

Professional Flat Jockey

Job Summary:

A Professional UK Flat Jockey is a licensed athlete responsible for riding racehorses in flat races under the rules of racing. The role requires high physical fitness, technical riding ability, tactical awareness, and strong professional judgement. Flat jockeys work closely with trainers to maximise a horse's performance on race day while maintaining high standards of safety, integrity, and animal welfare. The role is physically demanding, highly competitive, and performance-driven, often involving irregular hours, extensive travel, and continual weight management.

Core Skills:

- Advanced riding ability: balance, control, strength, and coordination at racing speeds
- Race tactics and judgement: pace awareness, positioning, and decision-making under pressure
- Physical fitness and weight management: strength, endurance, flexibility, and discipline
- Horse handling and care awareness: understanding equine behaviour, fitness, and welfare
- Communication skills: effective collaboration with trainers, owners, and racing officials
- Mental resilience: focus, confidence, adaptability, and coping with pressure and setbacks
- Professional conduct: adherence to rules, integrity standards, and licensing requirements
- Time management and reliability: meeting race commitments, travel schedules, and weigh-ins

Training:

- Entry typically begins through an apprentice jockey license with a licensed trainer where they are full-time employed, they can apply for a professional license once they have achieved 95 winners on the Flat or are over the age of 26 (then to be classed as a 'claiming professional')
- Completion of mandatory jockey coaching, fitness, and safety training, including riding assessments
- Ongoing professional development covering:
 - Race riding technique and tactics
 - Physical conditioning and nutrition
 - Equine welfare and integrity education
 - Rules of racing and disciplinary procedures
- Apprentices progress to full professional status based on performance,
- Continuous medical, fitness, and licensing checks are required throughout a jockey's career

Pay

- Earnings are performance-based and can vary significantly
- Income typically includes:
 - Riding fees per race ride
 - Prize money percentages for placed rides
 - Retainers or arrangements with trainers (in some cases)
- Annual income can range widely:
 - No guaranteed salary; income depends on rides secured, results achieved, and reputation
 - Additional costs (travel, agents, fitness, nutrition) are usually borne by the jockey

