

EQUINE STUDIES



LAKE ERIE
COLLEGE

Equine Studies Student and Rider Eligibility Standards

The School of Equine Studies at Lake Erie College strives to educate and produce highly qualified individuals for professional positions in the equine industry. Minimum standards for equine studies student requirements have been established to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our students, riders, horses and instructors. All students engaged in riding and barn activities at the college are required to meet and maintain these minimum standards to be eligible to ride and work with horses. Students enrolling in riding classes, participating in intercollegiate riding teams, taking riding lessons and riding boarded horses are required to possess riding skills and physical abilities that will enable them to safely and effectively perform in riding activities at a variety of levels.

Equine Studies Student Standards:

Physical ability expectations are established to protect the safety and wellbeing of our equine studies students as well as the horses and instructors in our programs. All students at Lake Erie College participating in mounted riding activities and barn activities with college-owned or boarded horses must meet the following minimum standards at all times¹. Students unable to meet these standards will be ineligible to participate in all activities in the barns or arenas except classroom lectures and observations.

- Able to safely mount a horse from an approved mounting block, unassisted, with their leg clearing the croup and their saddle remaining centered.
- Understand and readily respond to verbal instructions while on horseback. Hearing impaired students must be able to understand and respond to verbal instructions without assistance.
- Understand instructions without having to make visual contact with the instructor or take their eyes off course.
- Able to effectively warn other persons of their approach or position in the riding ring or on the ground. Speech impaired students must be able to verbalize a warning without assistance, regardless of impairment.
- Able to judge the distance between themselves and other horses in the ring, as well as judge the distance between themselves and any jumps or obstacles in the ring.

¹ Invited community riders in therapeutic riding or therapeutic horsemanship classes are excluded from these requirements.

- Able to easily bend at the hip and rise into the standard half-seat position for at least two revolutions of the 250 foot by 100 foot indoor arena.
- Able to ride at the posting trot for at least two revolutions of the 250 foot by 100 foot indoor arena without becoming winded, dizzy, light-headed, faint or in pain.
- Able to perform all routine horsemanship tasks either in the saddle or on the ground without losing balance, falling, becoming dizzy, light-headed, faint or be in pain.
- Able to bend, twist, squat and lift to clean stalls, pick up and hold horse's hooves, apply leg bandages, saddle horses and accomplish other routine horsemanship tasks without assistance.
- Able to correctly catch, halter, groom, bridle and saddle without physical assistance.
- Able to push a loaded wheelbarrow weighing 75 pounds for a distance of at least 500 feet on asphalt.
- Able to carry a full 5-gallon water bucket at least 50 feet and lift it to shoulder level.
- Able to vigorously groom a horse for a continuous 15 minutes
- Able to hold and properly control standard grooming equipment including but not limited to curry combs, brushes, sweat scrapers, mane and tail combs, braiding equipment, hoof pick and other similar equipment.
- Able to participate in general barn chores such as cleaning stalls, sweeping the barn, cleaning water buckets and feeding horses.
- Able to work regularly in barn or arena conditions where dust, hay, horse hair, grasses and other animal and farm factors are prevalent and understand that these factors cannot be controlled or reduced.
- Students must not be pregnant while riding or while working directly with or around horses.

Rider Fitness Standards:

Students who wish to ride horses at Lake Erie College will be required to take a rider fitness test at the beginning of each semester. This applies to riding in riding classes for academic credit, riding on an equestrian team, taking riding lessons, recreational riding and riding boarded horses. Rider fitness tests will be conducted at the Jerome T. Osborne Family Athletic & Wellness Center during the first two weeks of fall classes and spring classes. Assessment will be on a pass/fail basis. Students who pass the fitness test will be eligible to ride that semester. Students who do not pass the fitness test will be ineligible to ride that semester and may re-test to determine eligibility to ride in the subsequent semester.

The rider fitness test consists of these standards:

1. Run one mile in a maximum time of 15 minutes.
2. Hold a plank position on elbows for one minute.
3. Maintain a wall squat at 90 degrees seated angle for one minute.
4. Complete 30 sit-ups with bent knees, elbows to knees, in a maximum time of 4 minutes.

Rider Size:

Equine science and performance horse industry standards conclude that the maximum weight bearing capacity of a performance horse is 20% of its body weight.^{2,3} Dr. Sue Dyson, Head of Clinical Orthopaedics at the Animal Trust's Centre for Equine Studies in Newmarket, presented a landmark study on March 8, 2018 showing that asking horses to carry heavy to very heavy riders causes lameness in horses.⁴ Factors that further restrict weight bearing include horse breed and type, age, condition, performance expectations and training in addition to rider abilities, fitness and level of experience. Lake Erie College is committed to promoting equine welfare and advocating for safety and high standards in equine education. We recognize that horses who are expected to perform carrying more than 20% of their body weight may be considered abused animals. Riders must be matched with horses of the correct size, abilities and training to meet the needs of the student.

Riders weighing over 200 pounds and riders whom have minimal riding experience face limited opportunities at Lake Erie College for riding horses appropriately matched for their size and abilities. Riders over 240 pounds are ineligible to ride. A rider and tack may not weigh over 20% of a horse's body weight. Students entering the program with specific requirements for horses of a certain size or type should realize that such horses may not be available every semester and this could impede their progress in the program.

² Debra M. Powell, Karen Bennett-Wimbush, Amy Peebles and Maria Duthie. 2008. [Evaluation of Indicators of Weight-Carrying Ability of Light Riding Horses](#). Journal of Equine Veterinary Science. 28(1): 28-33.

³ Bonner, L. Equus Magazine, 2008. How Much Weight Can Your Horse Safely Carry? Retrieved from https://equusmagazine.com/management/weight_carry_062608

⁴ Dyson, S, Ellis, A, Guire, R, Douglas, J, Bondi, A, Harris, P. 2018. [The influence of rider to horse bodyweight ratios on equine gait and behaviour: a pilot study](#). 26th National Equine Forum, Westminster, London.