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# CERTIFICATION **CHECKLIST**

FINDING THE CERTIFICATION THAT FITS YOU!

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EQUINE CONNECTION - THE  
ACADEMY OF EQUINE ASSISTED  
LEARNING

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# HOW TO USE THE CHECKLIST

Choosing an Equine Assisted Learning (EAL) Certification Course can be challenging. It's often difficult to know what to prioritize, what matters most, and how different trainings compare.

To help you make an informed decision, we've created this checklist. It provides the detailed information you need to determine if a course is right for you and will help you achieve your dream career.

The checklist is divided into four sections, and here are some explanations on what to consider for each one.

## COMPANY INFO

Get to know the organization certifying you. Consider how long they've been in business, and whether they operate locally or travel to your country. The currency they charge can also significantly impact costs. For instance, if you're in the USA and they charge in Canadian dollars, you could save money depending on the exchange rate. However, if they charge in Euros and you're in Australia, the cost could be higher.

Check what others say about them. Reviews can offer valuable insights. Were they positive or negative? Are the reviews recent or outdated? Take the time to research their reputation, especially regarding how they work with facilitators and how effective their courses are.

Equine Assisted programs are currently unregulated, meaning anyone can claim to certify others. Investigate whether the organization has a code of conduct, ethics, or a governing body. This can help you demonstrate to potential clients that you adhere to high standards of safety and professionalism.

Consider their website and social media presence. Many companies claim to offer training in business, marketing, and branding, but their own online presence can indicate whether they're truly qualified to teach those skills. If their website is lacking or they haven't updated their social media in months, they might not be the best choice for training in those areas.

Finally, ensure the organization actively runs programs in addition to certifying facilitators. By working with real clients, they continue to develop and refine their training and facilitation skills. If they're not running programs themselves, how can they effectively train you to market and run yours?

## HORSE WELFARE

Using horses is no way to get results, but rather working with horses as the teachers and understanding what they are saying is how to instill long-lasting learning that is compelling for your clients and safe for your horses. It's about learning the horse's language versus expecting him to understand and adhere to yours. We must thoroughly know how the horse communicates in every way. The welfare of the horse is paramount! We are proud to be

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partnering with Equine Guelph, the horse owner's Centre at the University of Guelph to promote the welfare of the horse at all times.

Unfortunately, there are many certifications who state that they take care of the full welfare of the horse, but are still falling short.

We have all been told to take care of feet, or basic teeth care, but the full welfare of the horse means more than that. It is understanding and ensuring the five freedoms of the horse:

- Freedom from Hunger and Thirst - by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigour.
- Freedom from Discomfort - by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area.
- Freedom from Pain, Injury and Disease - by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment.
- Freedom to Express Normal Behaviour - by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animal's own kind.
- Freedom from Fear and Distress - by ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering.

When evaluating an organization, carefully examine photos on their website or social media. Focus on the horse—does it look comfortable or stressed? This can indicate whether the organization truly prioritizes horse welfare. It's also essential to have a maintenance program in place, as clients may not always reinforce the correct habits in your horses. Regular training and care ensure that your horses continue to feel safe while working with you and your clients.

What are the expectations for your horses? Consider how many programs you plan to run weekly and what will keep your horses safe and well-maintained. We recommend not overworking your horses, with a maximum of one program per day. Overloading them could harm their welfare and negatively impact their well-being.

## THE COURSE

When browsing different certification websites, many may seem to offer similar programs and benefits. However, as you explore further, you'll notice that these courses can vary significantly, even if the wording sounds alike.

Regarding the course length, be cautious of certifications that claim you'll become an expert in just 5 days, 2 weeks, or even 3 months. Achieving expertise in equine-assisted learning takes years of practice, making ongoing support vital. Ensure you choose a certification that not only meets your current needs but also supports your growth 5, 10, or even 15 years from now. Be clear on what ongoing support entails for each program.

Additionally, find out if the course requires a clinician on-site or if you need to be a counsellor or therapist yourself. If you're already certified, great. However, if you need to bring in another counsellor, remember that you'll be dependent on someone else for your business. If the course certifies you in equine "therapy" without requiring you to be a licensed therapist, be cautious. While working with horses can be therapeutic, labeling your courses as therapy without the proper credentials is misleading and unethical.

Finally, check if the organization not only certifies people but also runs programs with clients. Actively participating in the work adds credibility to their equine-assisted learning programs.

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## BUSINESS/MARKETING TRAINING

A business package and training can mean many different things. If you market your certification incorrectly, it can be incredibly frustrating to attract the clients needed to see a return on your investment.

When evaluating the training offered, find out if the organization practices what they preach. Do they effectively market themselves? Do they have a strong brand and a professional online presence? If they claim to train you in these areas, ensure they can actually deliver. If they aren't successful in these aspects themselves, how will they teach you?

Also, clarify what their business training includes. Is there a comprehensive business package that will help you advance, or will you be left to develop your own strategies?

In conclusion, choosing the right Equine Assisted Learning (EAL) certification is a significant decision that can shape your future career. Take the time to thoroughly research and evaluate your options, ensuring that the program aligns with your goals, values, and the welfare of the horses you'll work with. Remember, a strong foundation in both practical skills and ethical practices is essential for long-term success. By asking the right questions and considering the key factors discussed, you'll be well-equipped to make an informed choice and embark on a fulfilling journey in this rewarding field.

We hope that this checklist will help you to navigate through your options for certification to guide you to the course that will get you where you want to be!




# CHECKLIST

## FINDING THE CERTIFICATION THAT FITS YOU!

### COMPANY INFO

|   | Equine<br>Connection -<br>The Academy Of<br>Equine Assisted<br>Learning             |  |  |  |
|---|---|--|--|--|
| • When were they established?                             | 2008  |  |  |  |
| • Where do they operate?                                  | International   |  |  |  |
| • Training location options                               | CAN, USA, AUS, NZ   |  |  |  |
| • What currency do they charge in?                        | CAN   |  |  |  |
| • Do they have positive reviews?                          |    |  |  |  |
| • Do they have a governing body?                          | ealnetwork.com  |  |  |  |
| • Do they have an active social media presence?           |   |  |  |  |
| • Do they have a professional website?                    |  |  |  |  |
| • Are you able to contact them easily?                    |  |  |  |  |
| • Do they currently run programs/ workshops with clients? |  |  |  |  |

### HORSE WELFARE

|  |   |  |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|--|
| • Do the horse pictures show a positive mental state?                |  |  |  |  |
| • Do they follow guidelines and ethics?                              |  |  |  |  |
| • Do they teach about FULL horse welfare?                            |  |  |  |  |
| • Do they have a horse maintenance plan?                             |  |  |  |  |
| • Do they recommend how often horses can be worked with in programs? |  |  |  |  |



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|   | Equine Connection - The Academy Of Equine Assisted Learning  |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|--|
| <b>THE COURSE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is the length of the course?</li> </ul>                         | 5 days online theory (or at own pace) and 3 days in-person training  |  |  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do you need to be a licensed clinician or have one present?</li> </ul>                 |  |  |  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the course online?</li> </ul>   | The theory component is online.  |  |  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the course in person?</li> </ul>  | In-person component; virtual option available if travel is not possible.   |  |  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is there free training and aftercare?</li> <li>If so, what does it include?</li> </ul> | <br>Private group for facilitator support, free training for life and the ability to re-attend in-person training. |  |  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Includes lesson plans/ curriculims?</li> </ul>   |  |  |  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are there ongoing yearly fees?</li> </ul>  |  |  |  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are they recognized with insurance companies?</li> </ul>                               |  |  |  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can you attend more free training in the future?</li> </ul>                            |  |  |  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is there an opportunity to work with real clients during training?</li> </ul>          |  |  |  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are there safety and ethics protocols for both humans and horses?</li> </ul>           |  |  |  |  |

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ealnetwork.com

- Is there up-to-date marketing training?
- Is there up-to-date business training?
- Is there opportunities to get a return on investment?
- Is there target market training?
- Is there online presence/branding training?
- Is there pricing training?
- Does their brand demonstrate their credibility to train you in these areas?



# Don't just take our word for it...

“EC never stops looking for ways to improve... because of your dedication to this very special work and because you have built something incredible, and want people to succeed!”

EC is the absolute BEST with its training and passing on knowledge and updated materials to their facilitators and clients. I know all our horses will truly appreciate the improved way that humans will be working with them through the human's body language and no more pulling on the horse's head!

- Beverly Birtley

This certification provides the best knowledge of how to utilize the horses natural way of communicating. It helps me to facilitate the objectives and to parallel back to my clients in a way that their teacher is able to communicate clearly and effectively to them. Equine Connection (EC) is amazing for implementing this new way of working with horses in that they are always striving to ensure that the safety and welfare of the horses is #1! If there are new proven ways they ensure that the facilitators certified through them are up to date in all areas, and that our amazing teachers are understood. The EC have spent hours and time ensuring that this new way of working with horses works, and have implemented it into their BuildingBlock Objectives. It allows us 110% to our understand our horses and connect to them in the language they speak. Thank You!!!

- Cathy Wiltsie

The Equine Connection continues to share new knowledge with all of us, keeping us moving forward, updated, and continually learning. The three energies in particular honor our horses as our teachers and will improve their mindsets and overall well-being.

What I appreciate the most at Equine Connection are the following three things:

1. The welfare of the horse is the heart and center, the absolute priority in their programs. They continuously seek professional help from top experts of the industry, follow the newest research and make adaptations within their programs, if there is any chance for improvement.
2. The incredible and ongoing support system and accessibility for their global team. It is a family, we're in this together.
3. The huge portfolio of work material, course material, training videos, documentation, handouts, flipcharts, booklets, posters, flyers, marketing material, etc. that you have access to and that you can use for your own company and your own programs is simply amazing. And they keep producing, updating and improving always. It is an unbelievable added value.

- Deborah Hofmann Nogueira

This certification has really helped me move forward because it's all laid out in front of you. Everything from the curriculum to workplace. You have lots of support and many experienced facilitators to help. I've set goals and have been able to surpass them all. It's the best feeling.

- Krista Hill

“This organization is always growing and working to make our horses welfare top priority and keep its facilitators up to date in their training! It's why I picked this company to certify with!”

- Gwen Donohoe



This certification has been instrumental in the success of Spur'n Up Hope and in the growth of our program!

I love that Equine Connection continues to look for new ways for us to work with our horses better and help us learn to better communicate with them in ways they understand. These new techniques also assist us in better assisting our clients to learn from our Horse Teachers.

- Lee Williams

Becoming certified with Equine Connection has completely changed my life and helped me forge a new path helping others and sharing the power of horses. Without it I would not be where I am today. With the very best curriculum and certification behind I feel confident running my business.

- Sarah Reid

This certification has helped me understand not only people better but also my wonderful horses. It has helped me with me job (working with dysregulated children) with my personal relationships and helped me to help others. Doing what I love. Being with our amazing horse teachers and children. I have been able to help my former students grow in ways I never could within the classroom walls. I've also helped friends and family members see toxic traits and habits. This new program will only help me to continue this progress and help my clients achieve an even higher level of self awareness that they are seeking.

Equine Connection is continually researching, developing, and adapting to our ever changing world. They put our teachers, the horses first, that means as research evolves, we need to stay current and adjust with the research as it is our honor to be accepted and trusted by the horses. I commend them for continually looking at innovative ways to make our programs top notch while always keeping the horses well being at the forefront.

- Meg Lago

This certification helps me move forward by everyone inspiring us to get out of our comfort zone. It also feels awesome to be able to help people through our beautiful horses.

As humans we should try to always be willing to learn and see things from different perspectives. I think you guys have showed you are true heroes for doing this. When you know better, you do better.

- Sherry Heldmann

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There are no other EAL's in my area and I am finally getting the exposure I have been working at for 3 years. Our area is very deficient in mental health or family services agencies. The certification is the only reason they will have a discussion with me because they can't fathom how horses will help people.

You are always available to answer questions, so very patient and above all, very generous with your support and creativity to adapt situations. You are also the best cheerleaders I have ever met.

- Patricia Stacey

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This certification created an opportunity for self reflection and in the process of developing my facilitation skills I was able to advance my teaching skills as well. I now incorporate both teaching and facilitation in my riding instruction and have an avenue for individuals who are unable to ride or who are afraid to ride to still get the benefit of horse time for personal development. It also gives my horses who are not able or willing to be ridden anymore a job they enjoy.

Equine Connection demonstrates through their business model that they are more interested in developing people and spreading awareness of horse welfare than they are in simply making money from a concept.

- Amy Waterbury

Achieving this certification has been absolutely inspirational! The motivation to get going immediately is immeasurably valuable, and the helpfulness of the 'family' of facilitators has been outstanding. With this certification under my belt, I believe my goals for early retirement from a full-time desk job are achievable! Equine Connection has cemented together other disparate principles of working with horses that I have been experimenting with. The focus on horses being 'teachers' and the positive outcomes that are stressed and demonstrated throughout the course are instrumental in building confidence in offering these services in the community. The support of the Equine Connection instructors and family at large cannot be quantified!

- Lucinda Lunstrum

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You ladies are just the absolute best people to have come into my life and have helped me more than words can express. I hope to make that difference for others.

- Sarah Wise

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As a recent graduate of the certificate program, I have found that I have all the tools I need. There is A LOT of information and it takes commitment to get through it all. However, with each accomplished step, I am more confident that I have everything I need, both inside and outside to successfully launch and provide and hold space for people to reach their next best self through the power of our teachers, our horses. I have been working on my EAL dream for over two years and while I was ready to support people in this capacity, I didn't have all the business tools or all the connections needed to see the program I want to create. I started my Equine Connection certification about two months ago and I have so many tools and support. Those are the missing ingredients to move forward that I haven't had over the last two years with another certification programs that I took.

I love that the ladies at Equine Connection, even after doing this work for over a decade, keep their mind open to improvements that allow us to do better for horses and humans and are willing to continue to evolve. I have been teaching energy work with horses to volunteers over the last two years and it is life-changing when you look at the impact our energy has on each horse and the herd as a whole. My experience as a volunteer barn manager allowed me to try out the concepts and ideas of how energy shifts and moves in both positive and negative ways. Those parallels were powerful and empowered my team to own their own energy and its impact. This is big stuff. If we can push or pull 1300 lbs with the position of our bodies, which we can, imagine what we can do in our personal and professional lives? Thank you guys for your willingness to take us all to our next best self.

- Shawn Paul

This certification has allowed me to combine my two passions - education and horses - and to begin a new life journey and business. It has also helped me to understand my horses better, and deepen my relationship with my own horses.

I love that the new way of working with horses is all about listening to the horse and being respectful of the horse, more than even before. And that central to it all is the welfare of our amazing teachers.

- Tracey Hoffrichter

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Being Certified with Equine Connection has helped me move forward in my business with continuing support by the whole team as well as fellow facilitators. Even though this is my business and I am self employed I feel so supported. If I have questions or need advice, the support is at our fingertips with Workplace.

- Brittany Burns

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This certification empowers me to be my best self for my horses, for my clients, and for my personal growth. This is definitely a one of a kind certification. I am able to do what I love and earn a living while doing so is the icing on the cake.

I was drawn to Equine Connection because of the reputation they have for putting the horses first.. ALWAYS. This new way of working with horses confirms that I made the right choice. These beautiful animals deserve for the horse industry to evolve in the way we work with them.

- Tonya O'Shaughnessy

Getting certified has given me the knowledge and self awareness, that I can stand tall with confidence and succeed having my own business, working with my horses everyday!! I absolutely love what my horses and I can offer to my community ... I know in my heart, I have seen & experienced that this education is based in integrity, morals and high standards!! And that means the world to me, I take great pride saying I'm a Certified EAL Facilitator with Equine Connection!!

- ShariLea Schmidt

Equine connection is constantly developing these marvellous programs and ALWAYS with the welfare of the horse in mind. That is very important to me as facilitator!

- Johanna Frieberg

This certification has helped me improve myself and my thinking, while also giving me the opportunity to help others become more confident, build trust, and communicate more clearly. It's truly rewarding to be able to say, "I have a program that can help you or your child."

In a world where humans are becoming more and more disconnected, it's wonderful to have a way to ground them/us and assist with personal self-awareness.

- Meg Lago

They are very progressive and helpful and they want a better world for horses so that we can recognize that horses should not be treated like they don't have a voice.

- Sandra Kajan



[www.equineconnection.ca](http://www.equineconnection.ca)  
403.560.1153