

USDF "L" Education Program

Participants' Information

Revised January 2012

Welcome to the USDF "L" Education Program! Your commitment to continuing education is commendable.

This is an educational program organized by the USDF "L" Program Committee chaired by Lois Yukins. This program will help you to evaluate dressage performance at Training through Second Level. Gaits, paces, movements, figures as well as collective marks and basics are covered. You will learn the judge's role and responsibility, as well as Judging Methodology, Horse and Rider Biomechanics. Musical Freestyle will also be introduced. By the end of the program participants will be asked to judge full tests while giving scores and appropriate comments in a show-like atmosphere.

Program Goals:

This program has been designed with several goals in mind: 1) to give competitors, trainers, instructors and other interested people greater insight into the evaluative techniques of judging dressage; 2) to qualify individuals to judge schooling shows; 3) to meet a requirement to enter the United States Equestrian Federation, Inc. (USEF) "r" Judges Training Program; and 4) to serve as continuing education for licensed judges.

Faculty:

The sessions are conducted by a faculty of USDF-approved USEF "S" licensed dressage judges. These instructors all have experience in teaching judge-training programs. To maintain continuity between the sessions, all instructors follow an outline in the "L" Program Faculty Manual. In addition, instructors review the course at an annual "L" Program Faculty meeting and develop additional teaching materials.

Organization:

The USDF "L" Program is organized by local USDF Group Member Organizations or other approved organizations. Each organization is responsible for financing its program and for making all local arrangements of the program

Pre-requisites for Participation in the Program:

Part 1:

1. **Membership:** Must be a current USDF member (Group, Participant or Education Member)

Part 2:

1. **Membership:** Must be a USDF Participating Member

2. **Score requirements:** *Scores must be earned prior to entering the Part 2*

Must have three scores of 60% or higher at Second Level or above from three different USEF-licensed judges. Only scores from USDF-USEF recognized competitions will count. *Scores for Freestyle and Young Horse tests are not eligible as one, or more, of the three scores. It is the responsibility of the candidate to submit the scores to the USDF office prior to the start of Part 2.*

The Program:

The “L” Program consists of two parts, Part 1; ‘A Judge’s Perspective’ and Part 2; ‘Candidate Evaluation’. Part 1; ‘A Judge’s Perspective’ is the educational part of the program; it should suit anybody who would like to have more insight into what judges are looking for and how they operate. This part consists of Sessions A, B, and C. These three sessions must be attended in their alphabetic sequence. If participants miss a session, they need to make it up before they can attend the next session. For this purpose, they may go to any other group that offers the missing session. At the discretion of the organizer, up to 30 participants may be accepted into Part 1 This may mean that not everyone enrolled in Part 1 will be able to go on to the Part 2 immediately, or with the same organizer. It is up to the organizer to determine which participants will be eligible for their Part 2. The USDF Office and “L” Program liaison will make every effort to assist any qualified participants in finding a Part 2 to complete the program.

Part 2; ‘Candidate Evaluation’ is limited to 10 candidates and is intended for those candidates who are interested in judging schooling shows or entering the USEF program to become ‘r’ judges. This part consists of Session D1, D2, E and the Final Exam, see page 5 for more information on ‘Candidate Evaluation.’ Sessions D1, D2 and the Final Exam must be attended in order but Session E can be done throughout the program. If participants miss a session, they need to make it up before they can attend the next session. However, to make up an evaluative session (D-1, D-2, Final Exam), candidates must find a program that has an opening, which means a program that has less than 10 participants. If the candidate cannot find an opening in an evaluative session they should contact USDF.

It is recommended that participants wishing to complete the program, Part 1 and 2 do so within three years. If completion exceeds three years it is strongly recommended that candidates audit Sessions A, B, and C.

*Participants should be aware of the commitment this program requires in the areas of time, money and travel. The participant is responsible for finding a program or session if needed, to attend. It is recommended to contact the USDF “L” Program liaison, at USDF office, for assistance.

Homework

The Rules Homework, included on the USDF “L” Participant Flash drive, is to be completed by the participant and brought to the A Session to be discussed. The obligatory homework for each session is included on the flash drive and should be brought to each session for discussion. In addition, candidates are expected to be familiar with the material received for the upcoming session.

Required Resources:

- United States Equestrian Federation Rule Book
- United States Equestrian Federation Test sheets, Training - Second Level
- USDF “L” Participant Flash drive

At least three (3) weeks prior to the start of the program, participants should purchase the USDF “L” Participant Flash drive.

- Once approved by USDF as having met the Part 1 USDF Membership prerequisite, participants should purchase the flash drive through the USDF store on-line at www.usdf.org or call (859) 971-2277.
- *The flash drive will automatically update any revised handouts/material when inserted into a computer with access to the internet.*
- Each participant is responsible for purchasing the flash drive through USDF prior to the start of the “A” Session.

At all sessions, participants should dress professionally with consideration for the weather conditions.

Below are descriptions of the various sessions for ‘A Judge’s Perspective’ of the “L” Program.

Session A- Introduction to Judging & Biomechanics (12 -14 hours)

“Introduction to judging” is a lecture day and includes the following:

- Responsibilities and conduct of the judge
- Rules governing dressage competitions and judging
- Knowledge and ability required of a good judge
- Technicalities (contract, travel)
- Judge’s Comments
- Methodology (arriving at consistent scores)
- Errors of the Test & Errors of the Course
- Use of Diagrams

Biomechanics may be part lecture part practical session and includes:

- Biomechanics of the Horse
- Biomechanics of the Gaits

Participants should bring:

- USDF “L” Participant Flash drive (if access to a laptop is available) or the printed handouts and completed homework for discussion.
- United States Equestrian Federation Rules
 - General Rules (GR) and Dressage Division (DR)
 - Dressage Attire & Equipment Guide
 - USEF/AAEP Lameness Guide

- Notebook, pencils, and clipboard & name tag

Items from Participant's Flash drive specifically needed for this session:

- Session A Handouts
- USEF Rules Homework
- USEF/AAEP Lameness Guide
- USDF Glossary of Judging Terms
- Judge's Checklist

Session B- *Judging Criteria for Gaits & Paces, Movements and Figures*

This session is a combination of lecture and practice judging of approximately 12-14 hours and includes:

- Analysis of criteria for each level (Training, First and Second)
- Analysis of criteria for gaits and paces in each level
- Analysis of criteria for movements and figures in each level
- Practice - judging of movements from each test of each level

Participants should bring:

- USDF "L" Participant Flash drive (if access to a laptop is available) or the printed handouts and completed homework for discussion.
- United States Equestrian Federation Rules
 - General Rules (GR) and Dressage Division (DR)
 - Dressage Attire & Equipment Guide
 - USEF/AAEP Lameness Guide
- Notebook, pencils and clipboard & name tag
- Test sheets of all levels and tests with their own diagrams

Items from Participant's Flash drive specifically needed for this session:

- Session B Handouts
- Session A Homework
- USEF/AAEP Lameness Guide
- USDF Glossary of Judging Terms
- Judge's Checklist

Session C- *Basics, Collective Marks – Gaits, Impulsion, Submission and the Rider (12-14 hours)*

This session is a combination of lectures and practice judging with demonstration horses and focuses on:

Collective Marks:

- Correct basics that must be observed
- Methodology for judging Collective Marks
- Gaits & Paces
- Impulsion
- Submission
- Rider's Seat & Position, Rider Biomechanics

- Freestyle Overview

Participants should bring:

- USDF “L” Participant Flash drive (if access to a laptop is available) or the printed handouts and completed homework for discussion.
- United States Equestrian Federation Rules:
 - General Rules and Dressage Division (DR)
 - Dressage Attire & Equipment Guide
 - USEF/AAEP Lameness Guide
- Test sheets of Training through Second levels with their own diagrams
- Notebook, pencils and clipboard & name tag

Items from Participant’s Flash drive specifically needed for this session:

- Session C Handouts
- Session B Homework
- USEF/AAEP Lameness Guide
- USDF Glossary
- Judge’s Checklist

USDF “L” Education Program Part 2: Candidate Evaluation

This part is designed for candidates who want to go beyond the educational Part 1: ‘A Judge’s Perspective’ and who are interested in judging schooling shows and eventually entering the USEF program to become approved “r” judges. Candidate Evaluation consists of session D-1, D-2, E, and the Final Exam. To take the Candidate Evaluation, candidates must find a GMO that offers it. Candidates may choose any program offered anywhere in this country, provided it has an opening, i.e. has less than 10 participants. (*Candidates should contact the USDF office for help to find openings*).

Candidates must be 18 years or older in order to participate in this portion of the ‘L’ Program, Part 2: ‘Candidate Evaluation.’

Session D-1- Judging Full Tests in Each of the Levels (12-14 hours total)

This session will be conducted on two days during a USDF-USEF recognized competition. The session is taught by one instructor. Participants will be asked to judge full tests. The instructor will discuss with the participants the scores and comments, as well as summaries made at the bottom of the tests. The candidates should complete a written self-evaluation. To keep and compare with the evaluation filled out by the instructor. The completed evaluation from the instructor will be sent to the USDF office and kept on file. However, a copy of it will be returned to the candidates for their information.

Candidates should bring:

- United States Equestrian Federation Rules:
 - General Rules (GR) and Dressage Division (DR)
 - Dressage Attire & Equipment Guide
 - USEF/AAEP Lameness Guide

- Diagrams, done by the participant, along with test sheets of all tests and of all levels.
- Notebook and clipboard & name tag
- D1 Self Evaluation and Tabulation sheet (found on “L” Flash drive)
- Ink pens (not pencils) and a red pen
- Calculator
- Their own scribe, if possible

Session D-2- Judging Full Tests in Each of the Levels (12-14 hours total)

This session will be conducted similarly to Session D-2 but with a bit more emphasis on a testing situation. This is done to prepare candidates for the final testing. As in Session D-1, candidates should complete a written self-evaluation to keep and compare with the evaluation filled out by the instructor. Subsequently, the instructors will fill out the D-2 evaluation. Instructor Evaluations, both the Session D-1 and D-2, are not cumulative but based upon a candidate’s performance at the specific session. The completed form will be sent to the USDF office and kept on file. However, a copy of it will be returned to the candidates for their information.

Session E- Scribing and Sitting

All scribing and sitting forms must be on record at the USDF office prior to taking the final exam.

Scribing:

Candidates must have scribed for at least three (3) different USEF licensed “R” or “S” judges, for a total of 12 hours. Scribing hours may be made up of smaller increments, just so the total is 12 hours. Scribing hours from schooling shows will count, provided the presiding judge has an USEF “R” or “S” rating. Scribing hours must be documented on the attached form and signed by the officiating judge. Candidates should keep one copy for their records and send a separate copy to the USDF Office to be recorded.

Sitting:

Candidates need to sit with any USEF-approved “R” or “S” judge for a minimum of 10 hours at an USDF/USEF recognized competition(s). Please note that 10 hours is the *minimum* requirement. It is recommended to sit more than the minimum required hours if it can be arranged with show management and the judge. The required hours may be accumulated in smaller increments with several different judges, just so the total is at least 10 hours. The participant must sit with a minimum of 2 different judges. These hours must be spent observing the judge judging any test at Training, First and Second levels. A minimum of 3 hours at each level is required.

Participants must obtain permission from the competition organizer and from the officiating judge prior to the competition date. The usual procedure is to first obtain permission from the show organizer, before asking permission from the judge. If a participant wants to sit with a particular judge, he/she may ask for that judge’s schedule and then contact

the appropriate show managers. **Candidates should not ask a judge to promise a sitting session without prior approval from show management.**

Participants should bring a variety of test sheets, a clipboard, and if possible, their own chair. The participants will sit in the judge's booth and watch the ride as the judge scores. The judge will set the pace for how much he/she wants to discuss the rides. Participants must not interrupt the judge or the competition. The judge's responsibility is focused on the competitors. However, candidates are encouraged to take notes and to begin compiling information for a notebook of judging vocabulary and comments. In accordance with USEF rules it is strongly recommended, for the purposes of the "L" Program that participants do not sit or scribe with a judge they will be riding in front of at that show.

There are two Evaluation Forms; one for the candidate, one for the USDF office. The forms are marked accordingly. Participants should bring both Session E Evaluation Forms for the judge to fill out and sign. They should also bring a letter sized envelope addressed to USDF and stamped envelope. The candidate will receive one form back for their own information. The judge will mail the completed 'Office' form to USDF in the Business-Reply envelope, provided by the participant. Candidates should check with the USDF office to make sure the sitting hours were sent in. If they were not sent in by the judge, it is the responsibility of the candidate to provide the office with a copy of the completed sitting form.

Final Examination

Candidates must complete all sessions and the USDF Office must have proof of all scribing and sitting hours to be eligible to take the Final Exam.

The final exam takes place at a USDF/USEF recognized dressage competition. The duration of the examination is approximately 1 1/2 to 2 days. The examination will include a written test, and a practical judging test with some oral questioning. The examiner will ask candidates questions during the rides. Please note: Candidates may be required to judge orally. Candidates will also judge tests consecutively as the show is scheduled.

The written test is a closed book exam which includes true/false & multiple choice questions. There are no short answers or essay questions. The questions are compiled primarily from the general and dressage section of the United States Equestrian Federation Rule Book, the USDF Glossary of Judging terms and from the teaching material of the "L" Program.

Candidates should bring:

- United States Equestrian Federation Rule Book
 - General Rules (GR) and Dressage Division (DR)
 - Dressage Attire & Equipment Guide
 - USEF/AAEP Lameness Guide
- Test sheets of all levels Training through Second with their own diagrams
- Notebook and clipboard & name tag
- Ink Pen for the practical test and a red pen
- Pencil for written test

- Calculator for tabulation of their own scores
- An experienced scribe (if possible)

Criteria for Passing the Examination:

Prior to the exam, the candidates must sign a waiver with a statement that they understand and acknowledge that the judging principles of dressage involve subjective elements, and that there is no guarantee that candidates will pass the final exam.

Candidates agree that they will neither protest the results of the exam nor will they attempt to contact any examiner for explanations or tutoring following the exam. Candidates will not receive dressage test score sheets back after final examination.

A passing score of 65% or higher on the practical exam and an 80% or higher on the written exam is required to become a successful graduate of the USDF “L” Education Program and to be listed on USDF’s recommended roster to judge schooling shows. Each graduate will receive a personalized USDF certificate.

The USEF requires a 70% score on the practical exam and an 80% score on the written exam in order to enter the United States Equestrian Federation “r” Dressage Judge Program. Contact USEF for further details. Those who pass the program with a 70% will receive a certificate stating that they have passed the examination “With Distinction”. Within a few weeks after the testing, participants will receive by mail from USDF the results of their examination.

Please note: After a successful graduation, candidates are referred to as “L” Graduates. “L” Graduates are NOT licensed dressage judges. Therefore, they may not advertise themselves as “L” judges.

Re-testing:

1. Candidates who have failed the written exam may repeat it outside a structured program but it must be done under the supervision of a person approved by the “L” faculty chair. This may be the regional director, a member of the “L” faculty or an otherwise approved individual.
2. Candidates who have failed to obtain the minimum passing score at the practical exam must repeat and complete Part 2; ‘Candidate Evaluation,’ including Session D1, Session D2, and Final Exam (written and practical portions).
3. Candidates who would like to attempt to raise their score to enter the USEF “r” program must repeat the Final Exam (written and practical portions).

It is recommended that Part 1: Sessions A, B, and C be audited before a candidate attempts to re-test, if more than 3 years have passed from last testing.

****If candidates achieve a lower score at the re-testing, in either the written or practical portion of the final exam, the new scores will count. If either score, written or practical is**

below the minimum passing score their name will be deleted from the list of “L” Graduates for schooling shows.

Ideas for Additional Educational Activities:

These ideas are intended for additional practice during the program, for preparation for re-testing, and for continuing education after completion of the program:

- Rent or buy DVDs/videos with dressage tests from USDF (www.usdf.org). Look at them and score the various movements. Example: “On the Levels”.
- Login to eTRAK, USDF’s On line Learning center. Use the Search words *L Prep*. There you will find videos to use for practice judging along with articles and Quick Study Guides that can be very helpful throughout the Part 1 and Part 2.
- Organize an informal D session, with an “L” Faculty member or a USEF “S” Judge, at a USEF licensed/USDF recognized show.
- Arrange for a mock show with students. It will give you the opportunity to judge and the student gets a chance to ride the test and to receive an evaluation.
- We strongly recommend that you go to a local show, sit on the side, practice-judge on your own and dictate to a scribe. Use the score board to compare your total scores and placings with those of the presiding judges. Practice-judge in at least 3 different shows and judge several full classes at each level and test, but especially at Second Level. Compare your results with at least 3 different presiding judges.
- Go to a local show with another candidate and alternate practice-judging out loud. Then both watch and discuss the ride, concentrating sometimes on the basics, other times on the collectives. At other times, actually judge the ride, taking turns judging and scribing so that experience is added in judging both in writing and orally. Have a contest to see who can first come up with the collective marks and the bottom summary.
- Attend “Judges’ Roundtable,” “Mini Forums” and related educational activity when offered in your region.
- Go to the USDF Annual Convention and attend the Judges’ Committee meetings and the Judges’ Roundtable.
- Audit the United States Equestrian Federation Dressage Forum whenever auditors are allowed.