

## **Conducting Step 9 Clinics (Final Examination) NHC Practitioner CP Status**

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Step 9 is the final step in our training and certification program for Natural Hoof Care Practitioners. The student's TC Leader has evaluated his or her training reports, queried the student for their personal opinion if they are ready or not for Step 9, and made the call to recommend them for final examination. Now it's up to you to find out if they've made the grade, and are worthy of the much coveted CP status.

What OCC wants in Step 9 is evidence that students can render excellent trims on reasonably "normal" hooves, in fact, well-transitioned hooves. It is of paramount importance that students know what transitioned hooves are, and that they know how to sustain them consistently over time. This will be the main thrust of their practices as CPs, and so it is vitally important that we know that they know what to do, and why trimming to our Guidelines make this possible for all horses, in all environments and in every circumstance without exception. Lacking certainty and confidence here will surely lead the student to failure when confronted with severely deformed hooves that will require unwavering, expert execution of our Guidelines to reap success. If the clinician wishes to have the Step 9 student trim such extreme hooves, they should be fewer and "in addition to" more normal hooves trimmed — and students should demonstrate a clear understanding of how to trim them and why the Guidelines apply in all instances.

Please note that the AANHCP leadership now projects that an advanced training and certification program may be needed to curb the widespread fear students have of trimming acutely deformed and other extreme problematic hooves. This program will occur necessarily within the context of a veterinary medical format.

Things OCC is looking for:

Is the student reasonably familiar with our required learning materials? Feel free to query them on what you consider to be important or key pieces of information gathered from each text. If a student confides they haven't read our required texts, for example, they have no business becoming certified. If a student demonstrates that they have little or no understanding of our required learning materials, they have no business becoming certified.

It is recommended that students trim and "notch" several cadaver hooves, as though they were in a NT Workshop, and also trim one or two live horses. It is not necessary for students to trim more than this to ascertain if they are able to trim in accordance with our model and the Guidelines. We are looking for quality, reasonable timeliness, and depth of understanding — not quantity or speed for speed's sake. Students should be able to explain the purpose of booting, but they are not required to boot a horse in the examination.

Students should be queried about their understanding of 4th-Dimensional changes in the hoof (ref. Jackson's Bulletin #108). Do they understand that these changes must occur naturally (e.g., through consistent trimming, natural boarding, etc.) over time, and must never be forced (e.g., by invasive methods)?

Quiz the student regarding any facet of the 6-Step Method: do they understand the ordering of the trim? For example, that “flare” must be removed before turning the Mustang Roll, and that it must be gauged from underneath the hoof? Do they know that they MR must always be turned outside the Water Line? And that both heels should endure active contact with the ground? Can they differentiate H°TL from B°TL? Students who do not know the answer to such basic questions have no right to CP status.

Discuss diet issues with students. Have they read Jackson’s book, *Founder*? Are they aware of the potentially deadly risks associated with carbohydrate-rich feeds and seasonal green-grass pastures? Have they read Jackson’s *Paddock Paradise*?

Does the student have a clear understanding of safe horse-handling techniques? Can they position themselves under the horse safely, and without aggravating or compromising the horse’s sense of balance?

If you evaluate them on your client’s horses, does the student behave professionally? Is the student prepared — arrives with workable tools and equipment, proper clothing (e.g., gloves, etc.)?

After completing the examination, file your evaluation report with our Records Administrator.

In conclusion, as you are the gatekeeper of AANHCP’s coveted and prestigious CP status, it is incumbent upon you to “hold the line” and make every effort to ascertain the student’s worthiness of this honor. Students who cannot clearly demonstrate competence and who cannot explain why what they are doing works, will harbor no genuine pride in being certified. Without this, it will mean nothing to the horse-using community either, and horses will suffer as a result of our neglect. Happily, our training program is an excellent one — with the best model ever, and excellent learning materials backed by knowledgeable Clinicians, Instructors, TC Leaders, and administrators who do care and take pride in their roles as trainers and facilitators. With such a phenomenal line-up, it’s hard to see why any student would fail.

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If you have any questions, suggestions or concerns about the Training Cell Program and your responsibilities, please contact Michael Stelske.