

University of Florida  
Institute of Food & Agricultural Sciences  
*Master Beekeeper Program*



## INFORMATION & REQUIREMENTS

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### Mission

To improve honey bee health and the sustainability of beekeeping globally through beekeeper training and public outreach

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### Goals

- 1) Beekeepers in the UF/IFAS MBP will learn and adopt research-based beekeeping best management practices.
  - 2) Beekeepers in the UF/IFAS MBP will provide research-based education to the non-beekeeping public and serve as mentors to new beekeepers.
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### Overview

The University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) Master Beekeeper Program (MBP) is a five-year (minimum) certification program managed by the UF Honey Bee Research and Extension Laboratory (HBREL). It is composed of four levels: Apprentice, Advanced, Master, and Master Craftsman.

Note: The UF/IFAS MBP is *not* a Master of Science or other degree-granting program.

Individuals who want to join the UF/IFAS MBP can do so at any time by registering for the online Apprentice course. This, and all UF/IFAS MBP courses are housed on Canvas, an online learning management system. See [Appendix A](#) for course structure and registration information. All participants must enter the program at the Apprentice level; no one, regardless of experience or participation in other state's programs, will be permitted to skip levels. Contact the MBP Board at [honeybee@ifas.ufl.edu](mailto:honeybee@ifas.ufl.edu) for information on transitioning from the traditional (in-person) version of the UF/IFAS MBP to this online version of the program.

Joining the program does NOT require an application, beekeeping experience, or specific educational requirements. There are NO maximum or minimum age limits to participate in the UF/IFAS MBP. **To join the program, you must 1) be interested in keeping honey bees and 2) have access to a computer or mobile device with a reliable internet connection.**

## Program Requirements

For a summary of the requirements for each level of the program, see [Appendix B](#).

### *To become an Apprentice Beekeeper:*

**1. Complete the online UF/IFAS MBP Apprentice course.**

Candidates for Apprentice Beekeeper must complete the training lessons, associated learning activities, and module assessments within the online Apprentice Beekeeper course ([Appendix A](#)). There are no prerequisites for starting this course. The MBP Board encourages you to begin the online Apprentice course before you ever acquire your first hive of bees, though this is not required.

**2. Maintain at least one honey bee colony for at least one full year.**

Before becoming an Apprentice Beekeeper, you must have already kept honey bees for at least one year. This can happen at any point before being certified at the Apprentice Beekeeper level. Your one-year minimum does not necessarily need to be the year directly before being certified. You will be asked to honestly complete an agreement form within the online Apprentice Beekeeper course in order to fulfill this requirement.

**3. Currently keep bees.**

You must fully manage at least one honey bee colony at the time of being certified as an Apprentice Beekeeper. You will be asked to honestly complete an agreement form and submit a photo of you working your bees within the online Apprentice Beekeeper course in order to fulfill this requirement.

**4. Register as a beekeeper.**

You must be registered as a beekeeper if the municipality, state, or country in which you keep bees has a mandatory *or* voluntary beekeeper registration. You are exempt from this requirement if registration is not possible in your area. You will be required to show proof of your beekeeper registration within the online Apprentice level course.

Anyone maintaining honey bee colonies in Florida must register his/her colonies with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (more information can be found at <https://www.fdacs.gov/Divisions-Offices/Plant-Industry/Business-Services/Registrations-and-Certifications/Beekeeper-Registration>). In many cases, families can register together, rather than as individuals; this can satisfy the registration requirement for all members of the family.

**5. Score 80% or higher on a hive inspection practical assessment.**

This is the final requirement of the Apprentice level; all other Apprentice requirements *must* be completed before taking/submitting the practical assessment. Apprentice candidates can complete the practical assessment in one of two ways: in-person or via a video submission ([Appendix C](#)). In both instances, participants will be asked to demonstrate their ability to light a smoker, inspect/correctly work a honey bee colony, and identify various components in the hive/colony. A standard rubric will be used for grading all Apprentice level practical assessments regardless of the practical format that

is chosen. See the online Apprentice course for the grading rubric and more details on in-person and video submission guidelines.

***To become an Advanced Beekeeper:***

**1. Complete the online UF/IFAS MBP Advanced course.**

Candidates for Advanced Beekeeper must complete the training lessons, associated learning activities, and module assessments within the online Advanced Beekeeper course ([Appendix A](#)). Advanced Beekeeper candidates can begin the Advanced level course at any point after they achieve the Apprentice Beekeeper level.

**2. Hold the rank of Apprentice Beekeeper for at least one year.**

Before becoming an Advanced Beekeeper, you must have held the rank of the Apprentice Beekeeper in the UF/IFAS MBP for at least one full year (365 days). You will find the exact day on which you became an Apprentice Beekeeper on your Apprentice Beekeeper certificate.

**3. Maintain at least one honey bee colony for at least two full years.**

Before becoming an Advanced Beekeeper, you must have already kept honey bees for at least two years. This can happen at any point before being certified at the Advanced Beekeeper level. Your two-year minimum does not necessarily need to be continuous or in the year directly before being certified. You will be asked to honestly complete an agreement form within the online Advanced Beekeeper course in order to fulfill this requirement.

**4. Currently keep bees.**

You must fully manage at least one honey bee colony at the time of being certified as an Advanced Beekeeper. You will be asked to honestly complete an agreement form and submit a photo of you working your bees within the online Advanced Beekeeper course in order to fulfill this requirement.

**5. Register as a beekeeper.**

You must be registered as a beekeeper if the municipality, state, or country in which you keep bees has a mandatory *or* voluntary beekeeper registration. You are exempt from this requirement if registration is not possible in your area. You will be required to show proof of your beekeeper registration within the online Advanced level course.

Anyone maintaining honey bee colonies in Florida must register his/her colonies with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (more information can be found at <https://www.fdacs.gov/Divisions-Offices/Plant-Industry/Business-Services/Registrations-and-Certifications/Beekeeper-Registration>). In many cases, families can register together, rather than as individuals; this can satisfy the registration requirement for all members of the family.

**6. Complete and document at least 10 Public Service Points (PSPs)**

Candidates for the Advanced level must complete and document 10 PSPs. PSPs are educational activities focused on bees and/or beekeeping. Advanced Beekeeper

candidates will receive points for conducting such activities for audiences of non-beekeepers (i.e. general public). See Table 1 for the activities that qualify for PSPs for the Advanced Beekeeper level of the program. Activities are assigned points based on the amount of effort they require to complete. See Table 1 for how points are assigned to the qualifying activities. See Appendix D for details on PSP documentation requirements.

*Table 1: Qualifying Public Service Points for the Advanced level and the points assigned to each activity*

<b>Qualifying Activity for Advanced Level</b>	<b>Assigned Points</b>
1. Presenting a bee-related lecture, presentation, talk, or demonstration to a group of non-beekeepers (youth or adult).	1 pt./30 min. talk
2. Create an original slideshow presentation for yourself to use in completing a qualifying activity listed above (1)	1 pt./presentation created <sup>a</sup>
3. Answer bee-related questions at an informational table/booth at a fair, festival, or other similar event geared towards non-beekeepers (youth or adult). <sup>b</sup>	1 pt./1 hour of tabling

<sup>a</sup> Only 2 of the 10 PSPs submitted for the Advanced level can be from this qualifying activity category.

<sup>b</sup> Tabling cannot be concurrent with personal commercial ventures (e.g. selling honey), unless the venture is a fundraising effort for an educational organization (e.g. a bee club).

Any activities of public service that you completed before becoming an Apprentice Beekeeper do not qualify for this requirement. You may submit more than 10 PSPs for this level. Advanced level PSPs can be completed at any time as an Apprentice Beekeeper (Advanced Beekeeper candidate), as long as you have completed the ‘Education and Communication’ module (Module 2) of the Advanced Beekeeper online course.

**7. Score 80% or higher on in-hive practical assessments.**

Advanced Requirements 1 through 5 *must* be completed before taking/submitting the practical assessment. PSPs can be completed before and/or after the practical assessment. Advanced candidates can complete the practical assessment in one of two ways: in-person or via a video submission. In both instances, participants will be asked to demonstrate their ability to harvest honey from a bee hive and monitor a colony for *Varroa*. A standard rubric (found within the Advanced level online course) will be used for grading all Advanced level practical assessments regardless of the practical format that is chosen. See [Appendix C](#) for more details on in-person and video submission guidelines.

***To become a Master Beekeeper:***

**1. Complete the online UF/IFAS MBP Master course.**

Candidates for Master Beekeeper must complete the training lessons, associated learning activities, and module assessments within the online Master Beekeeper course ([Appendix](#)

A). Master Beekeeper candidates can begin the Master level course at any point after they achieve the Advanced Beekeeper level.

**2. Hold the rank of Advanced Beekeeper for at least one year.**

Before becoming a Master Beekeeper, you must have held the rank of the Advanced Beekeeper in the UF/IFAS MBP for at least one full year (365 days). You will find the exact day on which you became an Advanced Beekeeper on your Advanced Beekeeper certificate.

**3. Maintain at least one honey bee colony for at least three full years.**

Before becoming a Master Beekeeper, you must have already kept honey bees for at least three years. This can happen at any point before being certified at the Master Beekeeper level. Your three-year minimum does not necessarily need to be continuous or in the year directly before being certified. You will be asked to honestly complete an agreement form within the online Master Beekeeper course in order to fulfill this requirement.

**4. Currently keep bees.**

You must fully manage at least one honey bee colony at the time of being certified as a Master Beekeeper. You will be asked to honestly complete an agreement form and submit a photo of you working your bees within the online Master Beekeeper course in order to fulfill this requirement.

**5. Register as a beekeeper.**

You must be registered as a beekeeper if the municipality, state, or country in which you keep bees has a mandatory *or* voluntary beekeeper registration. You are exempt from this requirement if registration is not possible in your area. You will be required to show proof of your beekeeper registration within the online Master level course.

Anyone maintaining honey bee colonies in Florida must register his/her colonies with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (more information can be found at <https://www.fdacs.gov/Divisions-Offices/Plant-Industry/Business-Services/Registrations-and-Certifications/Beekeeper-Registration>). In many cases, families can register together, rather than as individuals; this can satisfy the registration requirement for all members of the family.

**6. Complete and document at least 20 Public Service Points (PSPs)**

Candidates for the Master Beekeeper level must complete and document 20 PSPs during their time as Advanced Beekeepers. PSPs are educational activities focused on bees and/or beekeeping. Master Beekeeper candidates will receive points for conducting such activities for audiences of non-beekeepers (i.e. general public). See Table 2 for the activities that qualify for PSPs for the Master Beekeeper level of the program. Activities are assigned points based on the amount of effort they require to complete. See Table 2 for how points are assigned to the qualifying activities. See [Appendix D](#) for details on PSP documentation requirements.

Table 2: Qualifying Public Service Points for the Master level and the points assigned to each activity

Qualifying Activity for Master Level	Assigned Points
1. Present a bee-related lecture, presentation, talk, or demonstration to a group of non-beekeepers (youth or adult).	1 pt./30 min. talk
2. Answer bee-related questions at an informational table/booth at a fair, festival, or other similar event geared towards non-beekeepers (youth or adult). <sup>c</sup>	1 pt./1 hour of tabling
3. Create an original slideshow presentation, pamphlet, brochure, or other teaching media for yourself to use in completing qualifying activities 1 and/or 2 (above) or for distribution through a specific educational organization which targets non-beekeepers (e.g. county Extension office, non-profit organization). <sup>d</sup>	1 pt./item created <sup>e</sup>
4. Establish an educational/demonstration apiary or bee hive <sup>e</sup> in a public space (e.g. county Extension office, local community garden). This must include some educational signage or other informative media.	4 pts./establishment <sup>f</sup>
5. Assist and/or mentor a member of a youth organization (e.g. 4-H, Scouts, FFA, science fair), with individual project work related to bees and/or beekeeping.	1 pt./hour of education provided
6. Publish a bee-related article in a publication targeted at non-beekeeper audiences <sup>g</sup> .	1 pt./publication
7. Be interviewed for and/or featured in a published news story (radio, television, newspaper, etc.) related to bees and/or beekeeping.	1 pt./publication

<sup>c</sup> Tabling cannot be concurrent with personal commercial ventures (e.g. selling honey), unless the venture is a fundraising effort for an educational organization (e.g. a bee club).

<sup>d</sup> Educational items created for the Advanced Beekeeper level cannot be resubmitted in the Master Level, unless significant (>50%) changes have been made to the item.

<sup>d</sup> Only 2 of the 20 PSPs submitted for the Master level can be from this qualifying activity category.

<sup>e</sup> This includes installing an observation hive.

<sup>f</sup> The PSPs in this category are for establishing such an apiary, not for maintaining it. Maintaining your colonies, regardless of location is a part of being a beekeeper. However, if you use your established apiary for a demonstration or presentation, each of those educational activities could count for a PSP, under qualifying activity 1 (see above).

<sup>g</sup> These publications cannot be your own personal websites, blogs, newsletters, etc.

In order to fulfill this requirement, you must submit PSPs from 4 or more of the categories in Table 2. Of the 20 PSPs required for this level, no more than 5 PSPs can come from any given category. However, do not let these requirements restrict your educational activities. You may always submit more than 20 PSPs for this level, in which



case you may exceed the 5 PSPs/category limit. Any PSPs that you completed before becoming an Advanced Beekeeper should have been submitted within the Advanced level online course and may not be carried over into the Master level course. Master level PSPs can be completed at any time as an Advanced Beekeeper.

**7. Complete and document at least 10 Mentorship Points (MPs)**

Candidates for the Master level must complete and document 10 MPs during their time as Advanced Beekeepers. MPs are awarded for educational activities conducted for/with audiences of beekeepers. See Table 3 for the activities that qualify for MPs for the Master level of the program. Activities are assigned points based on the amount of effort they require to complete. See Table 3 for how points are assigned to the qualifying activities. See [Appendix D](#) for details on MP documentation requirements.

*Table 3: Qualifying Mentorship Points for the Master level and the points assigned to each activity*

<b>Qualifying Activity for Master Level</b>	<b>Assigned Points</b>
1. Present a bee-related lecture, presentation, talk, or demonstration to a group of beekeepers (youth or adult) or hold a question and answer session for a similar audience.	1 pt./30 min. talk
2. Create an original slideshow presentation, pamphlet, brochure, or other teaching media for yourself to use in completing qualifying activity 1 (above) or for distribution through a specific educational organization, which targets beekeepers (e.g. bee club, non-profit organization). <sup>h</sup>	1 pt./item created <sup>i</sup>
3. Mentor a new or inexperienced beekeeper in practical beekeeping skills (e.g. building equipment, installing new colonies, swarm control, hive inspections).	1 pt./hour of education provided
4. Publish a bee-related article in a publication targeted at beekeeper audiences. <sup>j</sup>	1 pt./publication
5. Grade Apprentice/Advanced Beekeeper online video practical assessments using provided rubrics. <sup>k</sup>	1pt./2 assessments
6. Administer Apprentice/Advanced Beekeeper practical assessments in person using provided rubrics. <sup>k</sup>	1 pt./1 assessment

<sup>h</sup> Educational items created for the Advanced Beekeeper level cannot be resubmitted in the Master Level, unless significant (>50%) changes have been made to the item.

<sup>i</sup> Only 2 of the 10 MPs submitted for the Master level can be from this qualifying activity category.

<sup>j</sup> These publications cannot be your own personal websites, blogs, newsletters, etc.

<sup>k</sup> You will be required to complete an agreement form within the online Master level course before grading or administering Apprentice/Advanced practical assessments.

In order to fulfill this requirement, you must submit 10 MPs, at least 5 of which must come from categories 1 and 3 (Table 3). As always, you may submit more than 10 MPs for this level.

## 8. Complete 5 hours of Continuing Education (CE).

Before becoming a Master beekeeper, you must complete at least 5 hours of Continuing Education (CE) in advanced topics related to bees and/or beekeeping by participating in workshops, courses, lectures, symposia, or other training. Such topics must go beyond the level of information that was already covered in the Apprentice, Advanced, and Master Beekeeper online courses. Use this as an opportunity to learn more about a beekeeping topic that interests you. CE cannot overlap with activities you do for other requirements of this program. You cannot start work on this requirement until you have completed the online Master Beekeeper course. See [Appendix D](#) for details on CE documentation requirements.

CE can include, but is not limited to, the following topics:

- Life-saving treatment of persons suffering from allergic reactions to insect stings (e.g. EpiPen certification)
- *Advanced* training on honey bee pests and diseases
- Identification of pollen present in honey samples
- Commercial pollination services
- Queen rearing
- Instrumental insemination
- FABIS, USDAID, molecular or other honey bee race identification methods
- Live bee removal
- Native/wild bees
- Effective education
- Beekeeping with alternative hive types

## 9. Complete one Application of Practical Skills (APS) option

True mastery of beekeeping involves long-term application of practical skills. As such, before becoming a Master Beekeeper, you must complete one APS option. You cannot start work on this requirement until you have completed the online Master Beekeeper course. See [Appendix E](#) for details on documentation of your APS option.

To become a Master Beekeeper, you must complete one of the following options:

*Option 1:* Volunteer at least 40 hours for (choose one of the options below):

- a bee-related (wild or managed bees) research project at a college, university, county Extension office, or non-profit organization.
- a bee-related (wild or managed bees) educational project at a college, university, or a non-profit organization.
- a commercial beekeeping operation (e.g. honey producer, queen breeder, pollination services, live bee removal).
- a beekeeping organization, while serving as an elected officer (e.g. president, vice president, treasurer, secretary).



*Option 2:* Acquire an additional certification. Completing a Master Beekeeper Program in another state, region, or country cannot count towards this option (choose one of the options below):

- Certified Master Gardener
- Certified Honey Judge (from a state, national, or international honey judging program)
- Licensed Pesticide Applicator issued by your state such as a Restricted Use Pesticide License
  - In Florida, you must be approved in General Standards/Core and one category under either FS 487 (e.g. Private Applicator Ag., Demonstration & Research, Ornamental and Turf) or FS 482 (Commercial Pest Control).
- Establish a legally licensed honey processing facility

*Option 3:* Demonstrate practical skills in your own beekeeping operation (choose one of the options below):

- Operate a small-scale queen rearing operation according to Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) best management practices (BMPs), have it inspected by a FDACS apiary inspector or your region's apiary inspection agency, if available.
- Switch to and document use of IPM (integrated pest management) in your operation.
- Provide pollination services for a garden or farm (not your own) of at least 5 acres in size.
- Produce at least five hive products from five different honey show classes (e.g. dark amber honey, mead, molded candles, creamed honey) and enter them as exhibits in a honey show.

## Appendix A: UF/IFAS Canvas, the MBP Learning Management System

All instruction within the UF/IFAS MBP is offered through UF/IFAS Canvas, the online learning management system used by the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS). Each level of the MBP (Apprentice, Advanced, Master, and Master Craftsman) has a corresponding online course that participants are required to take. You can find the full UF/IFAS MBP course catalog here: <https://ifas-honeybee.catalog.instructure.com/>. After registering for a course, you can access it here: <https://ifas.instructure.com/>.

Multiple instructional modules make up the online course for each level; these modules are organized by topic and are composed of multiple lessons each. Each lesson starts by specifically listing the objectives for the lesson, so that you know exactly what the given lesson is intended to teach you. Lessons are made up of instructional content (narrated presentations, videos, documents, etc.) followed by interactive learning activities. Each lesson also includes additional resources that reinforce the topics covered in the lessons. Information found in the Additional Resources section of each lesson will not be “testable” material unless that information was already covered in the lesson’s instructional content. Each module will end with a critical thinking module assessment. Participants must receive a passing score of 90% to move on to the next module. Each assessment can be taken as many times as is necessary to pass.

**Appendix B:** Summary of the requirements for each level of the program

<b>Apprentice</b>	<b>Advanced</b>	<b>Master</b>	<b>Master Craftsman</b>
Apprentice online course	Advanced online course	Master online course	<i>TBA</i>
--	Hold Apprentice Beekeeper rank for one year.	Hold Advanced Beekeeper rank for one year.	
Maintain one honey bee colony for one year.	Maintain one honey bee colony for two years.	Maintain one honey bee colony for three years.	
Currently keep bees.	Currently keep bees.	Currently keep bees.	
Register as a beekeeper.	Register as a beekeeper.	Register as a beekeeper.	
1 practical assessment	2 practical assessments		
	10 Public Service Points	20 Public Service Points	
		10 Mentorship Points	
		5 hours Continuing Education	
		1 Application of Practical Skills option	

## Appendix C: Details on Apprentice and Advanced level practical assessments

*Video submission:* Participants can upload recorded videos of their Apprentice/Advanced level practical assessments, which can be submitted within the online Apprentice/Advanced course, respectively. See the courses for specific details on how to record and submit practical videos.

*In-person:* In-person practical assessments can be administered in one of two ways:

1. At least twice per year at the UF/IFAS Bee College events (visit <http://entnemdept.ifas.ufl.edu/honey-bee/extension/bee-college/> for details on these events), UF/IFAS HBREL staff will administer in-person practical assessments. Individuals must be registered for Bee College to use this option and must sign up for a time slot ahead of time.
2. Master and Master Craftsman Beekeepers in the UF/IFAS MBP, *who have been approved by the MBP board* (contact the MBP Board at [honeybee@ifas.ufl.edu](mailto:honeybee@ifas.ufl.edu) for approval), may administer practical assessments for Apprentice and Advanced level candidates at an apiary agreed upon by both parties.

See the online course for the grading rubric and more details on in-person and video submission guidelines specific to each level.

## **Appendix D: Documentation requirements for PSPs, MPs, and CE**

Two forms of documentation are required for each qualifying activity that is associated with Public Service Points (PSPs), Mentorship Points (MPs), and Continuing Education (CE) activities. The documentation includes 1) a signed and completed PSP/MP/CE Documentation Form and 2) other material evidence of the qualifying activity.

### ***Documentation Forms***

PSP, MP, and CE Documentation Forms must be signed by a representative or witness of the activity or by your mentee (for MP activities) or by the teacher/instructor (for CE activities). Completed forms are submitted within the Requirements page of the online course associated with each level. Blank Documentation Forms can also be found within the Requirements page of the appropriate online courses.

### ***Material evidence***

Such evidence may include an image or video of you presenting or participating in training, a testimonial letter from a third party, a newspaper/magazine article highlighting the event (you must be named in such evidence), a program/schedule with you included, a signed letter from your mentee, or a certificate of completion to name a few. Other forms of material evidence may also be accepted. MBP Board members reserve the right to accept or reject any submitted documentation. This evidence will be submitted within Requirements page of the online course associated with each level. Physical items that you submit as evidence may be scanned or you may take a legible photograph of the evidence.

## **Appendix E: Documentation requirements for APS options**

Two forms of documentation are required for the Master level Application of Practical Skills (APS) option: 1) APS Documentation Form and 2) a field journal.

### ***APS Documentation Form***

APS Documentation Forms include a summary of the work completed, the timeframe of your APS, and a ‘Lessons Learned’ section. Completed forms are submitted within the Requirements page of the Master level online course. Blank APS Documentation Forms can also be found within the Requirements page of the course.

### ***Field journal***

This form of documentation should be completed throughout your work on your APS option, although you will only submit it once, after the activity is complete. Your field journal can be written (hand-written and scanned or typed) or can be audio or video recordings (must be able to be submitted as one file upload less than 5MB in size). Each field journal must contain a minimum of 10 separate entries, each of which must include the following information:

- The date of the entry
- What activities or tasks you completed
- A reflection, which may include what you learned, what you enjoyed/hated, how this helped/did not help you as a beekeeper, to name a few
- Optional: you may also choose to include images or other evidence within your journal (if written)

This field journal will be submitted within the Requirements section of the Master level course.