

**THE SOCIETY  
OF  
MASTER SADDLERS (UK) LTD**



**CATEGORIES OF MEMBERSHIP  
AND  
REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS**

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# **SOCIETY OF MASTER SADDLERS**

## **CATEGORIES OF MEMBERSHIP & QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS**

Admission to membership of the Society of Master Saddlers is at the sole discretion of the Executive Committee of the Society. Fulfilment of the Society's qualification standards is normally required for eligibility to membership. However, fulfilment of those standards does not guarantee or entitle admission to membership.

Where appropriate, applicants will be inspected by a member of the Executive Committee, who will expect to see samples of current work

**1. MASTER SADDLER (RETAIL)** Members who shall be firms, companies or persons who, in the opinion of the Executive Committee:

- (a) have skilled employees or are skilled in their own right in the manufacture, repair and maintenance of saddlery and sell such goods by retail. That is to say they have, or have at least one employee working on the premises who has:
  - passed Level III Saddle (Advanced) and one other Level III of the City & Guilds Saddlery Skills Assessment Scheme.
  - holds the Society's saddle flocking qualification
  - has a minimum of seven years' experience in the manufacture, repair and maintenance of saddlery
  - has the necessary experience and knowledge to advise on all aspects of saddlery and saddle fitting
- (b) retail saddlery and equestrian merchandise and derive the major part of their income from the supply of saddlery items;
- (c) occupy retail rated premises which are open to the public and have an adequate amount of stock: (Minimum stock level—£55,000, to include at least 25 new saddles from 3 recognised UK manufacturers and 25 bridles. Variety of other horse requisites. Floor space—minimum of 625 sq ft minimum)

OR

Offer a saddle fitting and saddlery supply service by travelling to a customer's premises or have facilities to do this on site. (Minimum turnover £30,000)

- (d) have been in business for a minimum of one year;
  - (e) hold current employer's, product and public liability insurance
  - (f) deal with bonafide suppliers including UK saddle manufacturers.
  - (g) maintain records of all saddle fittings.
  - (h) have a sales and returns policy in place.
  - (i) in the case of a retail shop, provide at least one interior and one exterior photograph of the premises.
- (An inspection will also be carried out.)

**2. APPROVED RETAILER** Members who shall be businesses which, in the opinion of the Executive Committee:

- (a) retail saddlery and equestrian merchandise and derive the major part of their income from the supply of saddlery items;
- (b) occupy retail rated premises which are open to the public and have an adequate amount of stock: (Minimum stock level—£55,000, to include at least 25 new saddles from 3 recognised UK manufacturers and 25 bridles. Variety of other horse requisites. Floor space—minimum of 625 sq ft minimum)

OR

Offer a saddle fitting and saddlery supply service by travelling to a customer's premises or have facilities to do this on site. (Minimum turnover £30,000)

All retail applicants will also:

- (c) offer a comprehensive repair and saddle alteration service carried out by a qualified saddler (not necessarily on the premises) who has passed Level III (Advanced) Saddle and one other Level III (Advanced) of the Saddlery Skills Assessment Scheme or have the agreed services of a manufacturing member to carry out such work. (See also point 3 under 'Notes')
- (d) have been in business for a minimum of one year;
- (e) hold current employer's, product and public liability insurance
- (f) deal with bonafide suppliers including UK saddle manufacturers.
- (g) maintain records of all saddle fittings.
- (h) have a sales and returns policy in place.
- (i) in the case of a retail shop provide at least one interior and one exterior photograph of the premises.  
(An inspection will also be carried out.)

**3. MASTER SADDLER (CORPORATE TRADE)** Members who shall be manufacturing saddles that is to say persons, firms or companies who, in the opinion of the Executive Committee:

- (a) manufacture saddlery in the UK and sell such goods wholesale to bona fide retailers;
- (b) have or have at least one employee who has passed Level III (Advanced) Saddle of the City & Guilds Saddlery Skills Assessment Scheme or completed a formal 4 year apprenticeship;
- (c) occupy business rated premises and derive the major part of their income from the manufacture of saddlery;
- (d) have been in business for a minimum of one year;
- (e) hold current employer's, product and public liability insurance;
- (f) supply references from two companies to whom they supply saddles.  
(An inspection of work will also be carried out.)

**4. MASTER SADDLER** Members who shall be saddlers expert in the manufacture of saddlery, that is to say persons who, in the opinion of the Executive Committee:

- (a) are skilled in the manufacture, repair and maintenance of saddlery;
- (b) have passed Level III (Advanced) Saddle and one other Level III of the City & Guilds Saddlery Skills Assessment Scheme. In addition have the necessary experience and knowledge to advise on all aspects of saddlery;
- (c) derive the major part of their income from the manufacture, repair and maintenance of saddlery;
- (d) have been in business for a minimum of one year and have a minimum of seven years' experience in the manufacture, repair and maintenance of saddlery;
- (e) hold current product and public liability insurance or be employed by a business which holds such insurance;
- (f) supply references from two members of the Society willing to recommend upgrading to Master;
- (g) proves a competency in saddle flocking or has passed the Society's assessment for Flocking and Flocking Adjustment

(h) Submit a portfolio of photographs of work demonstrating a range of leather working skills and knowledge from the past three years.

(i) premium awards gained at the saddlery competition will be taken into account.

(An inspection may also be carried out to ascertain that the applicant's work is of 'Master Saddler' standard. This will involve both saddle and bridle work.)

**5. MASTER HARNESS MAKER** Members who shall be saddlers expert in the manufacture of harness, that is to say persons who, in the opinion of the Executive Committee:

(a) are skilled in the manufacture, repair and maintenance of harness and derive the major part of their income from harness making;

(b) have passed Level III (Advanced) Harness and one other Level III of the City & Guilds Saddlery Skills Assessment Scheme. In addition have the necessary experience and knowledge to advise on all aspects of harness making;

(c) derive the major part of their income from the manufacture and repair of harness;

(d) have been in business for a minimum of one year and have a minimum of seven years' experience in harness making;

(e) hold current product and public liability insurance or be employed by a business which holds such insurance.

(f) be recommended by two members of the Society;

(g) premium awards gained at the saddlery competition will be taken into account.

(An inspection of work will also be carried out)

**6.. MASTER BRIDLE MAKER (TRADE)** Members who shall be bridlemakers expert in the manufacture of bridles, that is to say persons who, in the opinion of the Executive Committee:

(a) manufacture bridles and sell such goods wholesale to bona fide retailers;

(b) have (or have at least one employee who has) passed Level III (Advanced) Bridle of the City & Guilds Saddlery Skills Assessment Scheme or completed a formal 4 year apprenticeship;

(c) occupy business rated premises and derive the major part of their income from the manufacture of bridles;

(d) have been in business for a minimum of one year and have a minimum of seven years' experience in bridle making;

(e) hold current employer's and product liability insurance;

(f) supply references from two companies to whom they supply bridles.

(An inspection of work will also be carried out.

**7. MASTER BRIDLE MAKER (CRAFT)** Members who shall be bridlemakers expert in the manufacture of bridles, that is to say persons who, in the opinion of the Executive Committee:

(a) are skilled in the manufacture, repair and maintenance of bridle work and derive the major part of their income from bridle making;

(b) have passed Level III (Advanced) Bridle and one other Level III of the City & Guilds Saddlery Skills Assessment Scheme and have the necessary experience and knowledge to advise on all aspects of bridle making;

- (c) derive the major part of their income from the manufacture and repair of bridle work;
  - (d) have been in business for a minimum of one year and have a minimum of seven years' experience in bridle making;
  - (e) hold current product liability insurance or be employed by a business holding such insurance.
  - (f) be recommended by two members of the Society.
  - (g) premium awards gained for bridle work at the saddlery competition will be taken into account.
- (An inspection of work will also be carried out.

**8. MASTER SADDLEMAKER** Members who shall be saddlers expert in the manufacture of saddles, that is to say persons who, in the opinion of the Executive Committee:

- (a) are skilled in the manufacture, repair and maintenance of saddles;
  - (b) have passed Level III (Advanced) Saddle of the City & Guilds Saddlery Skills Assessment Scheme or completed a formal 4 year apprenticeship.
  - (c) derive the major part of their income from the manufacture and repair of saddles;
  - (d) Have a minimum of seven years' experience in the saddlery trade;
  - (e) hold current product liability insurance or work for a company which does;
  - (f) supply references from two members of the Society of Master Saddlers;
  - (g) Proves a competency in saddle flocking or has passed the Society's assessment for Flocking and Flocking Adjustment;
  - (h) premium awards gained at the saddlery competition will be taken into account.
- (An inspection will also be carried out to ascertain that the applicant's work is of 'Master Saddler' standard.)

**9. MASTER SADDLE FITTER** Members who shall be saddle fitters expert in the fitting of saddles, that is to say persons who, in the opinion of the Executive Committee:

- (a) have passed the Qualified Saddle Fitting Assessment, gaining the Certificate in Saddle Fitting , awarded jointly by City & Guilds, The Worshipful Company of Saddlers and The Society of Master Saddlers or if achieved before 2007 passed The Society of Master Saddlers' Qualified Saddle Fitting Assessment
- (b) derive their income from the sale and fitting of saddles by retail or fit predominantly for Society of Master Saddlers members.
- (c) have the necessary experience and knowledge to advise on all aspects of saddle fitting:
- (d) Must use the services of a qualified saddler (holding City & Guilds SKASS Level 3 Saddle and one other Level 3) to carry out major saddle, panel and flocking adjustments and repairs or have the agreed services of a manufacturing member.
- (e) have a minimum of seven years' experience in the fitting of saddles, of which at least 3 are since qualifying;
- (f) hold current product and public liability insurance or be employed by a business which holds such insurance;
- (g) supply references from two other members of the Society holding the QSF certificate willing to recommend upgrading to Master. References will also be sought from customers.

- (h) is a Master Saddler or has passed the Society's assessment for Flocking and Flocking Adjustment
- (i) must not have any outstanding complaint against them or an upheld complaint in the previous two years.

**10. QUALIFIED SADDLER** Members who shall be persons who, in the opinion of the Executive Committee:

- (a) Have passed Level III (Advanced) Saddle and one other Level III (Advanced) of the City & Guilds Saddlery Skills Assessment Scheme;
- (b) are actively working as a saddler;
- (c) hold current product and public liability insurance or work for a business holding such insurance;
- (d) have been in the trade for a minimum of four years.

**11. QUALIFIED HARNESS MAKER** Members who shall be persons who, in the opinion of the Executive Committee:

- (a) Have passed Level III (Advanced) Harness and one other Level III (Advanced) of the City & Guilds Saddlery Skills Assessment Scheme;
- (b) derive their income from the manufacture and repair of harness and saddlery;
- (c) hold current product and public liability insurance or work for a business holding such insurance;
- (d) have been in the trade for a minimum of four years.

**12. QUALIFIED SADDLE FITTER** Members who shall be persons who, in the opinion of the Executive Committee, have passed the Society of Master Saddlers Qualified Saddle Fitting Qualification and fulfil the following points:

- (a) Derive their income from the sale and fitting of saddles by retail or fit predominantly for Society of Master Saddlers members;  
or  
have passed the Society's Qualified Saddle Fitting Assessment and are employed by a Society member. (Membership will be as an employed member and not automatically transferable if the employment is discontinued – see below.)
- (b) Must be or use the services of a qualified saddler (holding City & Guilds Level 3 Saddle and one other Level 3) to carry out major saddle, panel and flocking adjustments and repairs or have the agreed services of a manufacturer;
- (c) Three years to have been previously completed with the original employer or elapsed or termination agreed if the course was funded by the employer.
- (d) holds the Society's saddle flocking qualification.
- (e) hold current product and public liability insurance or work for a business which holds such insurance

An inspection may be carried out to ascertain stock holding and to inspect premises.

**12. QUALIFIED BRIDLE FITTER** Members who shall be persons who, in the opinion of the Executive Committee, have passed the Society of Master Saddlers Qualified Bridle Fitting & Measuring Qualification and fulfil the following points:

- (a) Derive their income from the sale and fitting of bridles or fit predominantly for Society of Master Saddlers members;  
or  
have passed the Society's Qualified Bridle Fitting & Measuring qualification and are employed by a Society member. (Membership will be as an employed member and not automatically transferable if the employment is discontinued – see below.)
- (b) If supplying a bespoke or repair service then must use the services of a saddler holding City & Guilds Level 3 Bridle. The Saddler/Bridle Maker must be named on application and annually;
- (c) Three years to have been previously completed with the original employer or elapsed or termination agreed if the course was funded by the employer.
- (d) hold current product and public liability insurance or work for a business which holds such insurance.

**13. INTERMEDIATE SADDLER** Members who shall be persons who, in the opinion of the Executive Committee:

- (a) Have passed Level II (Intermediate) Saddle and one other of the Level II of the City & Guilds Saddlery Skills Assessment Scheme;
- (b) derive their income from within the saddlery trade.
- (c) hold current product and public liability insurance or work for a business which holds such insurance.

**14. TRAINEE SADDLER** Members who shall be persons who, in the opinion of the Executive Committee:

- (a) Are undergoing training in saddlery or flocking at an SMS approved training centre and are working towards SMS City & Guilds Assessments;
- (b) hold current product liability insurance if they are producing work for sale to the general public.

Note: This category of membership is intended for those who are continuing their training. Therefore those accepted as Trainee Members will be expected to progress with their training and qualifications. (See also point 7 under 'Notes')

**15. TRAINEE SADDLE or BRIDLE FITTER** Members who shall be persons who, in the opinion of the Executive Committee:

- (a) have attended the Introductory Saddle or Bridle Fitting Course.  
or  
are enrolled onto 'The Assured Certificate in Bridle Fitting including Measuring and Bitting' course
- (b) are working as a trainee saddle or bridle fitter.
- (d) hold current public and product liability insurance if fitting for the public or work for an employer who holds relevant insurance.

Note: This category of membership is intended for those who are continuing their saddlery fitting training. Therefore those accepted as trainee fitters will be expected to progress with their training. (See also point 7 under 'Notes')

16. **ALLIED TRADE** Members who shall be UK firms, partnerships or companies who, in the opinion of the Executive Committee, have an interest in the saddlery trade and the Society. They will manufacture/distribute high quality saddlery related items for sale by wholesale to bona fide retailers or provide an industry related service. They will supply references from two companies and have been in the trade for a minimum of a year. For those supplying products an inspection of goods will be required.
17. **AFFILIATED MEMBER** Organisations which, in the opinion of the Executive Committee, have an interest in the saddlery trade and the Society. Those with a saddlers' workshop must employ a Qualified Saddler or Master Saddler.

### NOTES

1. All applicants will need to satisfy the Executive Committee that they have current product liability insurance if supplying a service or goods.
2. Where appropriate, all applicants will be inspected by a member of the Executive Committee, who will expect to see samples of current work.
3. Where an individual applicant or the saddler supplying the repair service for an Approved Retailer does not hold the required qualifications the Executive Committee may agree to an inspection of work. The inspector will expect to see a saddle repair, a re-flocked saddle, a new item of bridework and to meet the saddler. Those who came into the trade after 1993 will be expected to hold the relevant qualifications.
4. Retail applicants with shop premises
  - a) Minimum stock level—£55,000, to include at least 25 new saddles from 3 recognised UK manufacturers and 25 bridles. Variety of other horse requisites. (Confirmation of stocking levels will be sought from the relevant manufacturers)
  - b) Floor space—guideline of 625 sq ft minimum.
  - c) Where a company has more than one branch each premises to be listed and displaying the Society logo must fulfil the criteria laid down and pay the relevant Subscription.
  - d) In the case of franchises each premises will be considered as a separate application and therefore must fulfil the criteria laid down and pay the relevant subscription.
  - e) All retail applicants must provide a minimum of two photographs of the premises, one of the interior and one of the exterior.
5. The Executive Committee will wish to establish both the knowledge and skill level of any applicant, hence possession of certain qualifications alone will not guarantee membership in any category.
6. Any individual applying to upgrade to Master status without the relevant qualifications will be expected to attend the Saddlery Training Centre to be overseen carrying out certain saddlery procedures.
7. Category 13 (Intermediate Saddlers), 14 (Trainee Saddler) & 15 (Trainee Fitters) are eligible to use the Society Intermediate or Trainee badge, as appropriate to their category. A Trainee member's name only will appear on the SMS web site but contact details are not included.
8. Society membership is not automatically transferable with the sale of a business.

Email [enquiries@mastersaddlers.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@mastersaddlers.co.uk) for further information and an application form