

Houghton College Equestrian program guidelines

The Recreation: Equestrian major offers two options: Equine Performance or Equine Management. These majors give a solid foundation for students preparing to enter the equestrian venue as professionals in teaching, training, facility management and related careers. Through academically rigorous courses and expert instruction, students are equipped with a broad base of knowledge in classical horsemanship. Classes encompass theory and philosophy, riding, the teaching of riding, and care of the horse. In-depth studies, opportunities to study with world-class clinicians, and riding in competitions cultivate Christ-like character in students, enabling them to become effective scholar-servants.

Those wishing to participate in our equestrian program must realize the program is riding-intensive. It requires an ongoing commitment to learning and physical fitness. All Equestrian students are expected to maintain a professional demeanor at the barn. Horses can be unpredictable in their behavior, therefore, a degree of risk is inherent in working with these animals.

- The program observes a strict weight policy:
 - Students should not weigh more than 20% of the horse's weight. Student weight includes all riding apparel and horse tack. This percentage is in line with industry standards and is upheld by the Certified Horsemanship Association.
- Any student participating in equestrian classes who requires a certain type or size of horse will be accommodated as much as possible. However, if Houghton College does not have an appropriate horse in the college lesson herd to meet a student's physical needs, the student may not be able to participate in equestrian riding classes.
- Students who have severe allergies to hay, straw, shavings and/or others are advised to discuss their plans for entrance into this program with their family physician.

* Please note, students are required to sign a waiver of liability at the time of entrance into the program.

:

Additional degree program and minor requirements:

The equine industry is a highly competitive field; therefore a minimum level of riding experience and horse handling must be met for the equestrian studies performance and management track degrees. Those pursuing the performance track degree program and the management track degree program are required to meet all of the competencies listed below.

*See exception note below for those pursuing the management track degree program.

- During their first fall semester, all students interested in pursuing a management or performance track degree or equestrian studies minor must enroll in EQST 101, Introduction to Equestrian Studies.
- During their first or second year, students will work with their academic advisors to declare the equestrian degree program or minor of their choice.
- By the end of their 4th semester, students wanting to pursue either a management or performance track equestrian degree must fill out an equestrian performance or management track application, demonstrate the following minimal level competencies, and be accepted into the program by the equestrian faculty.

Student must:

- Independently handle horses and work around 1,000-lb. animals in small quarters.
 - Independently clean horse stalls, turn horses in and out to pasture, feed horses, carry and stack 50 lb hay bales
 - Independently groom and tack; English and Western
 - Independently walk, trot, canter, individually or in a group, in English tack on the HC programs intermediate string of horses
- All equestrian performance and management track degree students and equestrian minors are required to work barn chores one weekend a semester.

*Exceptions may be made for those applying to the management track degree program if the riding competency listed cannot be met. These exceptions will be considered on an individual basis if the student displays excellent barn management skills and horse handling abilities.

For students who are unable to meet the minimal level competencies and are not accepted into the management or performance track degree programs, the faculty will work with the student to find alternative academic options. Application is not required for the equestrian studies minor or up to eight credit hours of equestrian classes.

The Equestrian Studies degree program is riding intensive and all students should expect to complete a minimum of eight semesters of degree program course work to graduate. Transfer students and students who are entering the program with enough equestrian background to test into upper level riding classes, who meet the minimum level competencies and have completed the application process should still expect to need at least 5 semesters of degree program course work to complete the equestrian degree program class requirements.