

How to choose a Good Driving Instructor

Introduction.

Learning to drive can be quite nerve wracking. It takes your time, investment and commitment to successfully pass the DVSA Driving Test. There is a huge choice of driving instructors depending on your locality. Just type into Google “driving lessons.....(name of town/city) and the list should be populated with national, independent instructors. Having been a DVSA driving instructor (car & Fleet) for the past 10 years full-time, I am able to offer you my guidance on what to do and look out for... Remember there are rogues in every trade and driving instruction is no exemption!



Instructor Credentials.

Every instructor who is fully qualified needs to display a valid Green badge inside their front windscreen. A trainee will display a Pink licence. A Pink licence is good for gaining experience whilst preparing for the Part 3 of the ADI Qualifying process. If it's a trainee instructor you can ask for a discount on your hourly lesson rate.

Read Reviews on Google

Reviews can be biased on the school's website. Do a general search on the search engine such as Google. You can type a sentence such as “complaints against Joe Bloggs driving school” see if it brings up any results. Search on Facebook and other social media for

praises or criticisms. How does the driving school respond to negativity? What tone of language is used tells you a great deal about the business.

National driving schools

These can be divided into two categories:

- (i) Franchisee
- (ii) Broker type

The former are well known brands such as AA, Red, BSM etc. The vehicles are fully liveried and they tend to be newer cars. The instructor pays a monthly fee to the company in return for pupils. So the franchisor does the marketing and advertising on the digital platforms. Some franchisors insist on taking on only fully qualified driving instructors.

The latter type is similar to the former but a percentage cut is deducted in the form of a commission before paying the instructor. These type of broker service have become very popular over the recent years.

Independent ADI

Having established their service, instructors have set up their own brand of driving school. Mine is Farrah Driver Training www.drivingschoolbasildon.com

The instructor is responsible for generating their own pupils and does the marketing to promote his/her professional services.

Offers and incentives.

Over the years I have seen some silly offers such as £99 for 10 hours. This was advertised by a national franchise driving school a few years back. A lot of people bought the package only to be disappointed of having no lessons. **If it's too good to be true, then it's probably is.** Remember pay by a credit card in case the business fails to honour their terms as agreed. Or worse still go bust. At the time of writing this article, the Brexit no deal fear is looming as companies have put their plans to a halt or announced job cuts/re-location.

Another crafty way of getting money out of you upfront is offer a package at a silly discount price, then the driving school making no promises of an availability of an instructor. You could be waiting for months. Meanwhile your money is being used as an interest free overdraft. Remember to pay by **Credit card** if the transaction is £100 or over. Section 75 of the Consumer Credit Act gives you immunity.

Terms and Conditions.

Read the driving schools *terms and conditions*:

- Refund policy? Ask for clarification especially on intensive courses.
- Tyres – on Minis some instructors charge the pupil for accidental damage on the tyres. . Mini is owned by BMW and run on Run flat tyres. One tyre can cost up to £150.00
- Extras for evenings or Week-ends? Check this out
- Protection against price increases? Some schools stick to the hourly rate which was agreed from the onset.
- Read the terms before committing your money.

Etiquettes (from an Instructor)

- Answering the phone on their handset or blue tooth enabled. Remember it's your time and money. You are there to learn to drive.
- Not become too friendly - Rapport building is good however the ADI needs to observe the DVSA "Code of Conduct". Search on google if you wish to read further on this topic.
- Arrive on time, give and take the odd 5-10 minutes due to traffic conditions. The lateness should be made up.
- Keep lesson briefings to a minimum. You will learn by practicing. This means driving the actual car or practicing the manoeuvre. Humans learn by doing. Listening does help but should be kept to a minimum.
- Be patient. Encourage you to ask questions. We all learn differently and have different or combination of learning styles. If you have special needs, make your instructor aware of this. This is so that your lesson can be planned according to your requirements & learning ability/style.
- Motivate and encourage. Every bit of success on your driving should be encouraged. Instructors are now using coaching with instructions so that learning and responsibility can take place.



Flash car

A good instructor should be able to give a compelling lesson in any car which complies with DVSA requirements. A mini or DS3, Merc does not mean you will pass your test first time. The vehicle is just an enabler. Enabling you to practice in a mechanically propelled machine or a hybrid vehicle.

Pass rate and Grade of an Instructor.

The pass rate can be deceiving as some instructors are part-time. So if I do just one driving test my rate is 100%. Since April 2014, instructors grade were changed. We now have a Grade A, B and fail on a Standards Check. A Standards check (SC) is a way of auditing an instructor's skills and competences on a check list out of 51 marks. The audit takes place inside the instructor's car who is delivering an actual lesson witnessed by a Senior Examiner. The lesson lasts for one hour. A grade is then given according to the scores achieved. This is a grade "A" or "B" or a fail if the ADI scored below 8 on Risk Assessment.

Continuous Professional Development or CPD

Once an instructor qualifies having successfully passed all the relevant parts, there are no requirements from the DVSA for an instructor to up-date his/her skills. However, any instructor who has invested time and money in acquiring driving related skills and qualifications is more likely to give a good quality lesson.

I hope that I have given you an insight and some good guidance on how to go about investing your money in what is a life skill.

For **quality** lessons visit my website: www.drivingschoolbasildon.com

Find me on Facebook, LinkedIn

All the Best!



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