



## PROSPECTUS

Master Saddle Fitting Consultant

## INTRODUCTION

### **Welcome to the International Course for Master Saddle Fitting Consultant.**

Thank you for choosing a study at The MSFC, an international training institute where unique and recognised professional training is given in the field of the well-being for horse and rider, saddle fitting and saddle making. By choosing to study at the International College of the MSFC you are investing in an education that will help you to build a successful future. We will support your learning by providing an educational experience, designed to help you unlock your full potential.

The aim of this study guide is to inform you about:

- how our modular (distance learning) courses work
- what can you expect at the practical week
- supply information concerning assessments

*We wish you many interesting study hours!*

## TIMETABLE PRACTICAL STUDY WEEK

School times:	09.00 – 10.30 h
	10.30 – 11.00 uur coffee break
	11.00 – 12.30 h
	12.30 – 13.30 h lunch
	13.30 – 15.00 h
	15.00 – 15.30 h coffee break
	15.30 – 17.00 h

After official school hours you need to practice together; horses and saddles are available.

Location: The international school for saddle fitting and saddlery in Deux-Sèvres, France:

La Boutinière, 79320 Moutiers-sous-Chantemerle

Dates Saddle Fitting Course:

July 4 – 10, 2022 (extra course)

September 5-11, 2022

May 22-28, 2023

Additional Saddlery course for saddle fitters:

September 12-20, 2022 FULL

Additional Reflocking course for saddle fitters:

May 29 – June 1, 2023

### **What is distance learning?**

Distance learning allows students to study away from the college in their own time.

Distance learning is also referred to as 'home study' and 'flexible learning'. It frees people who want to study from the restrictions and limitations found in many areas of traditional education and training, and is an ideal method of learning for people whose work and family commitments prevent them from attending college on a regular, full-time or part-time basis.

### **Equal opportunities**

The MSFC, but also students among each other, will not discriminate against students or staff on the grounds of sex, colour, race, age, religion, sexual orientation or physical disablement.

### **Student evaluation**

We constantly aim for improving our standards, services and course material offered to students. To assist us in providing high quality courses which meet the needs of both the equine industry and the students, you are asked to complete the Evaluation form upon completion of the course.

# ASSESSMENT

The student will be tested for his knowledge and skills by:

- a computer exam with short open questions
- practical assessment
- written paper of a case you handled at home (including pictures), send by email

The practical assessment encloses:

- assessment of the horse's conformation and movement; making templates of the horse's back;
- saddle assessment and fault identification
- practical saddle fitting

If you have passed all three parts of the assessment, you will receive the well respected diploma of the Academy of MSFC and you use the registered title and logo of "Master Saddle Fitting Consultant".

# **LEARNING AIMS** (also assessed during written and practical exam)

## *A. Anatomy*

The student must have knowledge about:

- the built of a skeleton and the muscular system
- the function of muscles, ligaments and tendons
- locomotor system

The student need to be able to palpate the most important structures which is needed to make an effective analyses of the saddle and/or back problem.

## *B. Fysiology*

The student must have knowledge of:

- existing training methods
- muscle function
- recognize pain behaviour

## *C. Conformation*

The student must have knowledge about:

- normal conformation
- describe conformation abnormalities
- describe the consequences for saddle fitting
- describe hoof abnormalities

## *D. Locomotor system and biomechanics*

The student must have knowledge about:

- normal locomotion
- recognize and appoint different gaits
- recognize and appoint locomotion abnormalities and lameness
- describe the biomechanics of the horse's back

#### *E. Saddle knowledge*

The student need to have knowledge of:

- how a saddle is built
- how to recognize adjustable trees
- recognize saddle faults
- recognize and appoint the influence of a crooked (twisted) saddle
- appoint the influence of different forms of saddle trees
- appoint the possibilities of adjustments to the saddle
- recognize the different type of flocking
- how to do a complete safety check on a saddle

#### *F. Saddle fitting*

The student need to have knowledge about:

- the fit of a saddle
- the balance of the saddle
- the suitability of a saddle for that horse/rider
- find the best fitting saddle
- use of different measurement systems (e.g. templates)
- when and how to use therapeutical pads

#### *G. Influence of the rider*

The student needs to have knowledge about:

- correct anatomical posture on the horse
- recognize and appoint conformation faults
- influence of a crooked rider on the horse's back

*G. Recognize problems caused by a saddle*

The student needs to have knowledge of:

- Physical evidence of an ill fitting saddle
- Mental evidence of an ill fitting saddle
- Recognize training problems caused by an ill fitting saddle
- When to send in to a vet or physio

*H. Nutrition*

The student needs to have knowledge about:

- the feeding condition of a horse
- be able to measure the horse's condition
- basic nutrition protocol



# THE PRACTICAL EXAM

The practical exam consists of three parts:

- complete check of the horse and making templates (30 min)
- checking for saddle faults (30 min)
- finding the best fitting saddle (30 min)

During the practical assessment you will be judged on your knowledge, skills, insight in a difficult case and professional attitude. The exam will be in English.

We will explain at every part of the exam what you need to do:

## **Part 1: complete check of the horse and making templates (30 min)**

Introduce yourself to the horse and rider. Ask about history of the horse, management, level of riding .....etc. Describe the horse that is standing in front of you (e.g. sex, colour, type, scars, typical marks). Describe the conformation and mention the conformation faults if there are, and what the influence is on your saddle fit. Check the symmetry of the shoulders. Check the horse's back /girth groove / ears superficial and deep. Make the templates, measure and check the condition of the horse. Never make templates or tape measurements before you checked the back! Check for lameness and locomotion. Check the bridle/bit. Write everything down on your saddle fitting form.

## **Part 2: saddle fitting (30 min)**

You will see 10 saddles in total, which will be a mix of dressage, GP and Jump saddles.

Put **every** saddle short on the horse's back, tell what you think of it (what is good / what is bad / what can be altered) and shortlist maximum 3 saddles which you would like to fit more closely and see girthed up. Try to find the best fitting saddle and explain why. When it is not perfect yet, explain what you would like to see changed (for example: smaller size for the horse, deeper panel, bigger seat for rider, longer flap...). Fill in all details of the saddle and adjustments if needed on your *saddle fitting* form.

### **Part 3: checking for saddle faults (30 min)**

You will be presented with 6 saddles with faults. Check the saddles according to the protocol (safety check) and mention every fault you see.

You will get the results as soon as possible, depending if the outcome of your online exam and case study is already known too, you will receive your diploma.

The assessment is done without any prejudice towards any candidate. The results of every part of the exam will be discussed first with all the assessors. A final conclusion and advice will be given at the end of the morning or afternoon group. There is no discussion possible about the outcome. Marks will be given between 1-10. The mark 6 or higher for every part means you passed your practical exam.

### **Rules for passing, failing and retakes**

A candidate is passed if he/she has a mark of minimal 6 or higher for every part of the exam (theoretical and practical).

The candidate has the right to get a retake if one of the exam parts was less than a 6, taking in mind that:

- the candidate will be planned in for the next available time to do the retake of the part they failed, unless the candidate don't want to make use of that

possibility. Candidates who also join the saddlery course, will have the chance to practise the part they failed and do the retake in that period. No extra costs.

- On the day **if possible** (or during the saddlery/reflocking course) we offer you a retake for the part you failed. If you fail again, you need to come back another time. In that case you need to retake all three parts.
- you can do the online exam as many times as needed to pass; no time limit

# **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

## **Liability**

The MSFC is not responsible for theft of personal belongings. MSFC hold no liability for accidents and calamities during the course, unless carelessness is proven. In case of an emergency during the course, you need to contact the course coordinator immediately.

## **Safety**

During the practical course week you are advised to dress properly and safe to be around horses, e.g. safety shoes. When riding is involved, a safety helmet is obligatory.

## **Privacy**

The privacy of students is guaranteed. Student information is only available for the staff of the Academy of MSFC.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## ***How do the courses work?***

The Saddle Fitting Course is divided into a theoretical part and a practical part. The theoretical part consists of:

- Detailed illustrated text in your course map
- Handouts received during the practical

The course is designed for people to combine it with a full time job. You can sign in at any time that suits you. The theoretical part you can do at home in your own tempo, so it can fit in your family situation. The exam will be online, so you can do that also at a time that suits you best. For the practical part, you will be scheduled on the first available place. If something comes up, let us know in time (at least 4 weeks before, except emergencies of course) and we will reschedule you to the next possible date.

## ***Is there any e-learning involved?***

The majority of the course material at this moment is in hard copy, but in future courses will also be available on-line through e-learning.

## ***What are the costs?***

For the year 2022-2023 the following fee is due: € 2.400,00. You will receive an invoice for the total amount. The whole amount is due when you want to start the

course. It is possible however, to pay in two parts of € 1225,00 incl. administration fee (one instalment before your books are send, and one before you enter the practical weeks), or in three parts of € 835,00 incl. administration costs (one part before your books are send, one part half way and the last part a month before you come over for your practical part).

Our bank details: IBAN NL66INGB0004871530 BIC: INGBNL2A in name of MSFC, Hollandscheveld The Netherlands

ING Bank N.V.

Foreign Operations

PO Box 1800

1000 BV Amsterdam

You can also pay with PayPal to [info@msfc.nl](mailto:info@msfc.nl). **Make sure you choose the option without costs for us, otherwise we don't receive the correct amount!**

In the college fee is included: a course map, template set, coffee/tea, lodging onsite.

For the meals, we charge 35,- euros a day.

### ***Is funding available?***

Regrettably, distance learning courses do not automatically qualify for government funding or student loans. If you have a business, you can book it as study costs. Also look into the possibilities (different in every country) to get a part back with your tax.

### ***Can anyone become a student?***

Yes, you can! The only requirements you need are:

- English speaking
- age 18 or more - there is no upper age limit
- experienced with handling horses
- some riding experience; you need to be able to mount a horse for a few minutes to be able to check if the selected saddle is the correct one.

### ***Can I study from overseas?***

Yes, you can! You can study from anywhere in the world. There may be additional overseas postage fees when outside the EU. Please contact the office for details.

### ***Are there any time limits?***

The time taken to complete courses will depend on how many hours you spend on your studies each week. You can take your theoretical exam any time you want. But after the practical week, otherwise you would not be able to answer all the questions.

### ***When can I enrol?***

Enrolments for the theoretical part of the course are taken throughout the year. There are no term times as such. You will be scheduled for the first available place on the Practical part, unless you require differently; this way you can still fit it into your own schedule.

### ***How do I enrol?***

\* The course fees are quoted on the website. Fees listed include EU postage and packing. There is no VAT payable.

\* If paying in two instalments you will receive the course map and books after we received the first instalment. The last instalment need to be paid a month before you come to the practical week.

\* If paying in three instalments, the second part needs to be paid halfway and the third part a month before the practical week will start.

\* See also our terms & conditions

### ***What will I receive as a student?***

- Course modules - fully illustrated with drawings and photographs, printed on A4 bound within MSFC ring binders. The modules (including the handouts provided during the lectures in the practical week) contain all of the information needed to gain a pass grade in the course.
- A Saddle Fitting Kit, which contains of a saddle fitting block, a flexible ruler to make templates and a weight and height measurement tape. You will receive during the practical week.

### ***What level are the courses?***

Our courses are on academic level. To successfully complete a course on this level, you need to have a certain way of thinking and learning, and the capability of analysing and solving problems to get a professional and lasting result. Keywords are: professional, multidiscipline integration scientific views creativeness, problem solving, social and communicative qualities



***When will I receive my course material?***

Course material will (normally) be despatched within 2 working days of receipt of payment (holidays excepted).

A signature is normally required upon delivery; if no one is available to accept and sign for the parcel, the driver will leave a card and take the parcel back to the depot. You can arrange with them how to collect the parcel or when it can be delivered again.

If you do not collect the parcel within the time specified on the card it will be returned to us. You will then have to pay us the cost of sending the parcel to you for a second time (€ 25,00 for EU parcels. Other countries vary).

Alternatively, you can leave a signed note for the driver, explaining where to leave the parcel, e.g. in a garage, with a neighbour, etc. The place must be secure – neither the shipper nor the MSFC accept responsibility for parcels that are damaged or go missing if you ask the driver to leave the parcel. The driver must be able to take the note with him as proof of delivery and it must be signed by you.

If the material cannot be delivered to you because you have moved or given us an incorrect or incomplete address, a charge will be made for the second delivery as above.

### ***How many times do I have to come over?***

The course is designed for students from all over the world. Which means you only have to come over once, and finish with your practical exam. It might feel like a boot camp, since it will be very intensive!

### ***What happens during the Practical Study Week?***

The goal of the practical week is to provide you with the best basic knowledge and skills which you need to become a good and decent saddle fitter, including the scientific background. There are many practical 'hands-on' aspects to saddle fitting. You are expected to take responsibility for acquiring the various practical skills. To assist you in this we will teach you the best way to examine a horse, to handle a horse and to fit and check a saddle. You need to practise together after school hours.

You will learn to subscribe a horse's signalement, conformation and condition; to do a proper back exam and check the horse for lameness and know when to send it in to a vet; to measure a horse's back to be able to find the correct saddle; to fit a correct saddle; know when and how to use therapeutic pads and girths correctly; recognize the influence of poor movement to your saddle fit; the influence of the rider and how to deal with it.

In addition to practical skills, lectures are given by highly qualified lecturers. The lectures aid understanding of the subject and back up the distance learning material

studied.

At the end of the Practical Study Week practical skills are assessed.

***Is lodging and transport included in the course fee?***

Basic lodging is included if there is space (max 10 sleeps available, so first come first stay), but you have to share in two bedrooms (with comfortable beds) and two bathrooms in our cosy guesthouse. It might feel like pony camp again, but it is for free! You would only have to pay extra for the meals which will be provided (about € 35,- per day for 3 meals excl. drinks in restaurants). European students can fly best to Poitiers, Nantes or La Rochelle. International students to Nantes. You need to rent a car however to get here, but costs might be shared with other students. Especially for the many students from the UK it will be very convenient, since there are many cheap flight from the UK to France, you have many ferries and the tunnel, so you could easily come by own car (and maybe share the fuel costs with other students) since we are not that far from the coast. The area of Deux-Sevres (part of the Poitou-Charente) is very popular among the British for holidays and second houses.

For those who would like to have a private room, there is always the possibility to book accommodation nearby yourself (for example at the Domaine Chantemerle, just “around the corner” so you can walk to the school). And you can still join us with the meals together (which is very much advised). We also have some dinners at the Domaine.

### ***How is the atmosphere at a Practical Study week?***

You will meet a mixed and interesting group of people. Our students' ages range from 18 to 60 and all are from different types of background. Everybody is keen to learn; we always find that our students soon get to know each other and often become friends. 'Horsey' people always seem to have lots to talk about! So although you will work hard, the atmosphere is friendly and informal!

**We start with dinner on Sunday night;** this is a great way to get to know the other students and teachers. Some lectures are class-room based, but it will mainly be of a practical 'hands-on' nature. All of the lecturers are experts and welcome your participation in the sessions through asking questions; don't miss this opportunity to broaden your knowledge. Study Weeks include assessment of practical skills.

When you have studied the high quality distance learning materials, and completed the Theoretical (online exam) and Practical Assessments, students will possess the skills and knowledge needed to make a valuable contribution to the equine industry.

### ***Can I also reflock or repair a saddle after the course?***

No, not after only the saddle fitting course. But we offer additional courses if you also want to learn how to reflock and rebalance a saddle or how to do small repairs yourself in a proper way. Our Reflocking Course for Saddle Fitters is a 4 day course following the saddle fitting practical week in which reflocking and rebalancing will be trained, so you would only need to travel once to France.

## **Reflocking course for saddle fitters**

In this module you will be trained in the basic saddlery skills you need as a saddle fitter, which means you need to be able to reflock (also with double lining) and rebalance a saddle and that you are capable to replace a girth strap in the proper way. Highly recommended if you want to work as an independent saddle fitter.

What will you learn during this course?

What will you learn?:

- Remove the panel from the saddle
- Carrying out safety checks on the saddle
- Check the tree / check the rivets
- remove the flock and reflock the panel
- use of new flocking techniques and materials
- correct flocking of a saddle with and without lining
- lacing the panel back on
- adjust the flock when panel is back on
- prepare a new girth strap and stitch on a webbing

If you want to join, please ask for the special application form. Costs: € 1100,00

This is including using materials at location, lodging on site (group accommodation), coffee/tea/cookies and all meals (excl. drinks). Bring one or two saddles to work on. If not possible, we will provide one.

**Extra costs to consider (not included):**

The costs for the starters toolset is about € 500,00. Besides that you will need to bring some standard tools like hammer, scissor, plier etc.

**Basic leatherwork and saddle repair course**

What will you learn during this course?

- health and safety, since you work with very sharp tools
- how to use, to sharpen and to maintain your tools
- stitching with two needles
- use of "stitching clams"
- cutting of leather pieces
- preparation of the leather for stitching
- recognise different quality of leather
- making a small leather item like a belt

Examples of repairs shown/practiced:

- changing a girth system in 'point straps' and correct V-girth system
- replace girth straps if they are torn
- repair a cut in a seat
- repairs of flaps and kneeblocks, repair of the forepiece
- fix D-rings to the saddle for saddle bags

- repair of broken flexible point or make flexible point when not there

More information on this course will follow soon.