

Profession-less HARP

By Jörg Jahnke

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Introduction

Like its ancestor, Rolemaster, the HARP system uses professions for representing such archetypes as fighter or a magician. For more flexibility, and also for enabling characters to change their career path during their adventuring life, it also allows for adding more professions to a character, so that a PC might be part Fighter, part Thief etc.

But we might add even more flexibility. Why does the character have to have a profession at all? Isn't a profession an artificial restriction that we can get rid of? The rules presented in the following sections try to do exactly this, getting rid of professions for the HARP system without losing any benefits.

Please note that this added flexibility comes at the price of a bit more work at character creation because certain choices that the designers of the HARP professions have made now need to be made by the player. This also means that this system is rather meant for the advanced player and not for the HARP beginner.

What is defined by a profession?

Except for a description of the profession, where a player can get an impression what kind of character can typically be built with the given profession, and the key stats, which give a hint for what stats typically are important for members of a given profession, a profession defines the following characteristics for a character:

- Skill costs: Each profession has a set of Favored Categories whose skills can be developed at a cost of 2 DPs per level while other categories cost 4 DPs per rank.
- Initial skill ranks at character creation. Each profession gets 20 skill ranks in his favored categories.
- Professional abilities: This may be access to certain spells, Talents a character gains or category bonuses.

Unless we want to lose the ability for characters to specialize and excel in some areas, there needs to be some other way of defining these areas where a character can outperform other characters.

Stats defining favored categories

In this system the characters stats define what he can learn easily and where he will have difficulties. So a character with a high Reasoning stat will have lower costs for e.g. lore skills, and such have an easier time learning such skills than a character with low Reasoning. Likewise a character with high Agility stat will more easily get access to Subterfuge skills than a character with low Agility. For each of the skill categories in HARP a Key Stat gets defined. If that Key Stat is below 60, then the cost for skill ranks in the category is 4 DPs. If the stat is 60 or above but below 90, then the cost may be lowered to 3 DPs. And finally if the stat is 90 or higher the cost is allowed to get down to 2 DPs, making it a Favored Category.

Table 1.1 Stat values and DP costs	
Stat value	Minimum DP cost
<60	4
>=60 and <90	3
>=90	2

The following table lists all skill categories and the corresponding Key Stat:

Table 1.2 Key Stats for the skill categories	
Category	Key Stat
Artistic	Pr
Athletic	Ag
Combat	St
Concentration	SD
General	Re
Influence	Pr
Mystical Arts	In
Outdoor	In
Physical	Co
Subterfuge	Ag

At the same time the following restriction applies: The sum of the DP costs of all categories must not be lower than 30. If the sum of the costs derived consulting the above table and the corresponding stat values are lower than this value then the player has to increase the costs for some categories as he sees fit until the sum of the costs is 30.

Example: For the character Luc the player uses Option Two for stat generation from the HARP rulebook and distributes the 550 points among Luc's stats as follows: St 90, Ag 90, Co 80, Qu 70, Re 60, SD 60, In 60, Pr 40. Using the table above we get the following minimum DP costs for Luc: Artistic (4), Athletic (2), Combat (2), Concentration (3), General (3), Influence (4), Mystical Arts (3), Outdoor (3), Physical (3), Subterfuge (2). Summing up the DP costs of all these categories results in a value of $4+2+2+3+3+4+3+3+3+2 = 29$. This is one point below 30, so Luc's player decides to increase the cost of the Subterfuge category from 2 to 3 DPs. This brings the total up to 30. The player then notes the generated costs on the character sheet for Luc.

His costs are now as follows: Artistic (4), Athletic (2), Combat (2), Concentration (3), General (3), Influence (4), Mystical Arts (3), Outdoor (3), Physical (2), Subterfuge (3).

When developing spells the costs no longer are the same as developing skills in the Mystical Arts category. Instead the costs depend on the sphere of magic and its corresponding stat as given by the following table¹:

Table 1.3 Key Stats for spheres of magic	
Sphere	Key Stat
Adventurer	In
Cleric	In
Druid	In
Elementalist	Re
Harper	Pr
Mage	Re
Mystic	Re
Necromancer	In
Ranger	In
Shadowblade	Pr
Thaumaturge	Re
Universal	Re
Vivamancer	In
Warrior Mage	Re

The value of the stat listed in the table for a given sphere now determines the costs for developing spells in this sphere. For determining the final costs just compare the given stat value with the values in the [table 1.1](#) to get the final DP costs. Please note that these costs do not affect the skill cost sum over all categories but are independent.

Example: For the character Cedric, who is going to learn spells from the sphere of the Mage, the player wants to know the costs for developing spells. Looking up the Mage sphere in the [table 1.3](#), the player finds that Re is the stat determining the costs. Cedric currently has an Re stat value of 85, which, according to [table 1.1](#), would result in a costs of 3 DP per rank when developing spells in this sphere. If Cedric increased his Re stat to 90 the following level, then the costs for developing spells in this sphere would lower to 2 DP per rank.

¹ Every profession in the rules has two stats associated with its spell casting. One is SD, the other stat is the one used as key stat for determining the costs for developing spells.

Selecting Professional Talents

Each of the current HARP professions has a unique set of special abilities. To enable something similar with the profession-less system, each character gets 40 points to select from the Professional Talents listed below. Points not spent on these Talents may be used for normal Talents from the HARP rulebooks during character creation. At level two or at later levels characters may spend DPs to select additional Professional Talents, but only up to one Professional Talent per level.

Jack-of-all-trades (Lesser)

The character can easily pick up a variety of skills. The sum of the DP costs of all categories can be as low as 28 instead of the usual 30. All stat restrictions still apply. If the stats don't allow for lowering DP costs the level this Talent is selected then it still allows for lowering the costs at a later level when the stats have reached the necessary values.

Cost: 10

Jack-of-all-trades (Greater)

The character can easily pick up a variety of skills. The sum of the DP costs of all categories can be as low as 26 instead of the usual 30. All stat restrictions still apply. If the stats don't allow for lowering DP costs the level this Talent is selected then it still allows for lowering the costs at a later level when the stats have reached the necessary values.

This Talent may be picked even if [Jack-of-all-trades \(Lesser\)](#) was selected before, its effects then simply supersede those of the lesser version of this Talent.

Cost: 20

Example: The example character Luc should have cheap access to a few more skills. So his player decides to pick the Jack-of-all-trades (Greater) Talent. This allows him to lower the DP costs of four skill categories by 1, two categories by 2 or another combination that reduces the DP costs of the existing categories by 4 points to 26. Luc's player decides to again lower the costs of the Subterfuge category to two, where he had to increase the costs beforehand.

His costs are then as follows: Artistic (4), Athletic (2), Combat (2), Concentration (3), General (3), Influence (4), Mystical Arts (3), Outdoor (3), Physical (2), Subterfuge (2), for a sum of 29 across all skill categories. This leaves Luc three categories that can be lowered at later levels.

Specialized professional bonus (Greater)

Beginning at first level and then every fifth level thereafter (5th, 10th etc.) the character gets a +10 bonus to one skill in a Favored Category the character has to select when choosing this Talent. No skill can have a bonus greater than +30 from this ability.

This Talent may be selected multiple times for different Favored Categories but when doing so the player needs to track which category is being improved per level. It is probably best to do this tracking the same way you would track the advancement of a new level for a profession.

When combining this Talent with the [Generalized Professional Bonus](#) Talent or the [Martial Arts Affinity](#) the player needs to track whether he is advancing in his Specialized Professional Bonus (and which if multiple categories have been selected), the Generalized Professional Bonus or the Martial Arts Affinity.

Example: Firgon is a combat-oriented character and the player selects the Specialized Professional Bonus Talent for Firgon to increase skills from the Combat category every five levels. At first level Firgon gets a +10 bonus to one skill from the Combat category. At level four the player decides that Firgon should also be a skilled outdoorsman and selects the Specialized Professional Bonus Talent a second time to get a bonus to Outdoor skills. He gets the +10 bonus in one skill from the Outdoor category. Upon fifth level and every level thereafter the player has to decide whether the character is to make progress in the Combat category for his specialized bonus or in the Outdoor category. Firgon's player decides that in level five and six Firgon should advance in his Combat abilities. So upon 6th level Firgon has advanced in these skills for five levels (1, 2, 3, 5 and 6) and gets another +10 bonus to one Combat skill.

Cost: 20

Specialized professional bonus (Lesser)

Beginning at first level and then every seventh level thereafter (7th, 14th etc.) the character gets a +10 bonus to one skill in a Favored Category the character has to select when choosing this Talent. No skill can have a bonus greater than +30 from this ability.

In all other respects this Talent works as [Specialized Professional Bonus \(Greater\)](#) above.

Cost: 15

Generalized Professional Bonus (Greater)

Beginning at first level and then every third level thereafter (3rd, 6th etc.) the character gets a +5 bonus to one skill in a skill category that has no higher DP cost than 3. No skill can have a bonus greater than +25 from this ability. Another restriction is that spells may not receive the special bonus.

When combining this Talent with the [Specialized Professional Bonus](#) Talent or the [Martial Arts Affinity](#) the player needs to track whether he is advancing in his Specialized Professional Bonus (and which if multiple categories have been selected), the Generalized Professional Bonus or the Martial Arts Affinity.

Cost: 20

Generalized professional bonus (Lesser)

Beginning at first level and then every fourth level thereafter (4th, 8th etc.) the character gets a +5 bonus to one skill in a skill category that has no higher DP cost than 3. No skill can have a bonus greater than +25 from this ability. Another restriction is that spells may not receive the special bonus.

In all other respects this Talent works as [Generalized Professional Bonus \(Greater\)](#) above.

Cost: 15

Restricted Arcane Power (Greater)

The character may learn spells from any one selected sphere of magic. This Talent may be selected multiple times for different spheres of magic but the character may only learn from one so selected sphere when making a new level. The cost for developing spells in the sphere of magic depends on the selected sphere and its associated stat according to the [table 1.3](#) above.

Cost: 25

Example: Marian is to be a sorceress-like character. Her player decides she should have access to the Mage sphere and selects the Restricted Arcane Power Talent to get access to this sphere.

Restricted Arcane Power (Lesser)

The character may learn spells from a single selected sphere of magic which contains 25 or less spells². This Talent may be selected multiple times for different spheres of magic – but not twice for the same sphere - but the character may only learn from one so selected sphere when making a new level. The cost for developing spells in the sphere of magic depends on the selected sphere and its associated stat according to the [table 1.3](#) above.

Cost: 20

Martial Arts Affinity

The character has the ability to attack multiple foes and do multiple attacks as defined for the Monk profession in the HARP rulebook. Additionally, beginning at first level and every third level thereafter (3rd, 6th etc.) the cost for using Chi Defense is reduced by 5 point (to a minimum of zero). Finally Martial Arts attacks by this character are Medium Attacks instead of Small Attacks.

When combining this Talent with the [Specialized](#) or [Generalized Professional Bonus](#) Talent the player needs to track whether he is advancing in his Specialized Professional Bonus (and which if multiple categories have been selected), the Generalized Professional Bonus or the Martial Arts Affinity.

Cost: 20

Initial skill ranks

During character creation 20 skill ranks now get distributed among up to 6 skill categories. For determining the initial skill ranks we start with the Favored Categories, which have a cost of 2 DP per skill rank. Each of these categories gets assigned a number of ranks as defined in [table 1.4](#). If this would result in more than 20 skill ranks then the number of ranks may be reduced as the player wills until 20 ranks are reached, where we are then finished.

Once the Favored Categories have been assigned initial skill ranks and we have not yet reached 20 skill ranks, we proceed with the categories that have a DP cost of 3 and also assign a number of ranks as indicated by [table 1.4](#). If we then have less than 20 ranks assigned we first increase the categories with a DP cost of 3 to the maximum allowed from [table 1.4](#). Only if then we need more initial skill ranks we proceed with the categories that have a cost of 4 DPs.

Table 1.4 Initial skill ranks	
DP cost	Initial number of ranks
2	6
3	2-4
4	0-2

² As of now this includes the Harper, Ranger, Warrior Mage, Adventurer and Shadowblade spells

Example: For determining Luc's initial skill rank the player starts with Luc's favored categories first. These are the Athletic, Combat, Physical and Subterfuge category. 6 ranks have to be assigned to each of these categories. Since this would result in more than 20 ranks his player decides that Luc should get 6 ranks in Combat and Physical skills and 4 ranks in Athletic and Subterfuge skills.

Up to now he has the following initial skill ranks: Athletic (4), Combat (6), Physical (6) and Subterfuge (4), for a total of 20 ranks.

Effects of improving stats at later levels

HARP allows for increasing stats at later levels. Doing so now has an effect on the DP costs of the categories affected by the increased stats (see [table 1.2](#)). Whenever a stat value is increased to 60 or 90, the player may consult the [table 1.2](#) to check which categories are affected by the stat. If the stat is a Key Stat for one or more skill categories, then the DP costs for the affected categories may be lowered as given in [table 1.1](#), as long as the sum of the character's DP costs is still above the allowed minimum (usually 30 unless one of the Jack-of-all-trades Talents was selected).

Example: Starting with level seven Luc's In stat has increased to 90. This allows the costs of the Mystical Arts and the Outdoor category to be lowered from 3 to 2 DPs. Since the sum of Luc's DP costs across all skill categories is 29 at the moment and due to his Jack-of-all-trades (Greater) Talent he might have a sum as low as 26, Luc might reduce both skill categories. Because he does not plan to invest much in Outdoor skills at the moment and he would like to maintain some flexibility at later levels, Luc's player decides to reduce only the costs for the Mystical Arts category from 3 to 2 DPs.

His costs are as follows after this change: Artistic (4), Athletic (2), Combat (2), Concentration (4), General (3), Influence (4), Mystical Arts (2), Outdoor (3), Physical (2), Subterfuge (2), for a sum of 28 across all skill categories. This leaves Luc two categories that can be lowered at later levels.

Since the Mystical Arts category is now a Favored Category for Luc, with only a cost of 2 DPs per rank for a skill, Luc would like to learn some spells. For his character, which already has some skill with weapons, he decides to pick the Restricted Arcane Power Talent and get access to the Warrior Mage's sphere. This costs him 20 DPs.

Arcane Specializations

The existing Spheres of Magic offer a wide range of spells a spell caster may choose from. This also offers the opportunity for a GM to create specialized variants of spell casters that only have access to a limited number of spells in the sphere but on the other hand can get some special bonuses or abilities helping them with the specialized area of expertise.

Example: For a combat-oriented kind of Mage we want to create a Specialization called Battle Mage that can only learn the combat-oriented spells from the Mage sphere but on the other hand gets a bonus when casting elemental bolts or elemental balls.

Requirements for an Arcane Specialization:

- Only a Restricted Arcane Power (Greater) may have a specialization.
- At least 10 spells are selected by the GM and further spells may be selected by the player from a pre-selected of not more than 20 spells assigned by the GM, so that the character gets access to a total of 20 spells from the sphere. The GM may even offer spells from other

Spheres of Magic to be selectable.

- The GM may assign special bonuses to skills or other abilities to compensate for the restricted spell selection.
- The GM may add further restrictions to Arcane Specializations, e.g. characters may need to be member of a guild to get access or they need to follow a given codex etc.

Such Arcane Specializations are typically used for creating Clerics following specific diets. When a player picks a Restricted Arcane Power (Greater) for his character he may choose to either select the complete Sphere of Magic, without any kind of specialization, or he may pick an Arcane Specialization based on this sphere. In the latter case he will only be able to pick from the spells assigned to the specialization but will also get the special bonuses etc. associated with the specialization.

Example: For the Battle Mage the GM selects the following set of spells from the Mage sphere that any Battle Mage has access to: Air Wall, Bladeturn, Dancing Weapon (Warrior Mage Sphere), Deflections, Distractions, Elemental Ball, Elemental Bolt, Elemental Weapon (Warrior Mage Sphere), Fear, Fire Nerves, Fire Wall, Haste, Jolts, Mage Armor, Shock, Sleep, Spikes, Stun Cloud, Vacuum, Water Wall. In addition every Battle Mage gets a special +10 skill bonus to all Elemental Bolt and Elemental Ball spells.

System Adjustments

The Profession Adaptability talent of the Human race should now be handled in a way that Humans pay 5 DP less for every selected Professional Talent.

The Arcane Power Talent found in the HARP core rules now costs 30 DPs for all spheres containing 20 or less spells and 35 DPs for all other spheres.

The number of skill ranks that a character can develop varies with this system, depending on the values of the stats (see [table 1.1](#)). Varying also the number of DPs, and thus influence the amount of skills that can be developed in a second way through stats, is therefore not necessary. Instead the number of DPs should be fixed to 50 per level (100 for initial character development in level 1).

Example “professions”

The following table lists some existing professions (names in italic) as they could be represented using the above system. It also lists some new “professions” that could be created:

Profession	Professional Talents	Other Talents
<i>Cleric</i> ³	Restricted Arcane Power (Greater): Cleric sphere	
<i>Fighter</i>	Specialized Professional Bonus (Greater): Combat	Shield Training, Lightning Reflexes
<i>Harper</i>	Restricted Arcane Power (Lesser): Harper sphere	Enhanced Senses, Scholar
<i>Mage</i>	Restricted Arcane Power (Greater): Mage sphere	Sense Magic
<i>Monk</i> ⁴	Martial Arts Affinity, Specialized Professional Bonus (Greater): Combat	

³ The Cleric will typically use an Arcane Specialization based on his Clerical Order.

⁴ The original HARP Monk can only gain the professional bonus to his Martial Arts Styles and not for the whole Combat category.

Profession	Professional Talents	Other Talents
<i>Ranger</i>	Restricted Arcane Power (Lesser): Ranger sphere, Specialized Professional Bonus (Greater): Outdoor	
<i>Rogue</i>	Jack-of-all-trades (Greater), Generalized Professional Bonus (Greater)	
<i>Thief</i>	Specialized Professional Bonus (Greater): Subterfuge	Subtle
<i>Warrior Mage</i> ⁵	Restricted Arcane Power (Lesser): Warrior Mage sphere, Specialized Professional Bonus (Greater): Combat	
Beastmaster	Restricted Arcane Power (Lesser): Ranger sphere	Speak with normal animals
Explorer	Generalized Professional Bonus (Greater)	Outdoorsman
Healer	Restricted Arcane Power (Greater): Cleric sphere	Physick
Ninja	Martial Arts Affinity, Specialized Professional Bonus (Greater): Subterfuge	
Paladin	Restricted Arcane Power (Greater): Cleric sphere, Specialized Professional Bonus (Lesser): Combat	
Warrior Bard	Restricted Arcane Power (Lesser): Harper sphere, Specialized Professional Bonus (Greater): Combat	

Abbreviations

DP Development Point

PC Player character

⁵ The original HARP Warrior Mage only gets a +10 to his weapon skills on level 1, 7, 14 etc.