

Certificate IV

The Road Ahead for Driver Trainers

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Biography

- Managing Director of Trent Driving School, NSW
- President of the Australian Driver Trainers Association (NSW). The ADTA is a national organization with state/territory branches, the aim and objective of which is to improve road safety by improving the competency of drivers of all classes of vehicles.
- Member & Treasurer of the Executive Committee of the Australian College of Road Safety
- 25 years experience in driver education & training
- Active in organizing road safety programs in high schools and jointly with local government.
- Experienced in working closely with authorities at local, state and federal level to improve road safety
- Pioneered the development of quality control systems for the monitoring of quality service delivery of driving schools.
- Delegate and active participant in road safety conferences in Australia and overseas.
- Supported the raising of instructor standards to Level 4 in the Australian Qualifications Framework.

1. INTRODUCTION

There has long been a need for driver trainers to take a much greater role in the education and development of competent and safe new drivers. The crash statistics are still showing alarmingly high figures for younger drivers, who are particularly vulnerable within the period immediately after licensing. Much has been done to make new drivers aware of the problem including restrictions on their driving, advertising campaigns, education programs and so on, but the figures remain high.

Some Researchers have stated that driver training has had little effect on the crash statistics in the past. There certainly has been much debate about the problem but there is a suggestion that perhaps it is the type of driver training that is the issue and that the time is right for driver trainers to take a much harder look at the way in which the job is done.

The development of a new Certificate IV course for driver trainers is a big step in that direction, particularly with a much greater emphasis on the driver trainer's ability to impart knowledge on the safety factors of hazard awareness, anticipation, decision making and the correct use of space. The new course also enables the driver trainer to thoroughly assess as well as train new drivers.

2. BACKGROUND

In Australia, prior to 1990 there was no specific course for trainee driving instructors other than training programs provided by individual driving schools in some States that literally did just enough to get the trainee through a fairly simple Driving Instructor's Test at the Licensing Authority.

There was no common theme to any of these training programs and as a result there was a huge variance in the standard of new driving instructors. There had to be a change in this system and in the late 1980's a full course for new driving instructors was developed by a group of driving school proprietors, who had an interest in ensuring that instructors would be able to impart knowledge and training of a higher standard than otherwise would have been the case. This was achieved through the industry association, the Australian Driver Trainers Association (ADTA).

The result of this development saw a pilot course run at the Road Transport Industry Training Committee premises in Sydney in 1990 for about 20 existing instructors and two Roads and Traffic Authority driver examiners. The objective was to share this experience for the benefit of all states and jurisdictions.

The following year, 1991, another course was developed by TAFE and industry in NSW. This course then became the recognised course for driving instructors in NSW and all existing Instructors were required to complete this course before December 1994 if they wished to continue as commercial driving instructors. In South Australia, the licensing authority, Transport South Australia developed a short two-day course for driving instructors, which was the only other recognised qualification in Australia at this time. It was interesting to note the interest of other jurisdictions in the development of these courses.

In 1995 the industry, through ADTA, in conjunction with licensing authorities, developed competency standards for driving instructors, as this was the direction that training was taking at the time. From these competencies a Certificate III course was developed in Victoria that became the basis for training of driving instructors. This course had national approval for 5 years and was adopted across the country. At the same time ADTA developed a set of competencies for learner drivers, known as The National Driver Competencies, which was the “what to teach” component of any course and these were available to any training organisation who wanted to develop a Certificate III course for driving instructors.

The National Driver Competencies was a resource that led to the development of the NSW Learner Driver Logbook.

A number of training organisations were approved to present the course in several states. As the expiry date, December 2001, for the Certificate III course was approaching, the focus on national workplace training was changing from competencies to training packages. An attempt was made by ADTA to align to the Transport Distribution Training (TDT) Package. Because of time constraints it was decided to extend the approval for the current Certificate III course for another twelve months to allow time to develop the new course.

3. NEW COURSE DEVELOPMENT

Early in 2002 the Australian Driver Trainers Association convened a meeting of all the interested parties that included representatives from rider trainers, driver trainers, heavy vehicle trainers, TAFE, the Roads and Traffic Authority, Transport Industry Training Boards and interest groups across the country. The objective was to ensure that as much interest and input was achieved from all jurisdictions. TAFE offered to oversee the national course development.

There was keen support to raise the bar to a higher level from all parts of industry, the training providers and licensing authorities. What was needed was a core course, with specific add-on modules for cars, motorbikes and heavy vehicles. This would allow easy movement between the different licence classes. The ADTA National Driver Competencies were used as the learner driver “must know” content for the course.

For specific content on assessment and training, it was decided to align the course to Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training. This is a generic course from the Business Services Training Package that is specifically designed to be adapted into any workplace environment. In this course it has been adapted to driver training.

A simple explanation of Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training reveals two sections, assessment and training. These two sections are divided into: -

Prepare for assessment	assess	review assessment
Prepare for training	train	review training

There were a number of successful meetings throughout 2002 while the course was developed and in January 2003 the course was officially signed off as Certificate IV in Driving Instruction, complying with the provisions of the Australian National Training Authority AQF standard. The Course is the framework from which course providers can develop their own courses.

The course is in the public domain, which means that any Registered Training Organisation (RTO) can purchase the course document, design a course and present it.

4. COURSE STRUCTURE

The Course has been designed to train Instructors or Trainers to teach driving or riding to new car drivers, motorbike riders and truck drivers covering the four areas of light, medium, heavy and combination.

The core course was designed to train driving instructors to teach learner drivers to drive motorcars. The bike and truck modules were designed by adding or reducing the modules of that course to meet specific needs of teaching in these vehicles.

The course is made up of the following modules.

- 1 **IN-CAR SPECIFIC INSTRUCTION TECHNIQUES**
Imparts the skills that enable the driving instructor to instruct learner drivers in all sections of driving. This module is conducted in-car.
- 2 **UNIQUE INDUSTRY TOPICS**
Covers such topics as safety, training routes and locations, dual controls, in-car instruction techniques.
- 3 **VEHICLE DRIVING PROFICIENCY**
This module ensures that the driving skills of the driving instructor are of the highest order.
- 4 **THE DRIVING INSTRUCTION INDUSTRY**
Covers such topics as industry structure, legal requirements, accident and breakdown procedures.
- 5 **ROAD LAW UNDERSTANDING**
Ensures a complete knowledge of the road laws.
- 6 **ASSESSING LEARNER DRIVERS**
Covers the purposes and principals of assessment and the procedures to assess learner drivers.
- 7 **DRIVER TRAINING STRATEGIES**
Covers task analysis, competency establishment, learning outcomes, group-training strategies.
- 8 **PLAN ASSESSMENT**
Covers establishing evidence required, assessment methods, assessment tools.
- 9 **REVIEW ASSESSMENT**
Covers reviewing procedures and reporting of assessment.
- 10 **PLAN AND PROMOTE A TRAINING PROGRAM**
Covers identifying competency needs, development of a training program.
- 11 **PLAN A SERIES OF TRAINING SESSIONS**

Covers training requirements, development of training sessions, training materials, arranging resources.

12 DELIVER TRAINING SESSIONS

Covers prepare training participants, present training sessions.

13 REVIEW TRAINING

Covers record training data, evaluate training, report on training.

5. THE PROCESS OF CERTIFICATE IV IN TOPIC DELIVERY

In order to understand how Certificate IV in Driving Instruction qualified driver trainers can use their training in the workplace, the following the framework for topic delivery from no competence or understanding to full competence is presented.

- A lesson plan is developed.
- Research is conducted to find suitable locations for topic presentations.
- Training aids and support materials are gathered.
- The topic is sequenced within the driving framework to ensure correct driver development.
- A dual controlled vehicle is provided.
- Student prior knowledge of the topic is ascertained.
- The topic is introduced to the student and outcomes explained.
- An explanation of what is required using the support materials and observations.
- A “try it out” phase for the student including feedback questions to ascertain comprehension.
- A practice regime to help gain knowledge and competence is commenced.
- The topic is applied in various situations and integrated into other topic practice.
- Continuous revision of the topic is commenced.
- The student’s progress is recorded.
- The trainer’s actions are recorded.
- Assessments are conducted to check levels of competence.
- The driving test will assess how well the training was conducted.

This process for the presentation, practice, skill development, and record keeping for all topics is fundamental to the production of an educated, safe and competent new driver.

6. CERTIFICATE IV AND ROAD SAFETY

The course places a great emphasis on the safety aspects for all driving situations and the safety of the learner and trainer during the training process. The National Driver Competencies devotes a complete module to these safety aspects that include the following criteria: -

- Use recognised vision techniques while driving
- Create and maintain driving space
- Use techniques to be visible to other road users
- Avoid potential problems and hazards
- Use appropriate decision making while driving
- Use appropriate intersection safety techniques

The course also enables the driving instructor to develop attitudes and proficient driving techniques that meet community expectations with emphasis on the following criteria: -

- Community problems that are caused by road crash/trauma
- The effects of risk taking behaviour on driver safety
- The effects of peer pressure, opinions and beliefs on young driver behaviour

- The reasons for road laws and regulations
- The effect of drugs, alcohol and fatigue on drivers
- The causal attribution theory

At a time when new drivers are most vulnerable during their learning phase driving instructors must always be able to instruct in a safe environment. The course applies specific industry knowledge and skills that relate to safely instructing learner drivers. That includes the following criteria: -

- Use left seat control procedures while instructing
- Use driver responsibility transfer techniques
- Use techniques and procedures to anticipate and avoid dangerous situations
- Use techniques to avoid vehicle misuse
- Observe the safety implications of correct location selection

7. CONCLUSION

The Driver Training Industry now has a course in place that can give driver trainers the ability to produce safe, educated and competent new drivers. Course presenters must make sure that trainees are fully competent in all aspects of the course before completion.

Testing Authorities must also realise that new learner drivers will only do enough preparation to pass the driving test, so if the new course is to have a longer term effect on the road toll, the driving test must reflect the ideals that are an integral part of Certificate IV. This will encourage the driver trainers to keep up the high standards necessary to fully educate young drivers, rather than just train them to pass the test.

There are good signs across the country that driving tests are being reviewed to provide improved testing and assessment procedures. This being the case it will provide a better correlation to the aims and objectives of these new training and assessing procedures. The course is available on the National Register of Accredited Courses www.ntis.gov.au. The Course is also available for purchase via the curriculum clearing house www.oten.edu.au/nswcccn at cost price.