

Driver Trainer - Skills You Need

Besides an interest in driving, the starting point to becoming an Approved Driving Instructor (ADI) is having an even temperament and a personality to suit the work. Some instructors find it easier than others to be understanding, supportive and be capable of developing a good rapport with customers.

Learner drivers do not make deliberate mistakes. They are likely to make fewer errors where the instructor is fully in control of the learning environment by giving the correct level of tuition.

Route Planning

Instructors plan routes before lessons, making sure to include or avoid certain road and traffic conditions. Learners are instructed in use of the controls; driving procedures and responsible attitude.

Learner Observation

Learners' actions and responses have to be watched closely, the instructor being able to not only identify, correct and remedy errors, but also gain and build their confidence. Skills in assessment of the learners' strengths and weaknesses are needed to determine when they will be ready to take the theory and practical driving tests.

Effective Communication

Professional instructors have to communicate information and directions clearly and concisely while the learner is driving, ensuring the safety of all road users. A good ADI will fully prepare candidates for the test by teaching in stages up to the level of "independent driving". This takes plenty of tuition and practice to achieve a standard where the new driver can drive in complex and demanding road and traffic situations without needing any help.

Core Competencies

The technical merit of a driving lesson is determined on:

- Fault/skills recognition. Clearly identify all the learner's driving faults that require correction / Gain and build learner's confidence.
- Fault analysis. Having identified a driving fault, correctly analyse what caused the fault.
- Remedial action. Solutions! Constructive instruction to resolve problems.

Lesson Structure

Every driving lesson needs to have a start, middle and an end. The usual ingredients include:

- Recap at start. Concise accurate summary of the previous lesson.
- Aims & Objectives. Setting realistic and attainable targets.
- Level of Instruction. Dialogue and technique varied to suit learner's knowledge, experience and competence.
- Planning. Organised method and sequence of tuition.
- Control of lesson. Anticipate and protect learner from danger. Time management.
- Communication. Clear and simple instructional terminology and explanations.
- Question & Answer Technique. Relevant questions, correctly timed.
- Feedback & Encouragement. Best response to learner's performance and achievements.

- Instructor's Use of Controls. Learner must be aware of why the instructor has used any of the car's controls.
- Recap at end. Concise accurate summary of the lessons "learning points".

The DSA produces a booklet "Your road to becoming an Approved Driving Instructor" (ADI 14) that details precisely the skills required; technical formalities and procedures.

Learning Resources

"A picture speaks a thousand words", so it's important for instructors to have a personal Resource Pack that includes plenty of clear illustrations.

Instructors need to have a good working knowledge of "The Highway Code" and the DSA Driving Skills publications, specifically the "Driving – Essential Skills" and both "Driving Test" books (Theory Questions and Practical Test).

Reference resources include the booklet "Know Your Traffic Signs"; the driver licensing information contained in "What you need to know about Driver Licensing" (D100); the Provisional Driving Licence application pack (both available from most Post Offices).