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## INTRODUCTION

The Australian Trail Horse Riders Association supports any activity that improves the knowledge and skills of its members such that the inherent risks associated with horse riding are minimised.

ATHRA's Accreditation program is one such activity. The following documents relating to this program are available at [www.athra.com.au](http://www.athra.com.au) > *Forms & Info*:

IMS-F-21	Accreditation Course Participant Application
IMS-GU-010	Hosting an Accreditation Course
IMS-GU-012	Renewal of Member Accreditation Certification
IMS-GU-018	Accreditation Training Program
IMS-GU-041	Accreditation Course Outline
IMS-R-002	National Accreditation Register

This Guideline document provides recommendations to ATHRA clubs seeking to conduct horse and rider education sessions for their members, aimed at improving their horsemanship skills and safe riding practices. Novice riders and those lacking confidence on a horse are regarded as particularly important 'targets' for education sessions organised by clubs.

## CLUB APPOINTED INSTRUCTORS

Clubs seeking to conduct horse and rider education sessions should appoint one or more appropriately qualified Club instructors, ideally individuals who have been certified through ATHRA's Accreditation program as well as a Trail Boss.

Clubs should ensure that an accurate record is maintained by the club regarding their appointed instructors, the dates of the education sessions and the names of the attendees.

## CLUB INSTRUCTOR COMPETENCIES

Club Instructors should:

- Have a thorough knowledge of ATHRA's Code of Conduct;
- The ability to communicate effectively;
- The ability to practice what they instruct;
- The ability to train horses in a safe and humane way;
- Be able to demonstrate the safest way of controlling a horse;
- Have a good knowledge of equipment and tack with correct fitting and use.

## EDUCATION SESSION DESIGN

The primary focus of an education session should be: horse control, and how to obtain, maintain and regain it.

ATHRA recommends that sessions be designed to address the following critical areas:

- Correct selection, fitment and use of equipment, e.g. saddle, bridle, halter, lead rope, and all other horse related tack;
- Rider training in horse control, correct seat, use of reins and leg aids;

- Conditioning of the horse;
- Horse care and welfare.

### EDUCATION SESSION ENVIRONMENT

- All education sessions should be conducted within a fully contained area, fully fenced with no direct access to the public, a public road or public walkway;
- The surface of the area to be used must be level and in good condition, not be slippery, boggy or uneven by way of holes or deep ruts;
- Star picket posts and barbed wire must not be used as a perimeter fence;
- Attendees should be limited to a maximum of twelve (12) students per Instructor;
- The area to be used must be large enough to ensure the safety of horse and rider at all times. As a guide, twelve should have a total area of at least 360 square metres (eg 60 metres x 60 metres), which will provide 15 square metres per student;
- It is recommended that all students under instruction wear an approved and current riding safety helmet. As noted in ATHRA's Code of Conduct, it is mandatory for all members under 18 years to wear an approved and current riding helmet;
- Horses used must be physically and mentally capable of coping with instruction. Horses four (4) years of age and under should only be used by suitably experienced members;
- All gear used on horses must be in good condition and fit for purpose. The minimum requirements are a saddle and bridle;
- Bitted and/or appropriate bitless bridles must be used by all participants during education sessions. The use of a headstall is permitted, although a secondary means of control is recommended;
- Bareback riding or riding pads are not permitted during education sessions.

### INSURANCE

Coverage under ATHRA's insurance policies requires the education session to be sanctioned by the club in the same way as a trail ride – the Club Executive must approve the event and record the approval in minutes, newsletter or noted on a Club Ride Calendar.

Further information on insurance for Instructors is detailed at Item 6 in IMS-FAQ-002 Frequently Asked Insurance Questions, available on ATHRA's website.