

How to Succeed - Our Rules of Engagement

The way that Forth Valley Group helps our associate members work towards Advanced Test Standard is set out on this page.

For most people who join us this is fairly common sense and obvious, but we set it out clearly here just to be sure you and we are agreed in advance.

Summary

- If this is not for you please discuss it with us now!
- The quality/quantity of your own effort and input throughout the course is crucial to achieving a successful test outcome
- You are expected to actively listen to your Observer's advice then apply this to your driving/riding.
- We may switch your Observer to another associate if we feel you need to practise on your own to learn the things your Observer has advised.
- We expect you to make arrangements for drives/rides with your observer.
- You are person the legally responsible for control of your vehicle!

The Details

If you join our group we assume that you are happy with the way we work (This has been developed from considerable experience so we know it works well). If it presents you with any concerns or questions, or does not meet your expectation, or you feel unable to commit to this, then please contact our membership secretary immediately.

The Basics:

Becoming an advanced motorist/motorcyclist takes significant commitment from you. We are here to help you, but we cannot increase your skill without you, yourself, wanting to achieve and putting in the appropriate time, learning effort and untutored practice outwith observer time.

Between each Observed Drives/Rides:

Practise the system of car/bike control and the specific learning points your Observer currently suggests you concentrate on (don't treat the Observed runs like your only practice - you must practice between Observed sessions). If you don't typically drive/ride every day or so then please make a point of getting out and practicing.

Whenever you drive/ride keep the advanced skills that you are learning “switched on” so they become embedded as your normal activity. Otherwise they won't come naturally under "test conditions".

Read and become familiar with the highway code (we provide). You don't need to recite it cover-to-cover but you should be able to answer questions that are relevant to how you should interact with other road users on a daily basis.

Study the learning materials the IAM have sent you. Your Observer will likely suggest particular sections to read after each session so that you are ready to work on those aspects next time.

For Each Observed Drive/Ride:

Book your next Observed session early (we suggest at the end of the previous one). And text/email/call your Observer the day before so they know you have remembered. Arrive promptly at the agreed meeting place. If something serious goes wrong and it looks like you will be late or you really must cancel try to keep your Observer informed as early as possible so they have opportunity to fit another associate into your booking. If there is a gap in your drives/rides (for example for a holiday) then get started again quickly. It's up to you to manage the bookings. Long gaps cause learning to be lost, wasting IAM's charity resources, and your time.

Make sure your vehicle is not just road-worthy and legal but that your car/bike itself shows that you care about displaying good road skills (as just one example: you will fail the advanced test if your windscreen is not appropriately clean inside and out and/or you have a non-legal registration plate or exhaust). Make sure the interior of your vehicle is clear of clutter (that might fly around in a collision). Your Observer will not take you out if your vehicle appears unready. Motorcycle associates should always wear appropriate clothing. The session may be terminated if an associate attends a coaching session wearing inappropriate clothing like denim jeans, trainers, lightweight jackets, no gloves, etc.

Inform your Observer about any specific learning or developmental requirements you may have. Your Observer will also be keen to hear your particular reasons for wanting to do the course because it may help tailor how they help you.

Let your Observer know if anything might impair your skills for a particular session (for example have you just started new medication, are feeling unwell, or over tired).

You may encounter techniques/weather/road types on Observed drives/rides that may take you outside of your “comfort zone”. This will all help to mould you into an Advanced Driver/Rider, however, remember that you retain the right to refuse to participate in any of the above that you do not feel comfortable participating in and that you are responsible for the safe and legal operation of the vehicle.

Learn from your Observer. We do sometimes encounter associates who "know better" than their Observer. There are different ways to drive/ride and not all are dangerous, we accept that. However, your Observer does know the approach that will be recognised by the IAM examiners. If you feel a suggestion is unsafe then do not implement it but do discuss it and understand why it is the approach that will most likely get you to become an advanced driver/rider. If you don't listen to your Observer we can't help you.

Regular Reviews Of Progress:

You will be evaluated by another Observer when your Observer feels it necessary to determine your degree of progress. You may at this stage be recommended to go to Test, or continue improving with your Observer, or if you may be having difficulties getting to grips with the training, we may suggest you take time to consolidate your learning by reading and practicing without an observer. After an agreed period of time contact should be made with your Observer to organise your next Observed drive/ride.

Once you have been submitted for Test you will be contacted directly by an examiner allocated by head office. You and your examiner will agree a mutually convenient location/date/time for your Advanced Test. Advise your Observer of your Advanced Test date and examiner's name. Please also advise your Observer of the outcome.

You and your Observer:

All our officers and Observers are unpaid volunteers who give up their own time to help you learn (and beforehand to be trained and examined to be qualified to help you).

If you feel there is some issue that is preventing you making good progress with your Observer please discuss this with either your Observer (if appropriate) or our membership secretary.

Your Observer Will:

Arrange to meet you in mutually convenient public places;

Always endeavour to be prompt when meeting with you at the times and dates you have arranged. If they cannot keep an appointment they will advise you as early as possible;

Provide on-road guidance to improve your driving/riding towards Advanced Test Standard, but remember that the safe and legal control of your vehicle is your responsibility at all times;

Provide the opportunity for practical examples of the course criteria to help assist your understanding and development;

Provide constructive feedback throughout the duration of your course, including a written/scored report at the end of each observed session (or emailed shortly thereafter);

Tailor sessions to your learning requirements;

Assign relevant "Homework" in order to assist in your progress;

Answer any questions and address any concerns you may have with regards to the course subject matter;

Sometimes, if appropriate, provide "Demonstration Drives/Rides" using their own vehicle in order to assist your understanding of course subjects.

Questions?

If you have questions or you feel there is some part of this that does not match your needs, or to which you cannot commit, then please contact our membership secretary immediately.

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