

PET PARTNERS TEAM EVALUATION

Skills Exercises for Equines

Review the Handler's Questionnaire Form

- ▶ You meet the team evaluator and the evaluator's assistants.
- ▶ The evaluator reviews your handler's questionnaire.
- ▶ You share with the evaluator how your horse signals to you that it needs a break or that it's time to leave.

Accepting a Friendly Stranger*

- ▶ You and the evaluator greet each other and shake hands.
- ▶ The evaluator looks at but doesn't touch your horse.
- ▶ The evaluator walks around behind your team and then returns to his or her starting place.
- ▶ Your horse may change position but must remain next to you.

Accepting Petting

- ▶ The evaluator approaches again and pets your horse on the head, neck or back.
- ▶ Your horse may change position but must remain next to you.
- ▶ Your horse must willingly accept petting.

Appearance and Grooming*

- ▶ The evaluator feels your horse's coat and looks at its eyes, ears and nose.
- ▶ The evaluator slides a hand from a shoulder, down the leg, to the pastern area.
- ▶ The evaluator picks up and holds each front foot separately.
- ▶ The evaluator lightly brushes your horse on the neck, side of the body, rump, legs, belly and tail.
- ▶ Your horse may change position but must accept handling.

Out for a Walk*

- ▶ The evaluator explains what path to walk along.
- ▶ Your team will be asked to stop twice during the walk.
- ▶ Your horse must walk on a loose lead with its attention on you.
- ▶ Your horse may show interest in the environment but may not shy away; it must be responsive to your cues.

Walk Through a Crowd*

- ▶ The evaluator explains what path to walk along.
- ▶ Three assistants will walk through the area that you're walking through.
- ▶ You proactively navigate the crowd.
- ▶ Your horse must walk on a loose lead with its attention on you; it may not approach for visits independently.
- ▶ Your horse may show interest in its environment but may not shy away; it must be responsive to your cues.

Reaction to Distractions

- ▶ The evaluator explains what path to walk along.
- ▶ There will be two distractions, a visual one in front of your team and an auditory one behind your team.
- ▶ Your horse must walk on a loose lead with its attention on you.
- ▶ Your horse may express curiosity; if it startles, it should recover promptly.

Stay in Place*

- ▶ You cue your horse to stay.
- ▶ You walk to the end of your horse's lead rope, at least 4 feet away.
- ▶ You pause for 30 seconds and then return to your horse.
- ▶ Your horse may change the position of two hooves but must stay.

Reaction to a Neutral Dog

- ▶ Your team faces a neutral dog team at a distance of about 10 feet; both animals are on the outside.
- ▶ Both teams approach each other, stop when you're an arm's length apart, so that you and the other handler can exchange a greeting, and then keep walking.
- ▶ The entire exercise lasts no more than 10 seconds.
- ▶ Your horse may move its head to get a better view of the dog.
- ▶ Your horse may not stretch its head and neck across you to approach the dog.
- ▶ Your horse may not show aggression or excessive fear.

Aptitude Exercises for Equines

Overall Examination*

- ▶ The evaluator makes eye contact with your horse and then exposes it to physical handling to assess its reaction to being touched in different areas; for example, the evaluator slides a hand from your horse's rump, down a back leg, to the pastern area, lifts its tail and gently pulls its tail.
- ▶ Your horse must willingly accept handling.

Exuberant and Clumsy Petting*

- ▶ The evaluator simulates petting by someone with limited mobility and poor motor skills.
- ▶ The evaluator also uses a high-pitched or squeaky voice and makes strange noises while interacting with your horse.
- ▶ Your horse must willingly accept petting.

Restraining Hug*

- ▶ The evaluator makes eye contact with your horse and then leans in and gives it a full-body hug around the neck and shoulder that restricts it for no more than 15 seconds.
- ▶ Your horse must willingly accept the hug.

Staggering and Gesturing Individual

- ▶ An assistant wearing a costume and using healthcare equipment staggers, gestures with the hands and moans until he or she is 6 feet from your team.
- ▶ The assistant stops, calls your team to approach and pets your horse.
- ▶ Your horse must willingly approach and accept petting.

Angry Yelling

- ▶ Two assistants begin yelling at each other approximately 6 feet away from your team. The yelling is not directed at your team.
- ▶ The assistants stop yelling and become neutral, and one assistant calls your team to approach.
- ▶ Your horse must willingly approach and accept interaction.

Bumped From Behind

- ▶ While your horse is otherwise distracted by interactions with the assistants, the evaluator comes up from behind and gently bumps it on the front shoulder or the center of body.
- ▶ You acknowledge the bump and attend to your horse.
- ▶ Your horse may startle but should recover quickly.

Crowded and Petted by Several People*

- ▶ Three assistants approach, one at a time, and begin touching your horse, until all three are gathered closely around, attempting to attract your horse's attention.
- ▶ One assistant will be using healthcare equipment to approach your team.
- ▶ You proactively instruct the crowd to stand in safe positions while petting your horse.
- ▶ Your horse must willingly accept petting.

Offered a Treat

- ▶ The evaluator walks toward your team with a treat in hand, saying, "May I give your horse a treat?"
- ▶ Your get to decide whether your horse may have the treat.
- ▶ If you allow the treat to be taken, you direct the evaluator how best to offer the treat; your horse must take the treat gently.

Overall Handler Assessment*

- ▶ The evaluator makes an overall assessment of your handler skills, as demonstrated throughout the evaluation.
- ▶ Did you use PETS? Did you advocate for your horse? Did you guide interactions? Did you have appropriate social interactions?

* *Indicates exercises used to determine a Complex team qualification rating*