

Selecting the Best Pathway to Becoming an Approved Driving Instructor (ADI)

Starting Out

Before committing to a training company, training programme or parting with your hard-earned cash, consider carefully the driving instructor role. You will be self-employed either on your own with its responsibilities for all aspects of your work life or attached to a driving school where, for a weekly fee, you will receive some benefits which include a supply of students.

You will be a teacher in a classroom that moves. You will be mentally driving the vehicle at all times, making rapid decisions with and on behalf of your students. The job is rewarding in terms of job satisfaction but is tiring especially in the early weeks and months.

You will need a vehicle, either supplied by a driving school or bought or leased by yourself. Buying your own used vehicle will likely be the most cost-effective choice.

You will need assistance with qualifying and operating as an instructor for at least one year – probably more.

The DVSA is the government agency responsible for the Register of driving instructors. It runs a register of approved ADI Trainers called the ORDIT Register. This is a good place to start researching and selecting your ADI Trainer. The ADIT site will also give you this information and more. The best trainers will give you impartial, fair advice as well as information about the services they provide.

If you believe this is a role that suits your talents, go online to www.gov.uk (become a driving instructor) and:

- Answer five questions to clarify your suitability
- Carry out a Disclosure and Barring Service Check
- Apply for ADI Registration online at gov.uk

Once these three steps have been completed you are eligible to complete the three-part qualifying process.

BEST ADVICE	ACTIONS TO AVOID
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Seriously consider if self-employment is for you.• Consider if your skills and experience are suited to the ADI role.• Do your research: speak to local instructors.• Check the ORDIT Register; expect the qualifying process to take at least a year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parting with large sums of money (£thousands at the start)• Be pressurised into a training course by persuasive salespeople promising the 'earth'!• Failing to do your research

PART ONE – THEORY TEST

Done properly, the study you do to prepare for part one will benefit you in many ways:

- Pass part one first time (min 85% and 57/75 on hazard perception)
- Instil the theoretical baseline knowledge needed for the part two (driving) and part three (instructing) tests.
- Provide a depth of knowledge and understanding vital for teaching your students.

Invest in DVSA-recommended books (Highway Code, Driving the Essential Skills etc) and a Part One Study Guide to give your home study structure.

Use online resources, like Theory Test Pro, as a back-up to your reading material.

Ask your trainer to carry out in-car driving and instructing training to help bring the home study/theory to life.

BEST PRACTICE

- Invest in a study guide and DVSA – recommended books.
- Carry out in-car training
- Set a target date to finish home study and be test ready.

ACTIONS TO AVOID

- Using only online resources and Apps to practice answering questions.
- Taking the theory test before you are ready.

Once you've passed the part one test you have two years in which to pass parts two and three.

PART TWO – DRIVING TEST

On the face of it, this should be the simplest test to prepare for. You're already a 'good' driver having had few, if any, car crashes and collected few, if any, penalty points along the way.

We all have faults in our driving, fine-tuned over many years. Some we'll be aware of, others we won't. A 'first drive assessment' during part one home study will have highlighted the faults and advice should have been given on how to correct them.

Most trainee instructors need around ten further hours of 1:1 driver training, taken over several weeks to be confident of passing the part two test.

The test is not offered at every DVSA test centre. The test lasts around one hour and includes:

- An eyesight and licence check

- Questions on car functions and operation
- Reversing manoeuvre exercises
- Following directions by satnav
- A drive on a wide variety of road and traffic conditions

BEST PRACTICE

- Carry out driver training with an experienced instructor trainer
- Only take the test if you feel confident and your trainer says you are ready
- Usually ten hours of 1:1 training is needed to be fully prepared
- Use ‘commentary’ to raise your concentration level

ACTIONS TO AVOID

- Taking the test with little specialist training
- Wasting a ‘life’ when you only have a maximum of three attempts at the test

PART THREE – INSTRUCTING TEST

Parts one and two have been the necessary preparation for the ‘big one’ – part three; you’ve had your knowledge and driving skills tested, now it’s time to demonstrate you can impart that knowledge in a timely and safe manner.

Most trainees prepare for the part three test in two stages:

- Complete forty hours of training
- Teach students on a trainee licence to gain ‘real’ experience

This is the best way to prepare for the part three test.

Your trainer should ideally teach you 1:1 in a vehicle to complete the forty hours of training before you can legally teach students on a trainee licence.

You will learn new skills of lesson planning, managing road risks and teaching and learning strategies. You will learn how to teach subjects too, like dealing with road junctions and reversing manoeuvres.

A record of your training can be submitted to DVSA, and your sponsor (ADI or training organisation) will support you as you begin teaching ‘real’ students. This is necessary to

gain hands on experience. You will complete a further twenty hours of training during the first three months of the licence.

After a few months' teaching on a trainee licence, you will take one of your students on the part three test when an examiner will accompany and assess your teaching for about forty-five minutes.

If you pass, you can apply to become a fully qualified ADI. Your qualifying training will be completed.

BEST PRACTICE

- Carry out all your training 1:1 and in a vehicle
- Expect to do lots of reflection after and preparation prior to each training session
- Work part-time on the trainee licence (maximum 20 hours per week). You're gaining experience NOT building your empire!

ACTIONS TO AVOID

- Online, group training is not an effective way to learn teaching skills. It is cost-effective for the training company!
- Don't give up your current job until you've qualified. Working part-time on your current job and as a PDI is a viable compromise.
- Don't believe everything you read on driving instructor forums online

I wish you all the very best on your road to becoming a driving instructor.

Phil Hirst

ORDIT Principal Trainer