



INFORMATION & REQUIREMENTS

Mission

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

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.

Overview

The University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) Master Beekeeper Program (MBP) is a four-year (minimum) certification program managed by the UF/IFAS 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, here: <https://ifas-honeybee.catalog.instructure.com/courses/apprentice>. Beekeepers with two or more years of beekeeping experience may attempt to test out of the Apprentice Beekeeper level by passing both a written and practical test, here: <https://ifas-honeybee.catalog.instructure.com/courses/test-out>. These, and all UF/IFAS MBP courses are housed on Canvas, an online learning management system. Registration links for the Advanced, Master, and Master Craftsman courses will be provided to you as you become eligible to start them. Contact the UF/IFAS MBP Board at 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. After registering for a course, you can access it here: <https://ifas.instructure.com/>.

Joining the program does not require an application, beekeeping experience, or specific educational requirements. While this program is designed for adults, there are no maximum or minimum age limits to participate in the UF/IFAS MBP. **To join the program, you must 1) have the ability to keep honey bees and 2) have access to a computer or mobile device with a reliable internet connection.**

Program Requirements

Click on the table below to navigate to specific locations in this document.

| Apprentice | Advanced | Master | Master Craftsman |
|---|--|--|---|
| Complete the Apprentice online course. | Complete the Advanced online course. | Complete the Master online course. | Complete the Master Craftsman online course. |
| -- | Hold Apprentice Beekeeper rank for one year. | Hold Advanced Beekeeper rank for one year. | Hold Master 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. | Maintain one honey bee colony for four years. |
| Currently keep bees. | Currently keep bees. | Currently keep bees. | Currently keep bees. |
| Register as a beekeeper. | Register as a beekeeper. | Register as a beekeeper. | Register as a beekeeper. |
| Complete one practical assessment. | Complete two practical assessments. | Complete one Application of Practical Skills option. | -- |
| -- | Complete 10 Public Service Points. | Complete 20 Public Service Points. | Complete 20 Public Service Points. |
| -- | -- | Complete 10 Mentorship Points. | Complete 20 Mentorship Points. |
| -- | -- | Complete 5 hours Continuing Education. | Complete 10 hours Continuing Education. |
| -- | -- | -- | Develop and implement an experiment in your apiary. |
| -- | -- | -- | Develop and implement an Extension program. |
| -- | -- | -- | Present and discuss your projects with the MBP Board. |

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. There are no prerequisites for starting this course. The UF/IFAS 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 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 requirement can be completed any time after you join the UF/IFAS MBP; however, it is *strongly* recommended that you complete all of the online modules (Requirement 1) before attempting this requirement. Apprentice 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 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 instructions on how to complete in-person and video practical assessments.

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. 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. Your year as an Apprentice Beekeeper will be spent completing all of the Advanced Beekeeper requirements, including the Advanced level online course.

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. At least one of those years must be the year in which you were an Apprentice Beekeeper in the UF/IFAS Master Beekeeper Program. 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 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, delivered to non-beekeeping audiences (i.e. the general public). See Table 1 for the activities that qualify for PSPs in the Advanced Beekeeper level and how PSPs are assigned.

Advanced level PSPs can be completed at any time *after* becoming an Apprentice Beekeeper, as long as you have completed the ‘Education and Communication’ module (Module 2) of the Advanced Beekeeper online course. See the Advanced level course for details on documenting and submitting PSPs.

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

| Qualifying Activity for Advanced Level | Assigned Points |
|--|---|
| 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 ^a |
| 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). ^b | 1 pt./1 hour of tabling |

^a Only 2 of the 10 PSPs submitted for the Advanced level can be from this qualifying activity category.

^b 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).

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

This requirement can be completed any time after you have joined the Advanced level online course; however, it is *strongly* recommended that you complete all of the online modules (Requirement 1) before attempting this requirement. Advanced candidates can complete the practical assessments 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*. Standard rubrics will be used for grading all Advanced level practical assessments regardless of the practical format that is chosen. See the online Advanced course for grading rubrics and instructions on how to complete in-person and video practical assessments.

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. 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. Your year as an Advanced Beekeeper will be spent completing all of the Master Beekeeper requirements, including the Master level online course.

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. At least two of those years must be the years in which you were an Apprentice Beekeeper and an Advanced Beekeeper in the UF/IFAS Master Beekeeper Program. 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 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, delivered to non-beekeeping audiences (i.e. the general public). See Appendix A for the activities that qualify for PSPs in the Master Beekeeper level and how PSPs are assigned.

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. See the Master level course for details on documenting and submitting PSPs.

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 Appendix B for the activities that qualify for MPs in the Master Beekeeper level and how MPs are assigned. See the Master level course for details on documenting and submitting MPs.

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 can start work on this requirement at any point after becoming an Advanced Beekeeper. However, it is recommended that you complete Master level CE after completing the Master Beekeeper online course, so that you are aware of the content already covered in the course. See the Master level course for details on documenting and submitting CE hours.

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

Before becoming a Master Beekeeper, you must complete one Application of Practical Skills (APS) options below. This requirement can be completed any time after you have joined the Master level online course; however, it is strongly recommended that you complete all of the online modules (Requirement 1) before attempting this requirement. See the Master level course for details on documenting and submitting MPs.

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) and produce at least three successful queens.
- Switch to and document use of IPM (integrated pest management) to control one or more pests in your beekeeping operation. This pest may include *Varroa* or small hive beetles in your colonies, ants or other destructive animal pests in your apiary, and/or controlling animal pests in your woodenware or honey house.
- 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.

To become a Master Craftsman Beekeeper:

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

Candidates for Master Craftsman Beekeeper must complete the training lessons, associated learning activities, worksheets, and module assessments within the online Master Craftsman Beekeeper course. Master Craftsman Beekeeper candidates can begin the Master Craftsman level course at any point after they achieve the Master Beekeeper level.

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

Before becoming a Master Craftsman Beekeeper, you must have held the rank of Master Beekeeper in the UF/IFAS MBP for at least one full year (365 days). You will find the exact day on which you became a Master Beekeeper on your Master Beekeeper certificate. Your year as a Master Beekeeper will be spent completing all of the Master Craftsman Beekeeper requirements, including the Master Craftsman online course.

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

Before becoming a Master Craftsman Beekeeper, you must have already kept honey bees for at least four years. At least three of those years must be the years in which you were an Apprentice Beekeeper, an Advanced Beekeeper, and a Master Beekeeper in the UF/IFAS Master Beekeeper Program. You will be asked to honestly complete an agreement form within the online Master Craftsman 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 Craftsman Beekeeper. You will be asked to honestly complete an agreement form within the online Master Craftsman 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 Craftsman 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 Craftsman Beekeeper level must complete and document 20 PSPs during their time as Master Beekeepers. PSPs are educational activities focused on

bees and/or beekeeping, delivered to non-beekeeping audiences (i.e. the general public). See Appendix A for the activities that qualify for PSPs in the Master Craftsman Beekeeper level and how PSPs are assigned.

Any PSPs that you completed before becoming a Master Beekeeper should have been submitted within the Master level online course and may not be carried over into the Master Craftsman level course. Master Craftsman level PSPs can be completed at any time as a Master Beekeeper. See the Master Craftsman level course for details on documenting and submitting PSPs.

7. Complete and document at least 20 Mentorship Points (MPs)

Candidates for the Master Craftsman level must complete and document 20 MPs during their time as Master Beekeepers. MPs are awarded for educational activities conducted for/with audiences of beekeepers. See Appendix B for the activities that qualify for MPs in the Master Craftsman Beekeeper level and how MPs are assigned. See the Master Craftsman level course for details on documenting and submitting MPs.

8. Complete 10 hours of Continuing Education (CE).

Before becoming a Master Craftsman Beekeeper, you must complete at least 10 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 can work on this requirement at any time as a Master Beekeeper. Any CE hours that you completed before becoming a Master Beekeeper should have been submitted within the Master level online course and may not be carried over into the Master Craftsman level. See the Master Craftsman level course for details on documenting and submitting CE hours.

9. Develop and implement an experiment in your apiary.

Before becoming a Master Craftsman beekeeper, you must plan and execute a research experiment in your apiary. You cannot begin work on this requirement until you have completed the “Conducting Scientific Research” lessons within the Master Craftsman online course. You will plan your experiment within the online course by completing a series of provided worksheets to guide your progress.

You must submit a Master Craftsman Project Progress Report every six months to provide an update on the work you have completed. These reports give you the opportunity to evaluate your own progress and receive feedback along the way. You can find the template for and submission of these reports within the Master Craftsman online course. You will continue submitting these reports until you complete your project. Once your experiment has been planned and completed, you will submit a final

project report. Guidance on completing this report can be found within the Master Craftsman online course.

10. Develop and implement an Extension program.

Before becoming a Master Craftsman beekeeper, you must plan and execute an Extension project in your local community. You cannot begin work on this requirement until you have completed the “Planning and Delivering an Extension Program” lessons within the Master Craftsman online course. You will plan your program within the online course by completing a series of provided worksheets to guide your progress.

You must submit a Master Craftsman Project Progress Report every six months to provide an update on the work you have completed. These reports give you the opportunity to evaluate your own progress and receive feedback along the way. You can find the template for and submission of these reports within the Master Craftsman online course. You will continue submitting these reports until you complete your project. Once your program has been planned and completed, you will submit a final project report, submitting documentation for your work and reporting outcomes. Guidance on completing this report can be found within the Master Craftsman online course.

11. Present and discuss your projects with the UF/IFAS MBP Board.

This is the final requirement of the Master Craftsman level and of the entire UF/IFAS MBP. After completing Requirements 1 through 10 of the Master Craftsman level, you will present your completed projects to the UF/IFAS MBP Board. Others (e.g. beekeepers, researchers, Extension professionals, members of the UF/IFAS Honey Bee Lab, your friends and family) may also be invited to attend. This presentation can occur in person at the UF/IFAS Honey Bee Lab in Gainesville, FL and/or can be delivered remotely. You will be expected to create and present a slideshow explaining your two Master Craftsman projects, both your Extension program and the experiment conducted in your apiary. Following your prepared presentation, you will be expected to answer audience questions as time permits, followed by a discussion of your projects with the UF/IFAS MBP Board. Guidance on completing this final requirement can be found within the Master Craftsman online course.

Appendix A: Qualifying Public Service Points for the Master and Master Craftsman levels and the points assigned to each activity

| Qualifying Activity | 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). ^c | 1 pt./1 hour of tabling |
| 3. Create an original ^d 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). | 1 pt./item created ^e |
| 4. Establish an educational/demonstration apiary or bee hive ^f 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 ^g |
| 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 ^g . | 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 |

^c 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).

^d Educational items created for previous levels cannot be resubmitted in subsequent levels, unless significant (>50%) changes have been made to the item.

^e Only 2 of the 20 PSPs submitted for each the Master and Master Craftsman levels can be from this qualifying activity category.

^f This can include installing a permanent observation hive.

^g 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).

^g These publications cannot be your own personal websites, blogs, newsletters, etc.

Appendix B: Qualifying Mentorship Points for the Master and Master Craftsman levels and the points assigned to each activity

| Qualifying Activity | Assigned Points |
|--|----------------------------------|
| 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). ^h | 1 pt./item created ⁱ |
| 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. ^j | 1 pt./publication |

^h 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.

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

^j These publications cannot be your own personal websites, blogs, newsletters, etc.

At least half of the MPs required for each the Master and Master Craftsman levels must come from categories 1 and 3 in the table above (i.e. 5 MPs for the Master level, 10 MPs for the Master Craftsman level).