

USFCA Coaching Clinic Information for the Examiner

The qualities that make a good coach are not the same skill set as those that make an accomplished board examiner. Therefore, all Examiners are required to be current members and go through Certification and Accreditation Board (CAB) exam certification training before they can sit or head an examination board. The trainings are held at the annual conference and at select USFCA clinics. The only exception is for the Assistant Moniteur (A.M.) certification.

Board Members:

- Any current member USFCA Moniteur or above can certify an Assistant Moniteur. No examiner certification is required. All paper work and hours must be completed properly as per the Assistant Moniteur Guide Book.

Exam certification training is required for the Examiners of the following tests:

- Two Prévôts or one Master are required to conduct a practical exam for the Moniteur level.
- Two Masters are required to conduct a practical exam for the Prévôt.
- Three Masters are required to conduct a practical exam for the Fencing Master.

To be a Certified Examiner:

1. Current membership in good standing of the USFCA.
2. All Examiners must attend the examiner certification training at a USFCA clinic or the annual conference. There are two levels of examiners: Head and Certified. The website has information on the requirements to become a Head Examiner if you are already a Certified Examiner.
3. Head Examiners must re-certify every **three** years at an official USFCA clinic or conference. All Certified Examiners must re-certify every **three** years. Examiners must have proof that they went to a certification clinic. Certificates will be given for attendance at all certification trainings.
4. Examiners must be certified as a USFCA Prévôt or Master in the specific weapons that they are giving the test.
5. All Certified Examiners and Head Examiners trained by the CAB will be listed on the USFCA website with the date and place of training. The CAB will arrange the opportunity for Certified Examiners to be trained a few times per year.

Each USFCA clinic will need to have at least one Head Examiner and Certified Examiners if examination boards are going to test candidates. When the USFCA conducts regional clinics it benefits fencers, parents and coaches. It is a great opportunity to exchange knowledge with other coaches and allows the coaches to be tested with less expense.

What follows is an overview on the clinic process and instructions for Examiners. The goals of USFCA Clinics are to teach coaches, certify coaches and help the fencing community. The Clinic must also be financially successful for the host. Instructor

coaches and other staff should be paid and have expenses covered. Clinic attendees should be treated like a good customer.

The clinic should follow the USFCA Study Guides. This will prepare them for the practical exam. Cover all of the info in these guides and modify as appropriate per weapon.

Examiners have to read the USFCA materials and be familiar with the process prior to the exam. All the written exams and all the payments are completed on line. For any other circumstances contact Rob Handelman, the CAB Chair:
rhandelman@sbcglobal.net.

In general the clinic should be aimed at participants of the same level, i.e. all Moniteurs or all Prévôt. If there are enough instructors a mixed level clinic can work by splitting the groups. It is important to be clear about who will be tested. Advancement in levels is encouraged but it is important to be honest in evaluating who is ready to take the practical exam. Communication between the host, the Presenters and other Examiners is a must. Everyone must try their best to avoid the unexpected. Appearance is important, nice warm ups and a polo shirt is recommended for the instructors.

The USFCA Clinic is often a means of preparation for the test. Explain what the expectations are and avoid traps for people. Never allow personal favors, instead be supportive and help the examinees. As the clinic progresses try to correct mistakes as much as possible. Work as a team and have fun.

If the clinic starts on Friday night there should be a short introductory session. Late registration will be taking place at the door. Encourage non-members to join the USFCA. Confirm that anyone who plans to take the practical exam has proof of passing the written exam. Review the format of the clinic such as the daily schedule and the practical exam process that will take place Sunday morning or early afternoon. Present information on the USFCA exam process. Review definitions and terms. Handouts are helpful. Have a question and answer period. A copy of the USFCA recommended reading list is on the USFCA website.

Saturday morning session should be spent on group and class instruction. Moniteurs and Prévôt are expected to be able to teach group lessons and lead classes in footwork and blade work. This should be a primary focus of the Moniteur clinics. Saturday afternoon may be devoted to individual lessons.

Show a variety of warm-up and stretching exercises for groups. Let the student coaches take turns leading group exercises. Show a variety of games appropriate for different age groups. Be sure to demonstrate the instruction of group classes in technique drills.

Candidates get tired when they must give lessons and also take lessons all day. Mix the format so that they take some lessons, but give them plenty of time to observe lessons given by others. Encourage the host to invite local Fencers to take lessons.

Clinics attended by out of town fencers often start Sunday morning at 8 AM and end by 2 PM. This will allow those taking the exam time to schedule their travel home. Make sure you have enough examiners. Refer to the chart. More than one exam may need to be given at a time in separate parts of the venue if there are many exams. If there are not many practical exams the Master should observe the exams given by any Prévôt or less experienced Masters.

For Master certification be sure three exam board Certified Masters have been scheduled well in advance to make sure you have a complete board. Contact them in advance and make sure you will have enough candidates to cover their travel costs. Schedule board certified Masters and Prévôt from the local area if possible to conserve cost.

The examiners and candidates have the option to allow the exams to be observed assuming the environment is quiet and conducive to a good exam. Be sure the candidate is asked if they would mind being observed. Exams may be videotaped again with the permission of the candidate.

Video tape lessons by candidates and review these with them as time permits. Offer constructive criticism, corrections, and lot of encouragement. You may want ask candidates to bring a DVD or VHS in the format of the camera being used so they will have their own tape to keep.

Allow enough time for the candidates to practice for the practical exam on the following day. Use the *How to Become a Prévôt and How to Become a Moniteur* study guides and have copies available for them to reference with extra paper to take notes.

Look over the Score Sheets before the clinic so that you are familiar with them and can complete them properly without any problems. It makes the candidates more relaxed if the organizer appears to know what they are doing.

Remember, the new member is our customer. During the testing, we are not there to teach or give them a lecture; our duty is to evaluate their skills. You may in fact disagree with the coach's opinion but this should not be expressed. Simply evaluate them.

Tell them if they Pass or Fail, the grading of the practical exam should be shared with the coach. Be sure to welcome them and congratulate them or offer constructive criticism and help. Give the candidate the Examiner Evaluation Form for feedback on how well the examiners did as a board.

All paper work should be turned in within two days of the exam. A short report on the exam process and outcome should also be submitted to the CAB Secretary and the EC clinic committee. Keep records and or copies of everything just in case. Examiners should make sure all the exam forms are filled out and returned. The examiner will send the exam score sheet forms to the CAB Secretary noted on the form. Contact the USFCA CAB Chair (Rob Handelman) rhandelman@sbcglobal.net with any questions. Follow the directions given on the website. Email is the best way to communicate.