



APPRENTICE JUDGE GUIDELINES

The following policies have been established by the AHA Judges and Stewards Commissioner and the AHA Education/Evaluation Commission for apprentice judges. This document is meant to augment the USEF Apprentice Guidelines, not replace them.

USEF Apprentice Guidelines

- Read the **USEF Apprentice Guidelines** first.

Pre-requisites

- Apprentice judging cannot start until all USEF [Eligibility Requirements](#) are met and your checklist initiated through the USEF website. DO NOT start the USEF checklist until you have attended the Exhibitors/Judges School, and have fulfilled all Eligibility Requirements.
 - The USEF time frame is three (3) years from initiating the process through their portal until you complete and pass the AHA Evaluation/Testing.
- You can schedule an apprenticeship while you are completing these requirements, but the actual apprenticeship cannot happen until after all Eligibility requirements are met. Double check with USEF Licensed Officials Department to verify: loinquiry@usef.org

Finding Shows – communication with show managers and judges.

- You must receive permission to apprentice from the show management first, and then from the judge. If for some reason you cannot attend a competition where you were accepted as an apprentice, notify both the manager and the judge as soon as possible so that if a second person is waiting for an opportunity.
 - Contact the show manager first – ask if they have hired an “R” judge and, if so, then request permission to attend as an apprentice. If it is a multi-day show, be clear on which days you would like to apprentice.
 - Larger shows with multiple judges often have policies about not having apprentices, partly due to the number of people in the ring and safety of everyone involved and partly for fairness to the exhibitor to not have an overcrowded ring. Respect their decisions.
 - The no apprentice policy may be for the entire show or for only those classes having multiple judges. Specialty rings (trail, reining, etc.) may be available to an apprentice even if main ring classes are not.
- After receiving permission from the show manager, contact the “R” judge, and provide background information if the judge does not already know you. Judges are not required to accept apprentices; there could be multiple reasons a judge declines having an apprentice at a particular show. Again, respect their decision should they say no to your request.

- **New, effective 12/1/2025** Arabian shows are exempt from the USEF rules allowing only one apprentice in the ring at any given time. For a concurrent show, if both judges are “R”, each judge can have an apprentice in the ring with them.
- Please apprentice with no more than one member of the Education and Evaluation Commission. (EEC) and at only one competition.
- At least one apprenticeship needs to be at a show outside of your AHA region.
- Apprenticeships are counted in days, not strictly the number of competitions. The guideline is that an apprentice day is six hours or more.
- Look at past prize lists to see the variety of classes offered, making sure you cover a wide range of classes, including all Equitation seats, Showmanship, and Working Western along with pleasure and in-hand classes, including Performance Halter.
- Search the USEF calendar for approved Arabian shows – you can apprentice at either USEF regular and /or USEF Competition Lite shows.
 - Searches can be customized by state, date range, or USEF region (not the same as AHA region)
- Plan to apprentice all the classes assigned to the judge with whom you are working and for the entire show, if possible.
- Apprentice judges are not permitted at AHA regional or national championship shows.
- Apprentice judges are permitted at an AHA regional pre-show.
- Concurrent USEF shows
 - If you apprentice at a concurrent show with the judges for both shows, each day can only be counted once.
 - If both judges are ‘R’, then both judges’ evaluations will be counted. If one judge is a ‘r’, then the experience will be considered as additional experience rather than part of the required apprenticing.
- If you apprentice only specialty classes (i.e. Trail, Ranch Riding, Reining) at a show, the day(s) will count but you will need to make sure additional days are apprenticed elsewhere to keep a good balance of types of classes.
- AHA Value Shows DO NOT count towards the apprentice requirements but can be used for additional experience.
- We have developed an Apprentice Tracking form to help you track the classes and competitions where you apprentice. <https://www.arabianhorses.org/judges-stewards/judge/> Use of this form is optional but recommended so you can see at a glance whether or not you have a apprenticed a wide range of classes.

Conduct and USEF Conflict of interest rules

- The Apprentice Judge must in all instances adhere to the same ethical, appearance and conflict of interest standards as the registered judge. Any comments or remarks made to you by the registered judge while in the ring are confidential. Do not repeat comments about the entries, exhibitors or others to anyone, most particularly the exhibitors. Violations of any of the rules regarding ethical, conflict of interest or confidentiality are subject to charges being filed by the Commissioner. Read the apprentice rules in Chapter 10 of the USEF Rule Book.

- When apprentice judging you should conduct yourself the same as if you were listed as a judge in the prize list. You should dress appropriately, not bring friends with you into the ring, and conduct yourself with the exhibitors as if you were the actual judge at the show.
- Ask the judge where they would like you to stand while apprenticing during the classes. You are not the judge's shadow; it should be obvious to the spectators and exhibitors that there is **no** communication between the apprentice and the official judge during the judging of a class. Be conscious of not interfering with the judge's line of sight during the class.
- Do not expect the competition to pay for your meals, transportation, lodging or any other amenities. This is part of your own expense.
- Do not put yourself in a position where show management may be embarrassed and feel obligated to pay for your meals or any other expenses.
- Do not discuss the classes you are apprentice judging with the registered judge until after the judge has turned the card into the scorekeeper or ringmaster.
- Unless there is an emergency situation, do not plan on scribing for the official judge. This is your opportunity to score these classes.
- You cannot compete at the same show where you are an apprentice, nor can others listed in the Chapter 10 rules for apprentices.

What to bring with you.

- Class cards or notepad? Apprentices don't typically need class cards and the show does not usually provide a set to the apprentice. Using a notepad with one page per class is a good way to organize your evaluation of the exhibitors during each class.
 - Have a list of all the class specifications with you.
- The current [Evaluation form](#) from either the USEF website or the AHA website.
- Rain gear and appropriate outerwear for the facility and time of year. You will be on your feet for a long time so comfortable shoes are recommended!
- USEF and other rule books as appropriate for the specific competition. Download the most current versions prior to arriving at the competition.
- Patterns & Score Sheets for the classes being offered

Evaluation Form.

- If you have any questions about apprenticing in general, please contact the USEF Licensed Officials Department at loinquiry@usef.org.
- If your questions relate to Arabian specific apprenticing, you can also contact the Judges & Stewards Commissioner's Office JudgesSteward@arabianhorses.org
- ALL USEF/AHA apprentice forms MUST be uploaded to the portal, preferably within a week after the competition. If you receive an evaluation you are not too happy with, it is still an official evaluation and must be submitted. Use it as a learning tool to improve your skills! You cannot 'pick and choose' the evaluations to submit!!
- When you do upload the apprentice forms, please combine all three pages into one document rather than uploading the pages one at a time. There are multiple methods of scanning and combining document pages.
- Take advantage of the Apprentice Tracking Form developed to assist apprentices in tracking the number of horses they have evaluated in various classes. This form does not need to be

submitted to USEF or to AHA, it is strictly a tool to help you see where the 'holes' are in the variety of classes you are apprenticed or the number of horses you have evaluated.

https://www.arabianhorses.org/export/content.export/judges-stewards/js-docs/JS_Apprentice_Judge_Tracking_Form.pdf