



**CANADIAN THERAPEUTIC RIDING ASSOCIATION
ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE D'ÉQUITATION THÉRAPEUTIQUE**

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CanTRA EQUINE-FACILITATED WELLNESS (EFW)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

~ FAQs ~

Why choose CanTRA EFW certification?

CanTRA's EFW program offers a recognizably unique designation. The following principles have been identified as integral to CanTRA's EFW certification:

- To maintain a standard of excellence for Mental Health Professionals (MHP), Education Professionals (EDP) and Equine Professionals (EQP) comparable to that already recognized internationally for CanTRA's therapeutic riding instructor certification program.
- To maintain high safety standards by requiring two professionals (one MHP or EDP and one EQP) to work together with the client and the horse.
- To strengthen the quality of service to the client by requiring cross-training of MHPs, EDPs and EQPs so that each professional, while expert in their own field, has also received at least basic training in the field of their professional partner.
- To provide independent third-party examination and credentialling.

What certification options are offered?

Mental Health Professional

- CanTRA EFW Mental Health Professional (Basic), MHP(B)
 - May offer ground work therapy only
- CanTRA EFW Mental Health Professional (Advanced), MHP(A)
 - May offer ground work therapy and/or mounted therapy

Education Professional

- CanTRA EFW Education Professional (Basic), EDP(B)
 - May offer ground work therapy only
- CanTRA EFW Education Professional (Advanced), EDP(A)
 - May offer ground work therapy and/or mounted therapy

Equine Professional

- CanTRA EFW Equine Professional (Basic), EQP(B)
 - Supports Mental Health and Education Professionals working with individuals with mild challenges

- CanTRA EFW Equine Professional (Advanced), EQP(A)
 - Supports Mental Health and Education Professionals working with individuals with moderate to severe challenges

The intent of this structure is to allow certification candidates to gain experience and work toward certification while practicing in their chosen field.

The credentials are the designations that Mental Health, Education or Equine Professionals receive upon submitting the required experience/education documentation and passing the written examination (note that there is no exam for equine professionals, only the completion of required experience/education). CanTRA oversees the credentials.

Why do we need certification credentials?

In the big picture, EFW is very much in its infancy in North America. In recent years, many practitioners have hung out their shingle with credentials ranging from wishful thinking to exceedingly credible and everything in between, with training ranging from weekend courses to more substantial offerings. Given that clients typically may include veterans suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), youth at risk, abuse survivors, and other mentally and emotionally vulnerable children and adults, it is crucial that those purporting to be qualified to work with these clients be well and truly qualified.

CanTRA-certified professionals are those who can demonstrate documented, credible evidence that they have met or exceeded the basic level of knowledge and experience related to the specialized field of Equine-Facilitated Wellness. Today's mental health and education professionals face increasingly complex regulatory and outcome requirements. In keeping with this reality, CanTRA is working in conjunction with the Certification Board of Equine Interaction Professionals (CBEIP) to set professional and educational standards through its credentialing exam program. These exams test professionals for a body of knowledge that is required in order to effectively partner with equines in mental health and education settings, and thereby assist the employer, the public, and members of the professions in identifying qualified individuals.

What are the benefits of certification?

Professional distinction

- Certification is identified by the public as signifying professionalism, specialized training, and knowledge in the field of Equine-Facilitated Wellness.
- The CanTRA EFW certification program provides documented evidence that mental health and education professionals have been examined by an independent third-party credentialing body and have been found to possess a basic level of knowledge about this specialized field.
- It recognizes the expanded education, skills, and experience needed to be successful as a CanTRA EFW professional.
- It recognizes advanced professionals for their commitment to the profession.
- It supports the goal of professionals who incorporate equines in their work to have these interventions recognized as being facilitated by credible, educated, safety-conscious professionals.
- Certification promotes continued personal and professional growth in the field through updating and recertification requirements.

Liability insurance

CanTRA-certified professionals and centres have access to a national insurance policy which covers all employees, volunteers, officers, directors, instructors, managers, officials, member participants, and auxiliary workers while acting within the scope of their duties on behalf of the Canadian Therapeutic Riding Association. It should be noted, however, that the policy does not provide professional liability insurance for therapists, and as such a professional liability policy will still be needed from another insurance source, in accordance with the applicable provincial licensing requirements.

CanTRA's model for EFW is a one-on-one interaction with a two-person team of a mental health or education professional plus an equine practitioner working as partners with one horse and one client. My practices include group therapy where I would like to treat multiple clients at a time while still using horses and EFW techniques. Is this acceptable to CanTRA?

In equine-assisted therapies such as therapeutic riding lessons and Equine-Facilitated Wellness, group approaches are common and CanTRA recognizes that in many cases these may be warranted. The use of group therapy is not precluded, but the ideal situation is seen as that of individual therapy. The key here is that CanTRA-certified instructors and EFW practitioners are experienced and knowledgeable enough to recognize under which circumstances group therapy or private therapy would be required and when to use these different models in the best interest of the clients' progress and safety.

CanTRA's EFW model is stressing the importance of having mental health/education-certified EFW professionals working side by side with CanTRA-certified equine professionals to coordinate the equine intervention, just as the mental health/education professional (social worker or psychologist, for example) would do if they were coordinating with any other form of intervention/allied profession. CanTRA wants a mental health/education AND an equine professional on hand in situations that require both (i.e., when horses are actively being used in the therapy). Equine professionals are familiar with the horses and can make recommendations for matching horse to client, exercises that would be useful for specific therapeutic goals, and important safety considerations. For clinical, professional, and safety reasons, practitioners have to be prudent. This is why CanTRA requires that mental health, education, and equine professionals have some basic training in each other's scope of expertise – MHPs and EDPs need to have some basic horsemanship skills; EQPs need to have some basic knowledge of mental health/education practices. The whole point of having an MHP or EDP working with an EQP is to consult and plan about how to organize an effective and safe clinical intervention using EFW.

Depending on the goals and needs of the client, alternatively there are standard therapeutic riding programs or even mainstream riding lessons for which EFW certification is not required. For liability purposes, practitioners and instructors need to identify and be clear in what they are doing, whether they are providing coaching, social work or teaching services – especially if they are registered with their discipline's college and/or covered by an EFW or therapeutic riding centre's insurance.

Why are MH and ED Basic Professionals only expected to practice therapies using groundwork techniques while MH and ED Advanced Professionals can use groundwork and/or mounted therapies?

At the basic level of certification, Mental Health and Education Professionals are only expected to have obtained a very rudimentary level of horsemanship skills. If they have only obtained this bare minimum, they may be lacking the knowledge and skills to successfully understand and safely utilize mounted techniques in their therapy.

However, in cases where an individual may be certified as a Basic MH or ED professional who has also obtained some sort of equine coaching certification (CanTRA, Equestrian Canada, PATH International, etc.) OR they are working in conjunction with a certified EQP who can oversee the mounted segments and provide insight into what exercises may be beneficial, then mounted therapy techniques would be a feasible addition to their EFW sessions.

It should be noted that in NO circumstance does CanTRA condone a situation where more than one UNRESTRAINED horse and/or more than one client are in an arena together at one time.

What are the certification fees?

Fees are set up in a tuition-type structure. This allows each individual to work out a payment plan with CanTRA that fits within the timelines of their training. All tuition fees must be paid prior to the final granting of CanTRA certification.**

The tuition fee for all levels is C\$378.00 and includes:

- CanTRA membership for two years
- Prerequisite training review
- Advisor support
- Training submission review
- Badge/certificate

**Note: Upon completion of all prerequisites/training and approval by the CanTRA EFW Committee, Mental Health and Education Professionals are required to register for the CBEIP credentialing examination through the Professional Testing Corporation (PTC). Exam fees are payable directly to PTC and are above and beyond the CanTRA tuition fees. PTC currently charges US\$300.00 for examination.

Is there a way to be grandfathered into certification?

No one is grandfathered into the use of the credential.

Will it be possible to achieve lifetime credential status?

There is no lifetime credential. The profession is continuing to increase in complexity. As a result, continuing education will play a major role in making sure that Equine-Facilitated Wellness professionals stay current on the latest best practices in equine interactions as well as in their primary field of mental health or education.

How do I document my experience hours?

Candidates are not allowed to self-validate their experience hours. You will be required to provide documentation in the form of a copy of your license to practice, a current teaching certificate, master's degree or other relevant documentation to prove your authority to practice as a Mental Health or

Education Professional. Copies of rider-level certificates, signed-off updating hours sheets, proof of attendance at workshops/clinics, etc., can all be submitted. Other qualifying hours can be tracked by the candidate and signed off by their supervisor, mentor or person in charge of the program they are participating in.

How many hours can I document for the time I put into obtaining a rider level?

Whether you challenge only one level or several levels, you may claim 40 hours for each examination passed. The 40 hours roughly accounts for 20 hours of riding time/instruction, 15 hours of stable management instruction, and 5 hours for the exam itself.

Do hours from PATH International or EAGALA workshops count towards my CanTRA EFW certification?

Absolutely. There are many credible certification systems available, each with their own methodology and focus, which offer some valuable training components. Given that most Mental Health or Education Professionals use more than one approach/theoretical perspective to inform their treatment and intervention, it is important to remain open to professionals exploring what works best for them and their clients. However, once certified as CanTRA EFW practitioners, it is expected that credentialed professionals will work within CanTRA's EFW framework, guidelines, safety protocols, and code of ethics. Since its inception, CanTRA has set high standards of practice regarding safety and professionalism. Our primary concern in the development of CanTRA-sanctioned programs or events is the safety of all involved: clients, therapists, instructors, volunteers, and horses.

CBEIP Credentialling Examination Program

I have received approval from the CanTRA EFW Committee to proceed to the CBEIP credentialling exam. How do I do this?

CanTRA will send notice of completion of requirements to CBEIP on your behalf. Once CBEIP confirms acceptance, you can contact PTC directly to schedule a testing date.

How do I know where the closest test centre is located?

The CBEIP examination is available once a year and is administered during an established two-week testing period on a daily basis, Monday through Saturday (excluding holidays) at computer-based testing facilities managed by the Professional Testing Corporation (PTC). PTC has many testing sites across North America (over 20 in Canada). Scheduling is done on a first come, first served basis. To find a testing centre near you, visit www.ptcny.com/clients/CBEIP/index.html

Note: Hours and days of availability vary at different centres. You will not be able to schedule your examination appointment until you have received an Eligibility Notice from PTC.

What is the credentialing exam fee?

CBEIP currently charges US\$300.00 for examinations. This fee is payable directly to PTC and is above and beyond the CanTRA fees.

What examination study materials are available and what does CanTRA/CBEIP recommend I use to prepare for the exam?

Many organizations publish materials relating to Equine-Facilitated Wellness. A list of reading reference resources is included in the CBEIP Handbook for Candidates and can be found at <http://www.cbeip.org/download.aspx>. A Resource List is also posted on the CanTRA website at www.cantra.ca. It is suggested that those who are planning to take the examination review the content outline of the exam (also found in the CBEIP Handbook) and brush up in those areas where they might not feel as confident of their knowledge. It is not necessary to purchase or read all of the suggested resources.

Why is the reading reference list so extensive? Will all of the materials be tested?

The Reading Reference was developed to be broad in scope so all candidates will be able to locate materials for those areas of the examination they wish to study. While all of the questions on the examination will be drawn from materials on the list, not all of the information found on the list will be on each version of the examination.

How are the exams scored? What is a passing mark?

The examination is criterion-referenced, which means that there is one passing score for each form of the examination. CBEIP sets the passing score as it approves each new form of the examination. Statistics which are maintained on each question will assure that subsequent forms of the examination, although containing several different questions, will remain equivalent in level of difficulty.

What do I do if I fail the examination?

In order to retest, you will need to reapply for the exam and pay the appropriate examination fee. There is no discount on retests.

How long is my credential valid?

It is valid for three years from the date you were credentialled.

How do I renew my credential after the three-year period ends?

CBEIP Recertification policy:

Mental Health and Education Professionals need to recertify every three years. This involves submitting a completed application with backup documentation showing that you have met specific requirements. MHPs and EDPs may recertify through either Continuing Education Unit (CEU) documentation or by retaking the exam. In order to recertify through CEUs, you will need to document points through participation at specific industry events, professional development/continuing education hours earned during your current certification period, any other achieved certifications, and continued work experience. MHPs and EDPs must then submit their recertification certificate to CanTRA for its records and those of CBEIP.

CanTRA Certification system:

Equine Professionals need to complete 20 hours of updating over each three-year updating period through CanTRA-approved workshops, seminars and conferences. Proof of these hours must be submitted to CanTRA for its records in order to maintain certification.

How do I earn CEU points for recertification?

There are several ways to do this. You can receive points for college courses, attending or presenting at public seminars or conferences, business-related training provided by your employer, correspondence courses, publishing an article in an established professional magazine or journal, or even earning a certification from another organization. CBEIP does not need to pre-approve your courses. Professionals are required to track their own events or continuing education training.

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