pkwy., Lexington, KY 40511. Phone: 859-258-2472. Fax: 859-231-6662. You may also access the rule book at their website: [www.usef.org](http://www.usef.org)*

# Testing Information

Candidates for certification take GENERAL tests to evaluate their basic knowledge and SPECIALITY tests to evaluate their knowledge of the specialty they teach. ALL candidates take the General Tests and the applicable Specialty Tests for Level I-II. Candidates for Level III will also take the Level III tests.

## GENERAL TESTS

PHILOSOPHY TEST - Sent to all applicants before the Test Center; to be completed at home at the candidate's own speed. It consists of 10 essay questions. Its purpose is to give the candidate the opportunity to express his/her personal philosophy of teaching riding as well as his/her attitude toward the sport. For preparation, solidify your thoughts on your philosophy of riding and riding instruction. Consider your own riding ability and how it affects your teaching both positively and negatively. Think about the types of students you like to teach and why.

GENERAL INSTRUCTOR TEST - Sent to all applicants before the Test Center; to be completed at home at the candidate's own speed. It consists of 10 essay questions. Its purpose is to give the candidate an opportunity to demonstrate ability to communicate his/her knowledge clearly and to handle, in a decisive way, problems commonly faced by riding instructors. For preparation think of situations dealing with clients, students and horses which you have encountered as an instructor. How have you handled them, and what would you do differently if you could?

Level III THE HORSE TEST - The first test each candidate takes at the Test Center. One hour is allowed. True or false, short answers, multiple choice and "fill in the blanks" questions are all used. The purpose of this test is to determine the candidate's knowledge of horse anatomy, common bits and types of saddles, and common veterinary knowledge. As preparation, you should know points of the horse, conformation defects, basic horse care and be familiar with different types of commonly used tack.

Level III GENERAL HORSEMANSHIP TEST - The second test each candidate takes at the Test Center. One hour is allowed. Short written answers, multiple choice, and true or false questions are used. The purpose of this test is to evaluate the candidate's knowledge of General Horsemanship. As preparation, read material from the suggested reading list and think about the explanations you give students to help with common riding problems.

Level III THE HORSE TEST - This test is taken only by Level III candidates and is taken after completion of all Level II tests. It is similar to the Level II The Horse Test but with a higher degree of difficulty.

Level III GENERAL HORSEMANSHIP TEST - This test is taken only by Level III candidates and is taken after completion of all Level II tests. It is similar to the Level II General Horsemanship Test but with a higher degree of difficulty.

## SPECIALTY TESTS

Each specialty test is designed to test the candidate's knowledge of the specialty he/she has chosen to earn certification in. One hour is allowed for each specialty test. The tests may include true/false, multiple choice, short answer & essay questions. As preparation, review the rules & characteristics of the applicable specialty.

## CANDIDATE PRESENTATIONS

The purpose of the CP is to judge the ability of the candidate to teach a subject knowledgeably, clearly and concisely, in a brief amount of time. This must be an originally created presentation, and must not be a copy of someone else's work.

You will receive detailed instructions with your registration acceptance package.

(Scored 1-5, with 5 being the highest score)

### Professionalism, Maturity, Attitude & Temperament (PMAT)

Each candidate for certification is evaluated on the attributes above.

(Scored 1-5, with 5 being the highest score)

# TEST SCORING

The test scores required for each level follow. If a candidate achieves a passing grade at a level lower than the level for which he/she has applied, than he/she will be certified at the lower level. For example, if a Level III candidate does not pass the Level III tests but does pass the Level II tests, she will earn certification at Level II.

Level I Candidates must score an average of 80 or above on the four General Tests and a score of 80 or above on each Specialty Test taken. The CP must be scored at 3 or above.

Level II Candidates must score an average of 85 or above on the four General Tests and a score of 85 or above on each Specialty Test taken. The video must be passed at Level II and the CP must be scored at 3 or above.

Level III Candidates must score 90 or above on each test taken, the video must be passed at Level III and the CP must be scored at 4 or above.

The scoring procedure is extremely thorough, with fairness to the candidate always in mind. Borderline scores are always re-checked. Due to the time-consuming nature of this process and an equally thorough evaluation of each DVD/video tape, candidates should expect to receive the results of their certification status in approximately 6-8 weeks.

## *DVDs or Video Tapes*

*DVDs/Video tapes are required for Levels II and III. They are not required for Level I.*

ARIA ran a trial comparing live lessons with videos for the evaluation of an instructor's teaching ability and knowledge. It was determined by all involved that the value of evaluating a DVD/video over watching a live lesson is clearly superior in a number of ways, and much more fair to the instructor being evaluated.

- 1.) The instructor is able to prepare his/her best work.
- 2.) The instructor can choose the best conditions for the lesson in terms of horse, student, location, weather, etc.
- 3.) ARIA sends the video lesson to the best people capable of evaluating the particular riding discipline the student is seeking certification in. (This permits ARIA to offer certification in 15 different specialties, from Driving to Eventing to Mounted Patrol Training Officer)
- 4.) The video evaluators can watch the video under ideal conditions (no distractions, no hot & dusty ring, etc.). They also are able to replay the lesson or any part of it, allowing for better evaluation.
- 5.) Such controlled conditions allow the evaluators to properly assume that this is the best lesson the instructor can offer, and they are able to make a fair pass or fail decision.

All DVDs and/or videos, for all specialties except Driving, must show work at all 3 gaits. For jumping specialties such as hunt seat and show jumping, work must be shown over fences (except for the Hunt Seat on the flat specialty). Eventing videos must show work in all 3 phases, including work outside of the arena. A brief warm-up should either be shown, or, you must indicate in your introduction that one has been done prior to the video taping.

The video you submit to ARIA for evaluation must reflect both the classification of certification (Level II or III) and the specialty (hunt seat, saddle seat, etc.) for which you seek certification. If you are seeking certification in more than one specialty, you must submit a tape for each, or you may do two distinct and separate segments on the same tape.

**VIDEO TAPES MUST BE SUBMITTED IN STANDARD VHS FORMAT**  
**NO SMALL TAPES WITHOUT VHS CONVERTERS, PLEASE!**

The video must show that the instructor is capable of teaching a safe, organized and appropriate lesson at the level at which certification is sought. At the same time, it must be safe and appropriate for the student(s) and horse(s) selected for the demonstration lesson. This requirement is not to be construed as requiring that students jump a certain height of fence, for instance, but the instructor must select a subject that demonstrates his/her ability to teach at that level. Some specialties have specific requirements for the video lesson. (See the section on Specialties).

Look at the video as your opportunity to show the Panel just how good an instructor you are.

You have time to prepare the lesson and choose the students and horses you will use.

The video you submit should be an example of your best teaching.

We are not looking for professional video taping, but we are looking for an individual who cares enough to think about his/her presentation and presents his tape as required. Please don't leave anything on this tape which you don't want to have evaluated by the Panel.

**About Videotaping:** While we don't look for professional videotaping, the panel must be able to see, hear and understand your lesson in order to evaluate it fairly. Tell the camera person to show your student(s) most of the time so that we can see what your student is doing and the effect of your teaching. Taping at dusk or in poor light can make it impossible to see what happens. Wind, traffic noise or other background noise is magnified and can drown out your voice. Review your video and be sure it is clear enough visually and audibly to be evaluated fairly. We recommend that you keep a copy of the tape you submit. That way, when you receive your video evaluations, they will be all the more effective and informative. ARIA does not return DVDs, video tapes, or converter boxes.

**Format:** In preparing your video, please do not exceed a time of 22 minutes, using the following format:

1. A brief introduction of yourself, the student and the horse.
2. A brief discussion by you, the instructor, giving:
  - A. Rider's age and level of riding ability.
  - B. Disposition, age and training of horse.
  - C. Lesson plan for this lesson.
3. A presentation of a mounted riding lesson.
4. A brief evaluation by you, the instructor, of the lesson and plan for the next lesson.

**Lesson Topics and Levels:** Refer to the section on the definition of levels and choose a lesson topic that will demonstrate that you are competent to teach at that level.

1. Your video must show a lesson at the highest level of certification you are applying for. Be sure your video shows that you are capable of teaching at the upper range of the level you are applying for. A Level III video should show work at the advanced level, and a Level II video should show work at the intermediate level.
2. Your video must show the specialty or specialties (Hunt Seat, Western, Dressage, etc.) for which you seek certification, i.e. in eventing, you must show a lesson relating to cross country jumping, as well as an ability to relate flat work to jumping.

## **DVD/Video Tape Evaluation Criteria:**

The ARIA Evaluation Panel will be looking for the following when evaluating your DVD or videotape:

**Safety:** Remember that safety is one of the primary considerations and that your tape will be viewed with safety practices in mind.

**Ability to Teach:** The ability to teach riding is the ability to communicate clearly the skills and concepts necessary to ride.

Do you use your voice well?

Are your explanations clear?

Do you recognize your student's ability and teach to the appropriate level?

**Knowledge of the Subject:** The Panelists will consider whether or not you have demonstrated a clear understanding of what you have chosen to teach. Please do not attempt to teach beyond your level of competency.

Remember, your tape and your lesson subject must demonstrate your knowledge of the level to which you are applying—i.e.: an applicant for Level III Hunt Seat must show a lesson relating flat work to jumping, suitable for riders who are capable of jumping 3' to 3'6". (Note: It is not required that riders actually jump 3' to 3'6" in this lesson.)

A Level III in Dressage would show a lesson in half-pass, shoulder-in, flying change or other work at 2nd or 3rd level. A Level III candidate in Eventing must show a cross country jumping lesson suitable for Training or Preliminary and must also address importance of conditioning for this level. Level III Western candidates must show a lesson suitable for riders who are capable of competing in Western Horsemanship, or other performance events. (Lesson need not relate to competition, but must be taught to riders at this level.)

Candidates for Level III Show Jumping must show a lesson suitable for rider(s) who are capable of competing in the Preliminary Jumper Division. Lesson must include relating flat work to jumping.

Remember that the video is your introduction to the Panelists. It is better to teach a simple concept well than to attempt to teach a more difficult concept not as well.

**Work Accomplished:** Evaluate your video by considering these questions: What were you trying to accomplish in this lesson? Were you successful? How will you approach your next lesson with this student?

**Effect on The Horse:** The ultimate objective of any teacher is to teach the rider to improve the horse's behavior and training and its way of going. The lesson should demonstrate awareness and consideration for the horse and an eye for cause and effect. Does the horse get better or worse during the lesson?

**Creativity:** We want our lessons to be interesting and fun for our students. Consider the following questions as you evaluate your own video for creativity from the point of view of the Panelists.

Is it obvious that you thought about this lesson and know what you want to accomplish?

Have you provided creative solutions to your students' riding problems?

Do you demonstrate an ability to communicate your requests and explanations clearly?

Are you a safe instructor?

One of the questions each Evaluation Panel member will ask himself is this:

Would I send my child to this instructor?

**Suitability for the Job:** The Panelists are looking critically at your video to see if you have chosen a topic that is appropriate for your knowledge and abilities. They want to know that you thoroughly understand the concept you are teaching.

**Personal Appearance:** Your personal appearance reflects your professionalism. Neat, clean and appropriate dress is expected.

**Discipline:** It is important that you are in control of the class you are teaching. We expect you to provide the leadership your students need.

***Remember: Videos must follow format to meet requirements!  
We must be able to see and hear you clearly! Submit standard DVDs or  
VHS tapes or include a converter box with small tapes.***

**Earning your ARIA certification is an important step in your career.**

Each candidate for ARIA certification must agree to the following:

1. I will promote safe and ethical behavior, both for myself and my students.
2. I will be professional in appearance and demeanor. I will conduct myself and my affairs with honesty, integrity and to the highest standard.
3. I understand that if I earn ARIA certification, there is an annual renewal fee (currently \$45.) which is due each year.
4. I understand that I am required to return every five years, twice more, for re-certification at a reduced fee of \$200.00. (Upon request, an extension may be granted.)
5. I understand and agree that ARIA and the ARICP reserve the right to refuse and/or deny initial certification for any reason it deems proper.
6. I understand and agree that ARIA and the ARICP reserve the right to revoke certification, at any time, for any reason it deems proper.
7. All tests are confidential and are the property of ARIA and the ARICP. Test scores and video evaluations are sent to the candidate with their results; the tests and/or DVDs/video tapes themselves are not returned.
8. I understand and agree that it is solely and completely the responsibility of the candidate for ARIA certification to clearly demonstrate his/her ability to qualify for the level and specialty applied for. A comprehensive and thorough evaluation is given to each applicant's tests and DVDs/video tapes by members of the ARICP Evaluating Panel. No further review is given. Anyone not achieving the certification they desire may try again at the reduced rate of \$200.00. (Those tests which are passed need not be re-taken if candidate returns for re-testing within one year.)

# ARIA's Top Ten Tips to Success

**Earning your ARIA certification is an important step in your career.**

Having these nationally-recognized credentials assures your clients of your knowledge as well as your commitment to safety and integrity. Discounts with some of the country's leading insurance companies can also save you hundreds - or even thousands - of dollars.

Here are Ten Tips to achieving your ARIA certification:

## **BEFORE TEST DAY**

1. Register early. This will allow you plenty of time to do your two essay tests at home. You will hand these tests in at the Test Center. You will also be assured of a place at the Test Center of your choice.
2. Make sure your paperwork is clean and clear. Fill out all forms completely and legibly. Coffee stains and torn forms don't give a good impression of who you are.
3. Read carefully all the information you receive after registering. If you don't understand something, call or e-mail the ARIA office for clarification.
4. Prepare. Make sure you're confident and ready to test. Parts I and II of the book *Horses*, 3rd Edition by J. Warren Evans are very helpful. (This book is available from ARIA.) Realize that nearly everyone has some test anxiety. Accept that fact, relax, and look at the experience of testing as your opportunity to show the Evaluation Panel what a really good instructor you are. You are, aren't you?
5. Make your video an example of your very best work. (Video required at Levels II and III only)
6. Make earning your ARIA certification a *Priority*. Careless, sloppy work won't put that certificate on the wall. Take the time to do things right. Pay attention to what is asked, and do it.

## **ON TEST DAY**

1. Get to the Test Center early. Have everything you were asked to bring ready to hand in. Be proud of what you're handing in! Don't make excuses for videos which can't be heard, tests which your puppy chewed on, horses that were lame, etc. ARIA looks for maturity and professionalism in its certified instructors – make a good first impression!
2. Be rested and ready. A late night the evening before your testing won't help you be at your best. Make sure your home and barn are in good hands and forget about them on test day.
3. Focus and concentrate on the work at hand. Look at the tests as your way to show us what you know. Tests are designed to be straightforward and to allow for differences in techniques and methods.
4. Show courtesy, professionalism and respect to everyone, always. From your fellow instructors to your students and boarders, and from the parents of your students to the staff at horse shows and other events. It's expected of an ARIA instructor.

**As an ARIA Certified Instructor, you are a role model,  
and riding's not all you teach!**

## *What Instructors say about ARIA...*

Your influence, and that of the ARIA, has guided me in everything I do since I certified, and my certification continues to be one of my proudest accomplishments. I will continue to promote certification and the ARIA program; it is the best!

Alejandra Abella. Director, Equestrian Management, LLC Charlottesville VA 22902

I'm so proud to be part of the ARIA family and the standards which you have set are of the highest quality. I only wish more people out in this part of the country truly understood what high standards we are held to in our testing and our teaching. Too many other organizations run people through their programs without "actually seeing what they're made of" and have them walk out with a certificate in hand. I truly appreciate the testing, videos and the value placed on our experience in determining our certification as instructors, especially when our videos are critiqued by our peers.

Barbara Keller, Loma, Colorado

I first learned of ARIA through a fellow instructor. She was going to become certified and invited me to go through the process with her. In 2004 I became a Level 2 Hunt Seat certified instructor. Just recently I became a Level 3 Hunt Seat instructor, the only one in the entire state of Texas! I found the process for each testing to be challenging but extremely rewarding. I believe my pony club and especially "quiz" background really helped me prepare for the examinations. The candidate presentation probably was the thing that made me the most nervous, so I practiced it with friends and other instructors. I knew if I could do it in front of them, I could do it in front of the examiners! I felt that I should become certified because by 2004 I was giving lessons to more than 30 children per week and wanted to give their parents a fantastic reason to really feel comfortable with me, as well as to refer me to other parents and potential clients. This area has many instructors and I wanted to stand out in the crowd as an instructor who takes her teaching and students very seriously. I knew that my safety and skill-oriented lesson program should be recognized, and having ARIA stand behind something I have built from scratch is definitely something I am very proud of!

Julie Thomas, Denton, TX

This is an excellent program and encompasses many disciplines. I highly recommend this and feel that everyone teaching riding should be certified. I find it hard to believe that people have to be licensed to cut hair, but not to put a six-year-old child on a thousand pound animal. You would leave the Convention feeling very energized and even more excited about teaching than you have ever been before. Additionally you will make some new equestrian friends that you would otherwise never have had the opportunity to meet.

Gayle Lampe, Fulton, MO

I enjoyed the process of the certification. The gals who ran it were very approachable but very professional and had the experience that I had hoped they would. I look forward to expanding my certification yearly if money and time allows. Thank you for continuing this process.

Stephanie England-Grey, Burlington, KY

We sure enjoyed the convention last year and plan to attend next year as well. What a great organization to be a part of!

Thanks, Marcy Heepke, Edwardsville, IL

Thank you for making me feel so welcome at my testing and at the convention! I enjoyed myself immensely, and feel so good to have connected with such a professional, thoughtful organization. Your personal touches to all you do are delightful! The Naples Grande Resort was a terrific facility for everything; it was beautiful, and the setting was perfect. I am most of the way through the current issue of RI magazine, and it is excellent. Each page I turned I discovered a thorough, helpful article, and best of all, the professionalism of the association and its membership is evident in each piece. Thank you!!

Sincerely, Emily Wigley, Vashon Island, Washington

The convention could not have offered a “Rookie” like myself more than it did. I was very impressed with all the topics and your speakers were over the top wonderful! I feel I have been raised to a level of comprehension that would have otherwise been unattainable. Thanks Again !!!

Kindest Regards - Mike Mancino, Seaford, DE

Just wanted to drop you a note to say that I LOVED my first convention! It was great and I learned so much! Thank you for all you do.

Jill Ennis, Wildwood, MO

I have just returned from the ARIA Convention and wanted to express my gratitude for all the efforts of everyone who ran and lectured during it. I really feel energized by the experience and look forward to seeing you all next time. I really enjoyed the format you followed so the flow of information was not interrupted by questions. It was very informative and refreshing to be with so many in the same field. Being a certified instructor means a lot to both my students and myself.

Lynn M. Jendrowski, Blacksburg, VA

Thank you for being such a fabulous association and for giving such personal attention to each one of us. I appreciate all of your support.

Jennifer Nicolella, Cottonwood, AZ

Getting certified was one of the best things I have done!

Robin Wolff, Oneida, NY

I literally cried when I opened the ARIA package this AM and found that I had passed Level III. It has been a lifelong dream for me. Thank you so much for all the ARIA has done for me personally and professionally. I am presently seeking a Masters in Business during the summers and am a 30-year secondary educator. I have been a professional riding instructor for about 20 years now. I don't know how to explain this to you or the world, but horsemen understand — that Masters will never be as important to me as attaining Level III with ARIA! Never!

Again, thank you so much for being there and for being such an asset to all of us in the field.

Barbara Richie Pond, ARIA Certified Level III Instructor, Hunt Seat and Recreational Riding, Raeford, NC

I am grateful to be part of such a wonderful organization of professionals. Every ARIA instructor I have ever met has been the best example of integrity and professionalism that ARIA stands for.

Connie Warner, Chester, VA

I love being a member! and ARIA is my choice of all of them!

Deb Stone, Ruffin, NC

I completed the certification at Level II and it was a wonderful experience. I learned so much about myself just going through the procedure.

Skye Ackenbom. Riding Director, Camp Friendship, Palmyra, VA

I approach teaching with a boost in my confidence, knowing that my knowledge and skills have been reviewed and approved by the ARIA program's experienced and capable panel of examiners. I passed the Connecticut Bar exam in 1991 after four years of evening division law school, including summers. That was a big deal – but when I compare the Bar exam with the ARIA certification process, I think the latter did more for my self-confidence. After all, tests like the Bar exam focus on your ability to demonstrate your knowledge on paper; it doesn't tell you that you will be able to apply all that book-learning to succeed in the practice of law. In contrast, the ARIA adds to the written exams the practical demonstration of your ability to confidently impart knowledge to students when you record those video(s) that will be reviewed by a panel of highly qualified instructors.

Jean Morrison, Chaplin, CT

# WE WANT YOU TO SUCCEED!

A message to candidates for ARICP certification  
by Cameo Miller, member of the Evaluation Panel

Many people have spent time writing the brochure that is sent to you when you ask for information about ARIA. And yet it seems to us that some people may not really read it, as the materials they send in are nowhere near the standards requested and required for certification. So here is one more piece of paper which is comprised solely of tips and hints to help you succeed!

- Read the information sent to you thoroughly and completely! We send a detailed description of what is expected on your DVD/video, descriptions of the levels of certification and of the teaching specialties, plus more. Read it all! It has suggestions about what you need to study and to know for each level and for the various tests.
- Now re-read the video section. We must be able to see and hear what you are teaching in order to be able to evaluate it. Make a test copy before you do the final version so that you can correct any technical problems you may find. Review your final version to be sure it is exactly what you want to show. Remember - this should be an example of your best work. Everything doesn't have to go perfectly - a good instructor takes advantage of, and is able to adjust, the lesson to fit what is happening. And you can control how safe your lesson area is, and what you and your student look like.
- Please note that your video must show teaching at the highest level applied for. You may present a perfectly wonderful lesson of teaching a beginner to post to the trot, but this is not a Level III (advanced) lesson.
- For both tests and video, you must show us what you know. We cannot read minds and do not assume you know more than is presented to us. (If you think about it, that would be a very dangerous thing for us to do!) This is especially important for Level III candidates to remember, as they sometimes assume that something is taken for granted because they have done it for so long. This doesn't mean that you have to write down or explain everything you have ever known for every question and situation, but do be complete with each response to each question, and explain information on the video so that it is clear that you are paying attention to basics and safety, and know the reasons for your teaching methods.
- One of the questions that we frequently ask candidates is how high the standards for certification should be. The typical response is "very high, but not so high that I can't pass". Remember that these are national standards. There is not one Level III for Hunt Seat in Texas that means more than the one for New York; or a Level II Dressage that is different in Virginia than it is in Montana. The certificate you earn is recognized in any state in the union (and most foreign countries). You take it with you wherever you move or travel to teach. So you are being judged by national standards. This means that you must show a very high degree of knowledge, safety, and professionalism to pass. It should also be a source of great pride to know that in earning your certification you have met standards required of all instructors no matter where they live and teach.

ARIA is not a training organization. We attempt, to the best of our ability, to assess and then certify the knowledge you already possess. So it is important that you demonstrate the full extent of your knowledge during the video and testing process.

We work hard to create a situation where you will find the process a learning experience. We will try to help you define your strengths as well as your weaknesses so that the true success of the experience is that you become a better instructor. You will find people to network with to help you in your business, as well as with any future problem areas, and you will receive ideas to help you improve your own business. You will meet friends and colleagues so that you don't feel so isolated or that there is no one to help you during difficult times, and lots of information to help you be the best and most competent instructor you can be. This organization is based on cooperation rather than competitiveness. Not everyone who applies is certified. We want to maintain very high standards so that having this certification means something to you as well as to the industry as a whole. If you are not certified, you will learn the areas to improve in so that you can become certified in the future.

We want you to succeed and will try to help you do this as much as possible. But, it is for you to actually do—we can't and won't do it for you. It is your knowledge, professionalism, and ability that must be demonstrated for you to be ARIA certified. *We wish you the best!*