



# 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 Are the reviews recent or outdated?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 instil 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. At the end of this How To Use The Checklist guide, you will see who pictures outlining what to look for when assessing the pictures.

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?

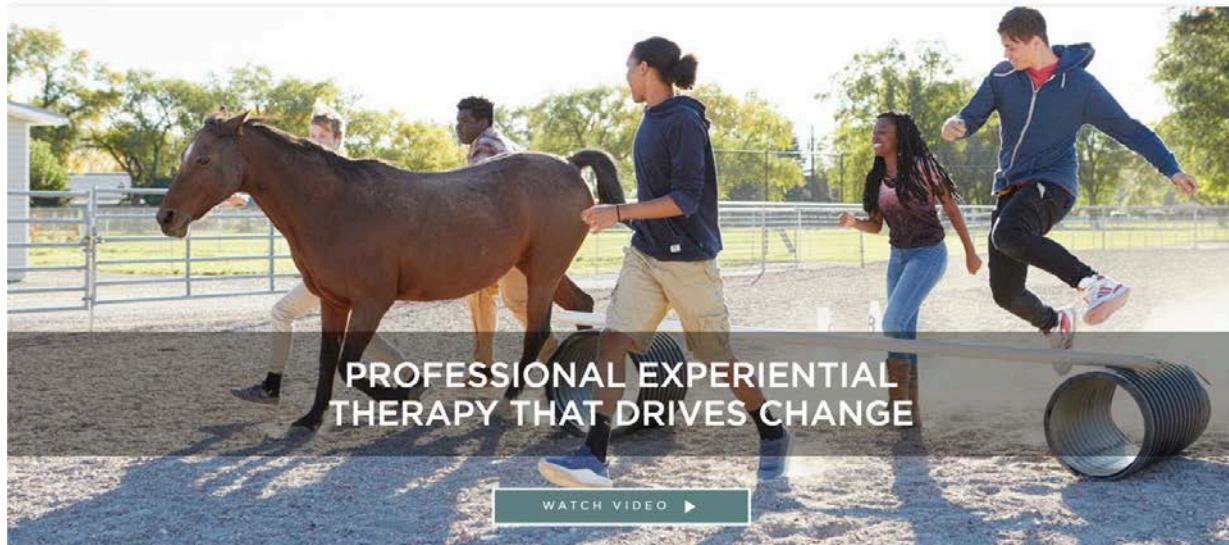
In conclusion, choosing the right Equine Assisted Learning (EAL) certification is a significant decision that can shape your future career. Take the time to thoroughly research and evaluate your options, ensuring that the program aligns with your goals, values, and the welfare of the horses you'll work 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!

### PICTURES MATTER!

Take a look at the pictures on the next page in order. In the first photo, what are you looking at? The horse or the people? In the second picture, do you see the difference?

Looks like a happy picture, right?



Now look at just the horse... is it a happy picture?



### What should you be looking for....

A medium or low head, soft eyes - without wrinkles, listening ears, soft nostrils, soft muscles and, loose tail... just for a few examples. Take the two pictures below. When you look at the body language you can see the difference! And if companies aren't paying attention to that detail in their marketing, maybe they aren't taking it into account in their training either.



# CHECKLIST

## FINDING THE CERTIFICATION THAT FITS YOU!

Equine Connection - The Academy Of Equine Assisted Learning

### COMPANY INFO

• 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>				
• What is the length of the course?	5 days online theory (or at own pace) and 3 days in-person training			
• Do you need to be a licensed clinician or have one present?	✗			
• Is the course online?	The theory component is online.			
• Is the course in person?	In-person component; virtual option available if travel is not possible.			
• Is there free training and aftercare?  If so, what does it include?	✓ Private group for facilitator support, free training for life and the ability to re-attend in-person training.			
• Includes lesson plans/curriculums?	✓			
• Are there ongoing yearly fees?	✗			
• Are they recognized with insurance companies?	✓			
• Can you attend more free training in the future?	✓			
• Is there an opportunity to work with real clients during training?	✓			
• Are there safety and ethics protocols for both humans and horses?	✓			

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# Equine Connection - The Academy Of Equine Assisted Learning

## BUSINESS/MARKETING TRAINING

- 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?



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