

# INTERNATIONAL ARMIZARE SOCIETY

Fidelity - Integrity - Honour

## Contents

INTERNATIONAL ARMIZARE SOCIETY .....	1
I. INTRODUCTION .....	2
II. MISSION AND OBJECTIVES .....	2
Canonical vs. Neo-Armizare .....	2
III. TESTING .....	3
IV. REFERRAL AND AT-LARGE CANDIDATES .....	3
V. PREVAILING AUTHORITY .....	4
VI. QUALITY OF EXECUTION .....	4
General Body Mechanics .....	5
Footwork .....	6
Attacking .....	6
Defences/set plays .....	6
Grappling .....	6
Tactical .....	6
VII. QUALITY OF INTERPRETATION .....	6
VIII. RANKS AND REQUIREMENTS .....	7
Certificates (required elements) .....	8
SCHOLAR (SCOLARO) .....	8
Badge: .....	8
Symbol: .....	8
Requirements: .....	8
FREE SCHOLAR (LAUREATO d'ARMI) .....	10
Badge: .....	10
Symbol: .....	10
General Requirements: .....	10
PROVOST (RETTORE d'ARMI) .....	14
Badge: .....	15
Symbol: .....	15
Provost Requirements .....	15
MASTER of ARMIZARE (MAGISTER d'ARMIZARE) .....	18
Badge: .....	18

Symbol: .....	18
Requirements:.....	18
Appendices.....	21
APPENDIX A: CODE OF CONDUCT .....	21
INTRODUCTION.....	21
CODE OF CONDUCT.....	21
APPENDIX B: DEFINITIONS .....	22
APPENDIX C: MEMBER ACADEMIES.....	23
APPENDIX D: RANK EQUIVALENCY.....	23
APPENDIX E: PEDAGOGICAL ADVANCEMENT AND SKILLS ACQUISITION (QoE skill model) .....	24

## I. INTRODUCTION

The International Armizare Society (heretofore referred to as IAS) is an historical and chivalric European martial arts confraternal association concerned with *l'Arte dell'Armizare* of the *dei Liberi Tradition*. This document describes the mission and objectives of IAS, the agreed-upon requirements for recognition of rank within the organisation, as well as formal testing requirements and mechanisms for forming the testing and governing bodies. It is a living document, and may be reviewed and revised at any time with the consent of the governing body. It is understood that learning any martial art is a complex act requiring years of ongoing study that is never fully completed.

## II. MISSION AND OBJECTIVES

The International Armizare Society's mission is to maintain and pass down canonical *Armizare* as recorded and left to posterity by the Founder, Fiore dei Liberi, and the work of successors determined to be within his tradition. In furtherance of this, the IAS also seeks the "preservation and promotion of *Armizare* as a complete, traditional, but living and functional martial art".

In furtherance of these goals, the association is to provide a common set of curricular and performance objectives such that inter-school rank recognition by signatories is facilitated. As a result, the IAS will also form a testing body and formal testing regimen for instructor certification in an effort to ensure transmission and proper preservation of the *dei Liberi Tradition*, as the IAS sees it.

### Canonical vs. Neo-Armizare

Referring to the specific instructions, tactical lessons and techniques left to posterity by Fiore dei Liberi, Filippo Vadi, and several fragmentary sources of anonymous authorship, Canonical *Armizare* is our historical legacy and the lingua franca by which the association understands its origins.

Conversely, Neo-Armizare is “Armizare in Context”, or an understanding of how to apply the principles, tactics and mechanics of the art holistically and within situations upon which dei Liberi either did not discuss, only touched upon tangentially, or upon which he could not have conceived. For example:

- Did not discuss - sword and buckler or large shield, although it was a contemporary weapon style, closely related to the sword in one hand, which he did teach;
- Touched upon tangentially - the use of the short stick (bastoncello) or partizan (ghiavarina)
- Could not have conceived - the use of abrazare, bastoncello and knife defense for modern, personal protection, interpolation of known techniques from contemporary traditions.

It is our belief that the Neo-Armizare applications shows an instructor’s fundamental mastery and integration of the art’s principles and teachings at the highest level, and reflects the founder’s intention that his art be holistic and synergistic.

The IAS central mission is to see that its understanding is refined and transmitted to the next generation. Although the IAS will test Provost and Master candidates in their ability to adapt the principles of Armizare to an unfamiliar weapon or environment as part of its examination process, the establishment of, and testing in, any formal Neo-Armizare teachings remains the sole provenance of member body schools, and is outside the IAS provenance.

### **III. TESTING**

This section relates to testing methods and standards.

Testing up to the rank of Free scholar is entirely in the testing school’s domain. Free scholar testing should entail invitations from outside bodies to attend. Provost and Maestro testing is overseen by the IAS.

Testing of ranks overseen by the IAS will include written, oral, technical and instructional components. Testing may be done in person, by video submission, or any other means allowing oversight. A prize play will round out the process, as a form of “confirmation.” All testing need not be done on the same day, but over a certain period.

Technical performance criteria is outlined in the general QoE specifications, as well as by rank.

### **IV. REFERRAL AND AT-LARGE CANDIDATES**

The International Armizare Society realizes that the grassroots nature of the larger HEMA community means that small study-groups or individual students might find themselves without a direct, higher authority to provide an established curriculum or test candidates. As part of the association’s mandate to foster and develop the larger Armizare community, such “at-large” students may apply directly to IAS for testing and certification. They will be referred to a recognized association instructor who is willing

and able to act as long-distance mentor and monitor. It is up to the mentor and candidate to arrange the specific details of their relationship, whether to become personal students or remain "At-Large" members of the association.

In the latter instance, the mentor will stand as the at-large student's advocate, and will recommend them for testing in the rank of Free Scholar. Testing will be arranged and conducted before a board, and the rank will be conferred directly by IAS rather than a member academy. At-large candidates who successfully achieve the rank of Provost may apply to join the association as a member body, granting them the right to create Scholars and Free Scholars under their own authority.

Note that IAS requires in-person examination and does not allow for video-testing. Further, it is the belief of the organization that a candidate for Maestro d'Arme can only be developed by direct, personal and in-person training between teacher and student, and does not confer this rank to "At-Large" students.

## V. PREVAILING AUTHORITY

Each member may develop its own curriculum, provided the ranks meet the base requirements set forth by the association, although the individual guildmasters/principals are expected to work fraternally to share and refine their material.

While this association, its procedures and methodologies may also form a model by which other HEMA traditions, schools and academies may form their own collective rank and testing requirements, such concerns are beyond the authority, scope or interest of the IAS, and it neither warrants nor refutes the ranks granted by any organisations outside its member bodies or recognised affiliates.

## VI. QUALITY OF EXECUTION

What follows are guidelines for an acceptable quality of execution (QoE). Quality of execution refers to the execution of technique using proper mechanics and timing for movement and action, but may have some interpretational aspects, given that it is impossible to entirely separate physical execution from interpretation in a systematic fashion. The points below are universal, with specific criteria pertaining to individual ranks noted in the rank descriptions, as needed.

More specifically, QoE will be graduated along a skill progression slide using an adapted model proposed by Henri Boudreault, PH.D. Our model is as follows (see appendix for more information on pedagogical progression and skills advancement):

- **Novice:** rigid adherence to taught rules or plans, no exercise of "discretionary judgment"
  - Rote execution or repetition of a demonstrated technique or skill as demonstrated, often without using proper mechanics and without necessarily demonstrating an understanding of the wider context or variations in technique.

- **Intermediate:** has limited "situational perception", all aspects of technique treated separately with equal importance.
  - Applies, with help, the knowledge and skills necessary to the performance of a technique.
  - Proper mechanics are more prevalent, but secondary to the performance of the technique. I.e. the student will quickly abandon proper mechanics if the situation becomes difficult.
  - Application of technique requires concentration and conscious thought.
  
- **Competent:** independent evaluation of a situation, autonomy, transfer of technique across situations.
  - Executes techniques in isolation (set plays, simple phrases) against non-compliant partners.
  - Executes technique without prompting, in tempo and using proper body mechanics.
  - Capable of planning an approach (strategically)
  - Can apply tactical decision making consciously
  
- **Proficient:** ability to apply and adapt technique and mechanics to a variety of situations.
  - Executes multiple techniques ("strings techniques) together to form complex phrases
  - Employs proper body mechanics, at speed
  - Can apply tactical decision making with little conscious thought
  
- **Mastery:** Has a holistic view and can adapt technique to varying situations *and* weapons (i.e. has practised the corpus of techniques and can use them across weapons and versus disparate weapons)
  - Employs proper body mechanics with fluidity and grace (*sprezzatura*)
  - Applies tactical decision making intuitively
  
- **Expertise:** Innovates building upon his mastery, is not limited by the parameters of the system
  - Has significant skill or knowledge beyond mastery in a particular sphere of research (polearms, mounted combat, etc.)

To gain any rank outlined below, a student must gain a certain skill level in the required elements. For instance, to gain Scholar rank, the student should be rated as "competent" in the required skills. Individual schools are encouraged to use the qualitative assignments with their internal ranks and evaluations.

### General Body Mechanics

As a rule, body mechanics are built on natural, mechanical efficiency, using universal principles such as the triangle, spiral and wave. All techniques presume the body is used in a way to perform maximum result with minimal effort, and to be effective across the system: in and out of harness, with all

weapons, etc.

### **Footwork**

Footwork adheres to the rules on general body mechanics and its original context (i.e. turn shoes in medieval environments). That means weight is carried over the balls of the feet, steps are even, balanced, precise and grounded - no jumping, hopping, bobbing, etc.

Footwork should be even and balanced, with the weight resting largely on the balls of the feet. Posture is upright, with weight shifts according to the guard or position and adapted to the situation. Given the holistic nature of *l'arte dell'armizare*, footwork should be applicable both in and out of armour, with carriage adjustments as necessary.

### **Attacking**

Attacks (cuts and thrusts) are to be done along proper fencing lines, and developed in true times (for the purposes of this work, true times are defined as leading the attack with the weapon, with the body following after) and in a safe manner (covering the most exposed line as one enters.)

### **Defences/set plays**

Defences should be performed in such a manner as to keep the defender reasonably safe and provide opportunities for a change in initiative in the form of a follow-on action or riposte. Said defences should be drawn from basic fencing action or from set plays and performed within acceptable standards of interpretation as set in the following section.

### **Grappling**

- Any grappling actions should be done in proper sequence, i.e.: unbalance, enter, throw.
- Grappling actions should be mindful of the context of the Art as a holistic system.

### **Tactical**

Will be evaluated:

The applicants use of tactics in freeplay. Tactics are defined as responses, in time, to a partner's actions.

Among these, we find:

Proper use of tempo in attacking and defending

- Developing a prima tempo (first intention) attack in proper tempo
- Use of second intention actions (dui tempi) and feints
- Proper use of measure
- Use of provocations to elicit responses, through guard changes, manipulation measure, drawing attacks or specific defences, etc.

## **VII. QUALITY OF INTERPRETATION**

Any interpretation must be demonstrably and arguably derived from source material, or reasonably interpolated from the wider dei Liberi tradition. This includes all four extant manuscripts, Filippo Vadi's manual, and manuals in the die Blume des Kampfs/Von Eyb tradition. Further, any interpretation must be demonstrably martially valid.

- A Free scholar should be able to present an interpretation of a play and provide a reasonable argument for his interpretation, keeping within the established interpretational standards of the IAS stated above
- Accord to the organization's understanding of the underlying body mechanics and tactics of armizare;
- Work at full speed against a simple attack;
- Work at full speed against an non-compliant opponent, or if the play "fails" naturally allow for safe secondary actions.

Furthermore, any provost or magister candidate with a substantial interpretive difference or innovation should be able to submit a paper justifying their interpretation and argue favourably in its defence before a panel of no less than three (3) judges. and based on the following criteria:

- Accord to the text in any/all of the Fiore Ms. In other words, a text might not address a point of interpretation, but it can't contradict it;
- The physical actions should generally accord with the illustrations allowing for: a) differences between the four Ms and b) the nature of medieval art;
- Must be demonstrably martially valid, as specified above.

## VIII. RANKS AND REQUIREMENTS

The International Armizare Society, with its associate schools, employ a historical rank structure based upon that used by the fencing guilds of the 15th and 16th centuries. Ranking consists of four grades<sup>1</sup>, in ascending order: Scholar (Scolaro), Free Scholar (Laurea), Provost (Rettore) and Master (Magistro). The first two of these ranks can be considered student ranks (with Laurea being a junior instructor role in some organisations), while the latter two constitute senior instructor ranks.

As an accrediting association and confraternity, the IAS is concerned with establishing recognizable standards and minimum requirements for all four grades, but leaves the authority for testing and granting of rank for the lower ranks of Scolaro and Laureato to its member academies. Note here that the member school may have any number of ranks before Scolaro. The *ellefante* symbol is reserved for these internal ranks, as the member school sees fit. Conversely, member bodies agree to external examination and certification by the association for the rank of Provost or Master at Arms, once all requirements internal to the member academy have been met.

For proper rank recognition by IAS to take place, several factors must be taken into account and evaluated. These are specified below, and form the corpus of minimum requirements that associates should adhere to.

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<sup>1</sup> Note here that the member school may have any number of ranks before Scolaro. The *ellefante* symbol is reserved for these internal ranks, as the member school sees fit.

1. Content
  - a. practical
  - b. theoretical
2. Quality of execution
3. Quality of interpretation
4. Academics
5. Instructional

A simple content-based approach would not take into account the quality of the included actions and interpretation, and as such, would be incomplete. Finally, pedagogy forms an important part of the requirements at higher levels for proper transmission to take place, and as such is included and evaluated for these ranks.

### **Certificates (required elements)**

Required elements for certificates issued by member schools include the following:

- School name
- Issuer name
- Issuer signature
- Rank name
- Rank symbol
- Rank colours
- IAS logo

### **SCHOLAR (SCOLARO)**

The first student rank is internal to member academies and outside the purview of IAS. Each member is free to grant Scolaro rank to its students, provided students meet the base required criteria that follows.

This rank forms the first rank for which there are formal curricular requirements. Being admitted to the rank of scholar attests to the candidate's ability to perform fundamental actions and set plays with proper mechanics and footwork. It also signifies an understanding of the fundamental precepts of the system and apply the entirety of their learning to a limited freeplay environment in a defensive capacity. Each school is free to define other requirements *as they see fit*.

#### **Badge:**

Garment in the school's colors (excepting red or gold), worn below the knee.

#### **Symbol:**

Tiger

#### **Requirements:**

TECHNICAL



Candidates should be able to *competently*<sup>2</sup> perform basic set plays and drills in the following components of *Armizare* using proper stance, footwork, and mechanics.

### Footwork

Scolari are expected to perform the following basic footwork unarmed, with dagger and with sword in two hands:

- Forward and backward pass (*passare, tornare*)
- Advancing and retreating step (*acressere* and *discesse*)
- *Volta stabile*
- *Mezza volta*
- Triangle/compass step

### Abrazare

The candidate must be able to demonstrate a selection of techniques from the *abrazare* section. The first five plays are a baseline minimum.

### Daga

The candidate must demonstrate a selection of techniques from the *daga* section. The nine remedy masters are an accepted minimum for the purposes of acceding to rank.

### Spada a due mani

The candidate must demonstrate a basic fencing actions and a selection plays, drawn from the manuscript and/or non-canonical, but considered to be fundamental to fencing in general. As an internal rank, schools are given the discretion to choose which actions best suit their curriculum.

### QUALITY OF EXECUTION

A Scolaro should possess the ability to perform simple set plays and defences in a static environment, according to the requirements of their school. These should include basic fencing actions such as beats, collections, simple parries, counter cuts and counter thrusts against a willing, semi-compliant partner. The level of execution sought is basic competency, per the skills progression chart.

### QUALITY OF INTERPRETATION

This is not assessed for the Scolaro candidate.

### ACADEMIC

The Scolaro candidate will undergo both written and oral examinations pertaining to the fundamentals of *Armizare*, questions which, are to be determined by each member's testing body in accordance with their own needs and curriculum as well as according to the reading requirements.

### Required reading:

Each member will have individual reading requirements that may be tested in the oral and/or written examinations.

The reading list is as follows:

- The Knightly Art of Battle, 2011, Ken Mondschein, J. Paul Getty Museum;

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<sup>2</sup> Per the QoE criteria.

- Prologue to the Getty manuscript, 2012, Translation by Tom Leoni, Freelance Academy Press
- Armizare, p. 1- 95, by Robert N. Charrette, 2011, Freelance Academy Press

## INSTRUCTIONAL

The Scolaro candidate should be able to demonstrate a drill, play or sequence from each of the core disciplines of *abrazare*, *daga* and *spada a due mani* (instructors are left to make the determination as to what precisely must be demonstrated) to another student in a tutoring capacity as a means of manifesting the candidate's understanding of the material and their ability to aid their fellow students as instructor-aides. The Scolaro is expected to be able to recognise and correct minor errors in execution and form, but should defer to the instructor as Scolaro is not a teaching rank.

## FREE SCHOLAR (LAUREATO d'ARMI)

A Free Scholar is a senior student, someone who has achieved scholar-level expertise with multiple elements of the art, the ability to fence proficiently with all of them, and has begun developing the ability to apply the plays of the system creatively and dynamically in new situations; ie: they understand the underlying *why* behind the *how* in the tradition's teachings.

As the higher of the two "student ranks", the IAS leaves it to its member academies to award the rank of Free Scholar, and recognizes that rank as if it had been awarded by the association itself. In turn, member academies agree to hold their Free Scholar candidates to the following minimal requirements, although each academy maintains the rights to add additional, internal requirements as they see fit.

### Badge:

Gold garter, worn below the knee.

### Symbol:

Lynx

### General Requirements:

A Free Scholar is expected to be versed in the core building blocks of *l'arte dell'armizare*, and be capable of performing techniques spontaneously and dynamically to the required level of execution, with the requisite disciplines. As such, the level of skill acquisition is that of *proficiency*<sup>3</sup>.

- *Abrazare*
- *Daga*
- *Spada a una mano*
- *Spada a due mani (largo e stretto)*
- *Lanza* (both the "common method" and the *dei Liberi* method).

As the lance - both as a spear and as the simple staff - is the logical bridge between armoured and unarmoured, short and long, the sword and polearms, it makes a logical companion arm at this level,

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<sup>3</sup> Per the QoE skill model.

although candidates are not required by the IAS charter to test or play their Prize in harness.

## ACADEMIC

The candidate must complete a written test or series of tests encompassing the ensemble of core disciplines outlined below, as well as including material based on the reading requirements for this level, also outlined below.

### Required reading

The *Laureato* is required to have read and understood the works that follow. The goal is not memorisation, but rather an understanding of the Art, the manuscripts, and the historical context in which it evolved.

### **Reading list:**

#### Primary material

- Fiore Getty translation
- Fiore Pisani-Dossi
- Vadi Prologue and 16 Verse Chapters

#### Secondary Material:

- Armizare, Robert Charrette

#### Contextual Material:

- Chivalry - Maurice Keen
- Chivalry and Violence in Medieval Europe - Richard Kaeuper (sort of the counterpoint to Keen)
- Mercenaries and their Masters - Michael Mallet
- Sword in the Age of Chivalry - Oakeshott

#### Pick One:

- The Italian Renaissance - by Burkhardt
- The Italian Renaissance - Peter Burke

## TECHNICAL

As previously stated, Laureato candidates should have reached a level of *Proficient* for the technical requirements stated below, per the QoE skills model.

### Footwork

In addition to the requirements for Scolaro, the candidate is expected to be able to perform multiple steps smoothly and in sequence, incorporating directional changes and keeping a stable, balanced base. Laureate should also be able to maintain this footwork in a freeplay environment.

### Abrazare

The Candidate must:

- Demonstrate the ability to perform all the *abrazare* plays in a dynamic and spontaneous fashion, using control and in a safe manner.
- Demonstrate falling ability in freeplay, including high falls
- Demonstrate an understanding of structure and how it relates to balance
- Demonstrate methods for breaking structure and balance in a dynamic setting

- Possess and demonstrate an understanding of *poste* and the grips and positions that derive from them.
- Execute a number of syllabus and/or flow drills, as well as set plays in accordance with the school's curriculum.

### Daga

The Candidate must:

- Demonstrate the *poste: porta di ferro sempia, porta di ferro dopia, porta di ferro dopia incrosada, mezana porta di ferro dopia, mezana porta di ferro dopia incrosada, posta longa, posta dente di cinghale, posta frontale*
- Demonstrate the four lines of attack and defences against them, unarmed
- Demonstrate the ability to fall safely with the weapon.
- Execute a number of syllabus/flow drills in accordance with the school's curriculum.
- Demonstrate a selection of key set plays from the entirety of the dagger section, both armed and unarmed
- Apply the plays in a dynamic and spontaneous fashion, using control and in a safe manner.

### Spada a due mani

The Candidate must:

- Demonstrate the 12 *poste* and their variations, as well as an understanding of their relation to one another and their tactical usage.
- Demonstrate cutting ability with the longsword
- Demonstrate *tutta volta, mezza volta* and *volta stabile* of the sword in accordance with the interpretation of the IAS.
- Demonstrate a minimum level of fundamental fencing knowledge
- Demonstrate an understanding of *tempo* and line by demonstrating actions in the following *tempi*:
  - *due tempi*: First and second remedy master actions, *rompere di punta, rebatter* deflection
  - *mezzo tempo*: attacking into a guard change, actions on the sword from the bind (*volte of the sword*)
  - *primo tempo*: demonstrate an understanding of how to initiate an attack and properly develop it.
  - *contratempo*: attacking the advance target (hands, arms, leg), single-time actions: *scambiar di punta*, first remedy master, stop-thrust, single-time counter-cut.
- Execute a number of syllabus/flow drills in accordance with the school's curriculum.
- Demonstrate all set plays from the *giocco largo* section of the manuscript.
- Demonstrate a selection of *giocco stretto* sections of the manuscript, at the tester's discretion.
- Demonstrate ability in applying the *spada a due mani* plays dynamically and spontaneously, with control and in a safe manner.

### Spada a un' mano (including the relevant material from the mounted section)

The Candidate must:

- Demonstrate the *un' mano poste* as well as an understanding of their relation to one another and their tactical usage.
- Demonstrate cutting ability with the single sword (see “cutting”, below)
- Demonstrate the use of tempo per the longsword requirements.
- Execute a number of syllabus/flow drills in accordance with the school's curriculum.
- Demonstrate all set plays from the *un' mano* section of the manuscript.
- Demonstrate ability in applying the *spada a un' mano* plays dynamically and spontaneously, with control and in a safe manner.

## Lanza

The candidate must:

- Demonstrate the “Common method” that opposes dei Liberi’s method:
  - poste of Breve Serpentina, Serpentina Lo Soprano and Bastarda Serpentina Lo Soprano
  - fundamental attacks of *punta portata*, *punta slanciata*, *punta cambiata*, blow with the *pedale*, blow with the half-spear, shortened thrust
  - Basic parries from Breve Serpentina, winding between Breve Serpentina and Lo Soprano and the “universal parry” from the Bastarda position.
  - Demonstrate the *cavazione*
  - Demonstrate the *cambiamento*
- Demonstrate Fiore’s method,
  - Six poste and their tactical usage
  - fundamental attacks of *punta portata*, shortened thrust, blow with the *pedale* or half spear, from each.
- Demonstrate the ability to move from the Common Method to dei Liberi’s method, either spontaneously or using a form/flow drill in accordance with the school's curriculum.
- Demonstrate the corpus of set plays from Fiore dei Liberi’s manuscripts, with emphasis on the *scambiar* and *rompere* from various starting *poste*.

## Cutting

Free Scholars are expected to be able to perform compound attacks with the dagger, longsword and sword in one hand from all guard positions, with both true and false edges (for swords), as well as an ability to choose the proper cut in a tactical decision-making environment (freeplay). Free scholars must also possess the ability to cut suitable targets with multiple attacks, as per the requirements outlined in the requirements for Free Scholar.

Further, thrusts should be delivered in proper tempo from all quadrants of the body as well as the center, and the candidate should be able to perform *cavazione* (disengage). Precision and control are requirements.

- Cuts and thrusts must be developed in proper order (true time), without bobbing up or otherwise compromising the mechanics of the cut.
- The Laureato candidate should be able to demonstrate basic cutting ability by severing a cutting medium (generally tatami omote) with basic cuts along several lines, employing proper balance,

lines and footwork. Patterns include:

- Pattern One: Simple Mandritto Fendente
- Pattern Two: Simple Rivero Fendente
- Pattern Three: Alternating Mandritti and Riversi - 4 cuts total
- Pattern Four: Mandritto Fendente, Rivero Falso sottano, Rivero Fendente
- Cuts must be appropriately developed in proper tempo according to the established quality of execution for cuts.

#### QUALITY OF INTERPRETATION

Free Scholars must possess the ability to perform compound set plays and counters related to their level in a fluid manner as well as dynamically in a freeplay environment versus non compliant partners. The level required for Free scholar is “Proficiency”.

#### QUALITY OF INTERPRETATION

The Free Scholar candidate must abide by the qualitative criteria established below for his rank level.

#### INSTRUCTIONAL

The Free Scholar is expected to be able to teach their school’s entire Scolaro curriculum in a group format. Further, the Free Scholar should be capable of developing and executing a lesson plan within the bounds of the curriculum. Pursuant to this, the Free Scholar should be able to see and correct mistakes in execution, both technical and mechanical, and provide basic feedback to students regarding tactical and strategic consideration. The Free Scholar must work under the direction and guidance of a Provost or Magister.

It is imperative that the student understand that rote verbatim is not required, but rather demonstrate an understanding of the various components of the Art, their tactical application, and their interconnection as part of a holistic system. Finally, as Free Scholars are considered to be assistant instructors, a candidate must possess the ability to demonstrate the material in a coherent and cohesive manner in a group lesson as prepared above.

#### **PROVOST (RETTORE d’ARMI)**

A Provost is the first of the upper ranks in the guild system, and the first formal teaching rank. Provost generally act under the guidance of a Master, and can teach as heads of chapters or specific programs.

It is the first rank that is conveyed directly by the IAS, except in those cases where, for lack of a sponsoring academy, the association has directly awarded the rank of Free Scholar, as noted above.

First and foremost, the Provost must have a proven track record in the instruction of the art, and is skilled in all weapons as described by Fiore dei Liberi's treatise. Key responsibilities of the Provost are the training and teaching of students, the contribution to the general operations and/or administration functions of their home academy, standing as coaches, mentors and examiners in the creation of At-Large Free Scholars, and as Challengers in any Provost's Prizes.

A Provost must be capable of teaching all of the core elements of the FS curriculum and have experience in the breadth of the full use of the art on foot, and conduct original research or technical development of the art.

**Badge:**

Dark red garter, worn below the knee.

**Symbol:**

Lion

**Provost Requirements**

A Provost must be capable of teaching all of the core elements of the Free Scholar curriculum, have experience in the breadth of the full use of the art on foot (including armoured combat), and conduct original research or technical development of the art. They must swear to the IAS Instructor Code of Conduct, abide by the rules and constitution of their home academy, and agree to the and promote the principles of historical European martial arts within and without organizations that are focused on the formalisation of these arts.

Upon successful completion an official teaching license is granted by the IAS to those who have successfully prized at this rank.

Provost candidates will be considered if the following criteria are satisfied:

**GENERAL**

- Minimum time of five years since receiving the rank as Free Scholar;
- Minimum of at least 30 years of age;
- Candidate's instructor formally makes the request to the governing body of his/her intention for the rank of Provost. In the case of independent, or "at large" candidates, please refer to ["Referral and 'At large' Candidates"](#).
- Is willing to swear to and abide by the IAS's Instructor's Code of Conduct (see Appendices) and any complementary requirements of their home academy.

**ACADEMIC**

- Can demonstrate a knowledge of the individual treatises of the Dei Liberi Tradition and their variances;
- Possesses a solid analytical understanding of the historical treatises relevant to the art of *armizare*;
- Has submitted an approved, peer-reviewed research to the IAS testing body -(see below). *or*
- Has built a teaching curriculum for historical martial arts in keeping with the defined parameters for Quality of Interpretation.
- Has a solid, working knowledge of the cultural milieu and martial history of early Renaissance Italy, and contemporary arms and armour.

## Required Reading

In addition to a research project or curriculum submission, reading requirements form part of the qualification criteria for a candidate seeking Provost status.

### ARMS AND ARMOUR

Armour - Claude Blair

Archaeology of Weapons - Oakeshott

### CHIVALRIC CULTURE

Knights Own Book of Chivalry - translated by Elspeth Kennedy

Ramon Lull - translated by Noel Fallows

Book of the Courtier - Castiglione

### TOURNAMENT CULTURE

Tournaments - Barber & Barker

Deeds of Arms - Muhlberger

## TECHNICAL

The following technical requirements must be met by Provost candidates. In addition, the candidate must possess the ability to apply the lessons and tactics of the canonical plays creatively and spontaneously, as demonstrated in public examination, and this for the whole of the Art, both armoured and unarmoured.

### Footwork

Provosts should perform to free-scholar levels, with the addition of maintaining a solid base in harness, with appropriate footwork and carriage throughout.

### Abrazare

The Provost candidate must possess knowledge of all canonical plays of *abrazare* and be capable of demonstrating them in a dynamic environment.

In addition, the Provost candidate must demonstrate:

- 4 basic holds and how to break them: mutual arm hold (symmetrical or asymmetrical), collar/neck and elbow hold, back hold (high and low), diagonal hold (pinch grip tie)
- Demonstrate a selection of throws/takedowns from the 5 takedowns implicit in Fiore's manuscripts (backward, inside, outside, reverse and forward) These should be demonstrated statically and dynamically (in movement, not against an actively resisting opponent)
- Demonstrate ability in at least 2 3-minute *abrazare* bouts.

### Daga

Demonstrate a collection of set-plays, with proper footwork, use of tempo, measure and technique, while remaining a safe partner.

Spada a un' mano (including relevant plays from the mounted section)

As per *daga*.



Spada a due mani

As per *daga*.

Lanza

As per *daga*.

Spada en arme

Demonstrate ability in armoured combat. Given the difficulty in arranging armoured combat, public deeds of arms may be employed to showcase such ability in lieu of formal testing.

Azza

As per *spada en arme*.

Cutting

Possesses sound body mechanics, edge awareness and control of a sharp weapon, as demonstrated in test-cutting and in teaching basic test-cutting. The Provost candidate should be able to cut using multiple cuts along varying lines with either edge in quick succession at a suitable target (generally accepted to be *tatami omote*), with both passing footwork and statically (or *volta stabile*).

- Pattern Five: Three consecutive mandritti fendente
- Pattern Six: Mandritto Fendente, Riverso Falso Sottano, Mandritto Fendente
- Pattern Seven: True and false edge *mezani*

QUALITY OF EXECUTION

In addition to all the previous requirements, Provosts should be able to adapt the plays and principles thereof and apply them to varying conditions (changing measure, different line of attack, etc.) in a dynamic manner. Further, the level of execution required is that of “Mastery.”

QUALITY OF INTERPRETATION

The Provost candidate must be able to provide interpretations of specific plays according to the qualitative interpretation guidelines set out in section VII. A suggested minimum is one play per required discipline (i.e. *abrazare*, *spada a una mano*, *spada en arme*, etc.)

INSTRUCTIONAL

A Provost must be capable of teaching all of the core elements of the Free Scholar curriculum, have experience in the breadth of the full use of the art on foot, and conduct original research or technical development of the art. They should be able to provide proper feedback on mechanical and tactical issues students may have, and institute corrective measures.

FURTHER REQUIREMENTS

- Has fulfilled home academy's specific internal requirements for promoting to the rank of Provost;
- Demonstrated teaching skill in both private lessons and group instruction;
- Has delivered instruction in regularly scheduled classes at their home academy;
- Must be able to teach the entire Free Scholar curriculum.

- Has taught outside their own academy in a large, public venue, such as the Western Martial Arts Workshop, Vancouver International Swordplay Symposium, Longpoint, Swordfish, etc.

#### TESTING

Testing will be via a public examination and Prize Playing, as noted in section III of this governing document. Upon successful completion, an official teaching license is granted by the IAS to those who have successfully prized at this rank.

### **MASTER of ARMIZARE (MAGISTER d'ARMIZARE)**

The rank of Magister is a senior teaching rank, and represents the head of a school working independently of the tutelage of another. His role as head of a school is to continue to foster good pedagogy, create and refine curricula, research source texts and publish relevant articles to the community, transmitting *l'arte dell'armizare* as a living art in the interest of providing a lineage.

#### **Badge:**

Bastone

#### **Symbol:**

Master of the Seven Swords

#### **Requirements:**

The Magister d'Arme must meet all the criteria of a Provost, in addition to the following additional criteria:

#### **ACADEMIC:**

The Magister of Armizare must know the corpus of manuscripts *verbatim*, as well as have an understanding of the underlying social and historical context of the period. This includes:

- Knowledge of the four Fiore Ms, Vadi's Ms and the fragmentary German sources of dei Liberi; work and the ability to explain what is in each, where they differ, etc.
- Detailed knowledge of the biography of Fiore dei Liberi, his principal students, and Niccolo d'Este.
- Detailed knowledge of the condottieri system, its origins and its role in the Italian wars of period 1350 - 1450.
- Detailed knowledge of the "Transitional" and early "All-White" period of arms and armour.
- Understanding of the symbology used in the dei Liberi tradition and its relationship to other metaphorical/symbolic structures of the period.

#### **Required Reading:**

WESTERN MARTIAL ARTS  
Sidney Anglo

## DUELS AND JUDICIAL COMBAT

Trial by Fire and Battle in Medieval German Literature - Ziegler

## HISTORY

Land and Power in Late Medieval Ferrara - Trevor Dean

## TECHNICAL

The candidate for Master of arms, in addition to all the criteria established for the previous ranks, must also meet the following requirements:

- Ability to be given random plays from Fiore and to demonstrate it at full speed and power, then show how to conduct the play as the attacker and/or from the other side, as relevant ( think of Fiore's closing advice of the sword at largo) and to immediately construct a drill that teaches the play, its counter, and a counter-counter.
- Ability to apply lessons from one weapon to another weapon in the system.
- Ability to apply first principles of armizare to a minor weapon (bastoncello, ghiavarina, staff) or undiscussed weapon (sword and buckler, etc) of the art/period.

## QUALITY OF EXECUTION

The Candidate must be able to perform the corpus of canonical techniques of his tradition, dynamically and spontaneously, as well as extrapolating those principles and techniques to weapons outside the tradition (e.g. staff). The required skill level along the scale for this rank is “expertise”.

## QUALITY OF INTERPRETATION

In addition to the requirements for Provost, the Master candidate must be able to show how the tradition fits into the wider Italian martial tradition, as well as its relationship with extant Germanic traditions of the period.

## INSTRUCTIONAL

Beyond the requirements for the previous ranks, a Magister must be capable of teaching not only the full canon of the art on foot, as well as a minimum of academic knowledge of the art on horseback, but must be able to train students to transmit the art themselves. In other words, the Magister must be able to train teachers to continue in a living tradition.

The candidate must be able to teach the entire Provost curriculum, and provide technical and pedagogical support across a wide swath of disciplines as a mentor in support of a Provost's' academic requirements in terms of research or development of curricula. This will be specifically tested in the following ways:

Submission for a written curriculum and lesson plan for:

- A single class in abrazare, daga or spada, inclusive of class objectives, warm-up and cool-down.
- A four - six series of interrelated classes, the topic to be approved by the advisory board, inclusive of both individual class and series objectives.
- Teach a 3 hr group lesson to a class of six or more students.

- Teach a 1 hr individual lesson on an intermediate or advanced topic.

Group lessons may be submitted by video, consist of a seminar at a major international event, or, if the prize play is hosted by one of the member academies, the lesson may be taught to the hosting group.

# Appendices

## APPENDIX A: CODE OF CONDUCT

### INTRODUCTION

This Code of Conduct is intended to provide standards of professional conduct that can be applied by International Armizare Society instructors and its member organisations that choose to adopt them.

This Code also provides a common set of values upon which the IAS instructor builds their professional work and has as its primary goal the welfare and protection of the individuals and groups with whom the instructors work. It is the individual responsibility of each instructor to aspire to the highest possible standards of conduct. IAS instructors respect and protect human and civil rights, and do not knowingly participate in or condone unfair discriminatory practices.

### CODE OF CONDUCT

#### A: Competence

1. IAS instructors strive to maintain high standards of excellence in their teaching.
2. IAS instructors recognize the boundaries of their particular competencies and the limitations of their expertise. They provide instruction in only those areas for which they are qualified by training and experience.
3. IAS instructors maintain knowledge of relevant technical information related to the instruction they render, and they recognize the need for ongoing education and training.
4. IAS instructors strive to maintain continual commitment to CANI: "Constantly And Never-ending Improvement [citing Dr. W. Edwards Deming's personal philosophy as taught by Tony Robbins].

#### B: Integrity

1. IAS instructors seek to promote integrity in the instruction of l'Arte dell'Armizare.
2. IAS instructors are honest, fair, and respectful of others. In describing or reporting their qualifications, services, or fees, they do not make statements that are false, misleading, or deceptive.
3. IAS Instructors strive to operate by the fundamental guidelines of common etiquette and chivalric philosophy and avoid behavior unbecoming or potentially damaging to the IAS, and its members.

## C: Professional Responsibility

1. IAS instructors uphold ethical standards of conduct, accept appropriate responsibility for their behavior, and adapt their teaching methods to the needs of different learners.
2. IAS instructors consult with, refer to, or cooperate with other IAS or CFAA instructors to the extent needed to serve the best interest of the learner.
3. IAS instructors' moral standards and conduct are personal matters to the same degree as is true for any other person, except when instructors' conduct may compromise their teaching responsibilities or reduce the public's trust in the instructor or the IAS.
4. IAS instructors promote the IAS ranking system and ensure sound pedagogical principles in the instruction of l'Arte dell'Armizare.
5. IAS instructors ensure that rank assessment and promotions awarded by its members are conducted in accordance with the approved standards of the IAS.

## **APPENDIX B: DEFINITIONS**

### **Armizare**

L'arte d'Armizare (The Art of Arms) is the medieval Italian term for knightly martial arts that were employed by the aristocratic warrior class of Europe. Armizare (are-mit-TZAR-ay) is divided into combat on foot and on horseback, in and out of armour. It includes wrestling and techniques when armed with a dagger, sword, pollaxe or spear.

### **Canonical Armizare**

Specific instructions, tactical lessons and techniques left to posterity by Fiore dei Liberi, Filippo Vadi, and several fragmentary sources of anonymous authorship. IAS central mission is to see that its understanding is refined and transmitted to the next generation.

### **Neo-Armizare**

Is "Armizare in Context", or an understanding of how to apply the principles, tactics and mechanics of the art holistically and within situations upon which dei Liberi either did not discuss, only touched upon tangentially, or upon which he could not have conceived.

### **Chivalric**

Martial arts are formulated within a cultural milieu and are meant to be tempered by a system of ethics and behavior. Central to Europe at the birth of the Renaissance were those chivalric ideals as recorded in the historical record by philosophers, thinkers, jurists and allegorical authors such as Ramon Lull, Geoffrey de Charny, Dom Duarte of Portugal, Giovanni da Legnano, Wolfram von Eshenbach, Chretien de Troyes and Rene d'Anjou. As with any ethical system, chivalry was idealized more in thought than in deep (practice?), but as modern people we seek to honor the past, as well as the words of our art's founder, himself, through a belief that the study of martial arts should be only be undertaken with, and

used to develop, people of good moral and ethical character.

### **Dei Liberi Tradition**

Refers specifically to the martial art established by the late 14th century master-at-arms, Fiore dei Liberi de Civida d’Austria (c.1350 - 1420), who recorded his teachings on Armizare in a series of illustrated manuscripts, all named (in either Italian or Latin) the *Flower of Battle*. The larger dei Liberi tradition also includes the work of Filippo Vadi of Pisa, as well as several fragmentary German manuscripts of unclear authorship found as a part of larger compendia of martial teachings.

### **Historical European Martial Arts**

The expression "historical European martial arts" (HEMA) is a subset of Western Martial Arts (WMA) that denotes the martial or fighting arts of Europe, with a special concentration on the middle ages, the Renaissance, and the early modern periods that became dormant and have been reconstructed in the current era. Reconstruction of the arts, in this case *Armizare*, is based on a combination of theory and practice. The first is based on a strict reading and understanding of the original instructions left to posterity by Fiore dei Liberi and members of his tradition, understood through the historical and cultural context in which their both their fighting art, and its written record, were created. The second consists in faithfully translating this understanding into body-mechanics, weapon in hand, first through drills, then progressively into free-fencing.

### **Set Play**

A pre-determined series of movements or techniques with varying degrees of complexity, often taken directly from the illustrated techniques of the manuscripts.

## **APPENDIX C: MEMBER ACADEMIES**

At the time of this writing, the active member academies are as follows:

[Chicago Swordplay Guild](#)

[Les Maîtres d’Armes](#)

[Northwest Fencing Academy](#)

## **APPENDIX D: RANK EQUIVALENCY**

Given that certain members may already have a ranking system in place, employing naming conventions of their own, upon admittance to the IAS, the rank structure will be examined to determine how the rank structures of member academies stand in relation to one another. Once this is done, they will be added to the table below for reference. To provide a *lingua franca* among members, IAS rank names are encouraged when referencing ranks among members

IAS rank	CSG Rank	NWA Rank	LMA Rank
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Scolaro	Scholar	Baceliere	Scholar
Laureato	Free Scholar	Laureato	Free Scholar
Rettore	Provost	Provost	Provost
Magister	Master	Maestro	Master

### **APPENDIX E: PEDAGOGICAL ADVANCEMENT AND SKILLS ACQUISITION (QoE skill model)**

Henri Boudreault, PH.D., proposed a model for gauging competence, upon which we have based the skills progression in this document. It, in turn, is modeled on a learning progression proposed by Stuart and Hubert Dreyfus (which is modeled on earlier work). This learning progression has 5 discrete phases experienced by every student in skills acquisition. Grading skills levels, or competence, employs a sliding scale that is reminiscent of, and somewhat mirrors, the learning progression. The levels employed in this document are a hybridised superset of adapted to our particular needs in a martial learning environment, and aligned with our rank requirements.

The phases of learning are:

1. The exploration phase
2. Fundamentals acquisition
3. Integration and training
4. Transfer of skills
5. Enrichment

Each skill and each level of competence goes through this iterative process of learning. Without going into a level of detail inappropriate for this document, the exploration phase allows the student to become comfortable with the notions he must learn, and explore its possibilities and context. The fundamentals acquisition phase is where the student acquires the basic notions and skills towards gaining competence. Integration and training is active learning, with the student participating fully in his advancement. The transfer phase is where the student takes a skill, notion, principle or ability and applies it to another context. Finally, the enrichment phase is where the student actively explores and transfers these notions to other situations not directly related to the context, learning on their own with minimal outside assistance.

Skill progressions advance in terms of competence, from novice to expert, using the following nomenclature: Novice, Intermediacy, Competency, Proficiency, Mastery, Expertise. A description of what each skills level entails follows. All Quality of Execution (QoE) will be measured against this scale. It should be noted that QoE is progressive. For instance, a student may be expected to perform a technique with a certain level of skill at the Scolaro level, and perform the same technique to a higher



level of skill for a later rank. As such, the student should expect that they may be evaluated repeatedly on the same material, employing different criteria, throughout their advancement.

**Novice (N):** rigid adherence to taught rules or plans, no exercise of "discretionary judgment"

- Rote execution or repetition of a demonstrated technique or skill as demonstrated, often without using proper mechanics and without necessarily demonstrating an understanding of the wider context or variations in technique.

**Intermediate (I):** has limited "situational perception", all aspects of technique treated separately with equal importance.

- Applies, with help or prompting, the knowledge and skills necessary to the performance of a technique.
- Proper mechanics are more prevalent, but secondary to the performance of the technique. I.e. the student will quickly abandon proper mechanics if the situation becomes difficult.
- Application of technique requires concentration and conscious thought.

**Competent (C):** independent evaluation of a situation, autonomy, and transfer of technique across situations.

- Executes techniques in isolation (set plays, simple phrases) against non-compliant partners.
- Executes technique without prompting, in tempo and using proper body mechanics.
- Capable of planning an approach (strategically)
- Can apply tactical decision making consciously

**Proficient (P):** ability to apply and adapt technique and mechanics to a variety of situations.

- Executes multiple techniques ("strings techniques) together to form complex phrases
- Employs proper body mechanics, at speed
- Can apply tactical decision making with little conscious thought
- Has some ability to transmit knowledge or technique

**Mastery (M):** Has a holistic view and can adapt technique to varying situations and weapons (i.e. has practised the corpus of techniques and can use them across weapons and versus disparate weapons)

- Employs proper body mechanics with fluidity and grace (*sprezzatura*)
- Applies tactical decision making intuitively
- Can transmit knowledge and technique, and more importantly, principles.

**Expertise (E):** Innovates, building upon his mastery, is not limited by the parameters of the system

- Has significant skill or knowledge beyond mastery in a particular sphere of research (polearms, mounted combat, etc.)