



AGENDA ITEM: 6

SUMMARY

Report for:	Licensing Health & Safety Enforcement Committee
Date of meeting:	26th November 2013
PART:	1
If Part II, reason:	

Title of report:	Knowledge test arrangements for taxi and private hire driver applicants
Contact:	Ross Hill – Licensing Team Leader, Legal Governance
Purpose of report:	To report the results of consultation on the expansion of the Knowledge test arrangements for prospective applicants for hackney carriage and private hire drivers' licences.
Recommendations	To adopt the proposed changes to the arrangements for Knowledge tests for prospective applicants for hackney carriage and private hire driver's licences, with full effect from the 1 st April 2014.
Corporate objectives:	<p>Safe and Clean Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge tests are one element in ensuring that applicants for driver's licence are fit and proper persons, and suitable to work at close quarters with the public. <p>Dacorum Delivers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposals outlined would support the transition to paperless working under the Dacorum Anywhere program.
Implications:	<p><u>Financial</u> All of the proposals outlined within will have a financial implication, which would either be paid directly by applicants (practical driving test), or recouped through test fees (purchase of computer knowledge test software, English test fees).</p> <p><u>Equalities Implications</u> An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out. It is believed that the public safety interest justifies the impact.</p>

Implications (cont.):	<u>Value for Money</u> Adoption of a computerised knowledge test will resolve a current undercharge in respect of knowledge tests. <u>Risk / Health And Safety</u> None
Consultees:	The results of consultation are included in this report.
Background papers:	Licensing, Health & Safety and Enforcement Committee Agenda, 25 th June 2013 Taxi and Private Hire Licensing: Best Practice Guidance (Department for Transport, March 2010)
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. When considering applications for taxi and private hire drivers' licences, the Council must satisfy itself that the applicant is a fit and proper person prior to granting a licence. No definition is offered of this term, and the Council's discretion is accordingly wide-ranging.
- 1.2. One element considered as part of this requirement relates to the testing of the applicant's topographical knowledge of the borough of Dacorum. This is currently undertaken through a written knowledge test, in which applicants are required to demonstrate their familiarity with the landmarks, roads and places within Dacorum which they may be required to go to as a licensed driver.

2. PROPOSED REVISIONS

- 2.1. The initial report considered by the Committee in June 2013 detailed the current arrangements in full, together with a summary of the perceived defects with these arrangements. It is not proposed to repeat this detail in full in this report. By way of a summary, candidates are currently required to take and pass a paper-based test testing knowledge of locations, routes, and licence conditions, but there is currently no assessment of driving ability, communication skills, numeracy or demeanour. Tests are randomly generated and individually marked by an officer. This makes the current system unwieldy and expensive, with a loss currently being made on each test taken.
- 2.2. A number of possible improvements are now proposed to various aspects of the test, which should go a long way towards resolving the current weaknesses in the testing regime. The following paragraphs outline all of these proposed improvements.

Computerised testing system

- 2.3. One of the main concerns with the current paper-based test is the length of time spent by officers in preparing, invigilating and marking the test papers.

The cost to the Council of the current test has now been calculated at £61 per paper.

- 2.4. Software has now been identified which allows a knowledge test to be taken on a computer. The Diamond test system presents candidates with a randomly generated test paper, consisting of multiple sections as specified by the authority during installation. The test itself is presented in a multiple choice format, with every question presented alongside 4 or 5 possible answers – the candidate simply uses the mouse to click on the one they believe to be correct, and then proceeds to the next question.
- 2.5. The main advantage of such a system is that preparation time is reduced to almost zero (simply requiring the officer to input the name and test date at the time of booking – the test is then automatically generated). Marking is also instantaneous, and the system can be configured either to display the outcome to the candidate immediately, or to generate a results letter for subsequent dispatch. Previous tests and answers are retained electronically, should a challenge arise.
- 2.6. Use of such a system would, through the reduction in officer time, reduce the cost to the Council of each test to an estimated £27, factoring in the purchase cost and licence fee of the software. It would also assist greatly in the transition to paperless working under the Dacorum Anywhere program, as previous knowledge tests currently form a significant proportion of the hard copy files held by Licensing. There are a number of options for delivering such a test – enquiries have been made about the use of the IT Training Suite in the Civic Centre for multiple simultaneous tests, or alternatively the software could be installed on a single computer for one-on-one testing, either under the invigilation of Licensing or another appropriate area.
- 2.7. There would be a need to reconfigure the test and review applicable pass marks, as the nature of the test would change significantly on the introduction of multiple choice questions. Pass marks would need to be established separately to ensure that the test remained suitably challenging, possibly using the feedback of experienced drivers (or other persons with a comprehensive knowledge of the area).
- 2.8. Changing the test system will provide an opportunity to introduce assessment of other skills and areas of knowledge. The most suitable for assessment in this way would appear to be numeracy (e.g. calculating change due from a fare, or time/distance questions) and equalities issues (e.g. laws around carriage of passengers with disabilities or assistance animals). It was initially proposed to assess knowledge of the Highway Code – however, this would duplicate an aspect of the driving assessment (discussed later) and as such is no longer recommended.
- 2.9. A number of drivers have requested exemption in recent years from the topographical elements of the knowledge test, as they intend to work outside of Dacorum as chauffeurs or executive drivers. It is viewed as desirable to prevent this being used simply as a loophole to obtain a licence, and to ensure the knowledge and skill of such candidates, and for this reason introduction of a substitute topographical test, covering national landmarks and routes, is proposed. Candidates obtaining a licence in reliance on such an exemption would be entitled to a limited licence only, conditioned to

prevent use for more typical private hire work. Under no circumstances would hackney carriage drivers be exempted from the topographical elements of the test.

- 2.10. It is also proposed to end the current practice of exempting applicants from test sections passed previously, and instead to require all sections to be passed in a single attempt. There also appears to be little justification for the retention of the current policy of a 12 month 'cooling-off period' for candidates who have failed three attempts in a 12-month period – it would appear that this requirement could be equally well met by simple advice given to a candidate who has performed particularly poorly. Both of these measures currently cause confusion and increased bureaucracy.

Practical driving test

- 2.11. Paragraph 70 of the DfT Best Practice Guidance states:
“Many local authorities rely on the standard car driving licence as evidence of driving proficiency. Others require some further driving test to be taken. Local authorities will want to consider carefully whether this produces benefits which are commensurate with the costs involved for would-be drivers, the costs being in terms of both money and broader obstacles to entry to the trade. However, they will note that the Driving Standards Agency provides a driving assessment specifically designed for taxis.”
- 2.12. It is considered desirable to carry out a more in-depth assessment of a prospective applicant's driving ability, prior to considering an application for a new licence, as this will provide evidence that a candidate has a greater than normal knowledge of road traffic legislation, drives safely at an advanced level and can accomplish many technical manoeuvres associated with taxi driving. The DSA assessment provides an objective means of accomplishing this, with added reassurance as to the abilities and accreditation of the examiners. Further information on this test is appended at Annex A.
- 2.13. The DSA assessment is undertaken with a professional driving test examiner, in the applicant's own vehicle, and lasts for around 40 minutes. Tests are booked directly by the candidate, and a fee of £79.66 is payable (£96 for 'out of hours' appointments). No discount is offered for retests following a failure or non-attendance.
- 2.14. During the test, the candidate will be observed driving in a number of situations, including performing a legal U-turn, solo instruction-less driving, (simulated) safe picking-up and dropping-off of passengers, and an emergency stop. They will also be asked a number of 'Cabology' theory questions, and questions about the Highway Code and traffic signs/road markings. The test will be failed in the event of a serious or dangerous fault being committed, or if an excessive number of minor faults are observed.
- 2.15. Passing the test results in a certificate being issued, and a permanent notation being created on the driver's DVLA record. A number of insurers will consider this assessment to be an advanced driving qualification and will offer a discount on motor insurance policies or taxi insurance policies to successful candidates.
- 2.16. A number of DSA test centres in the local area offer the practical taxi test, including Watford (currently a 5 week wait for appointments), St Albans

(3 weeks), Barnet (3 weeks), Borehamwood (4 weeks), Aylesbury (3 weeks), Luton (8 weeks) and Hendon (3 weeks).

2.17. A second test option, involving a wheelchair loading exercise, is also offered, but for this the candidate must provide a wheelchair accessible vehicle, and it is considered unlikely that many prospective drivers would have access to such a vehicle. This test also carries a higher charge, reflecting the longer test. For these reasons, it is proposed that the basic test would be a sufficient minimum requirement in respect of assessing driving capability, with the enhanced wheelchair test a discretionary extra which the candidate may wish to undertake. The wheelchair exercise can also be booked separately, without the other elements of the test, and this may be of use in the event of complaints against a driver in respect of loading and securing passengers in wheelchairs.

English language proficiency requirements

2.18. Paragraph 71 of the DfT Best Practice Guidance states that “Authorities may also wish to consider whether an applicant would have any problems in communicating with customers because of language difficulties.”

2.19. Adequate communication skills and language proficiency are considered essential for the work of a taxi or private hire driver, due to the need to correctly understand and follow directional instructions from a passenger, and to enable the driver to give and follow instructions in an emergency situation, which may be stressful.

2.20. A number of options exist for English language proficiency testing. However issues arise with the cost and time commitment of many of these, together with the need to ensure that the examining body is reputable, that the course is accredited by a recognised organisation, and that the result is of a sufficient level so as to indicate a suitable proficiency. Many also assess all elements of language skills, including reading and writing abilities, which may not be of such relevance to the work of taxi and private hire drivers.

2.21. A suitable option has now been identified for a spoken English test. The Versant English Test, offered by Pearson Education, is taken by telephone and provides a near-instant, objective result, assessing the candidate’s skills in vocabulary, sentence construction, fluency and pronunciation, as well as providing an overall score. The test lasts for around 15 minutes, and the result is available to authorised persons almost immediately after the test, which lasts for around 15 minutes, is completed. Details of a sample test, including the instruction sheet and a results report, are appended at Annexes B and C. During the test the candidate carries out a number of verbal tasks, comprising:

- following verbal instructions to read sentences from a printed sheet,
- repeating sentences played over the phone,
- answering simple questions asked over the phone,
- reconstructing sentences from multiple segments read to the candidate,
- answering open questions (speaking for 20-30 secs each on several topics) asked over the phone.

2.22. The test produces a score within a given range, which correlates to certain language proficiency levels, rather than a straight-forward pass or fail, and as such is suitable for a wide range of proficiencies. The levels also correlate to the Common European Framework of Reference for languages (CEFR), which allows the results to be accurately compared against other language-based qualifications. For the purposes of driver licensing, it is believed that candidates should have language proficiency equivalent to the threshold of levels B1 and B2 of the CEFR scale (an overall score on the Versant test of 55/80 or higher). Level B2 is defined by CEFR as follows:

Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.

2.23. There is a cost of around £30 per test undertaken. For security purposes, it is proposed that tests would be taken under supervision at the Council's offices, following an identification check, so as to ensure that tests are not taken by a person other than the candidate.

2.24. The requirement for any test of this type would need to be applied equally to all candidates, including those who may be expected to speak English as a first language by virtue of their country of birth. However, it is proposed to exempt a candidate from any adopted English test requirement if they can demonstrate that they have previously passed a relevant English language qualification at a suitable level, such as:

- a GCSE, GCE O-level or GCE A-level issued by a recognised examining body in the UK (grade C or higher)
- an NVQ, City & Guilds, or similar vocational qualification (level 2 or higher) issued by a recognised examining body in the UK
- an equivalent qualification to either of the above, issued by a recognised examining body in an English-speaking country other than the UK
- a TOEFL, IELTS or ESOL qualification at CEFR level B2 (or equivalent)

Transitional provisions

2.25. Purchase and configuration of the computer testing software is likely to take several months, as a result of which it is proposed to commence those changes from April 2014. The practical driving test, while already offered, represents a substantial change to our practices and to ensure sufficient capacity in examination centres it is also proposed that this requirement is not introduced until April 2014. The proposed language requirements are the least onerous change and the simplest to introduce, and it is intended to commence these for all applicants registering for a first test from January 2014.

2.26. Several dozen individuals have previously registered and attempted the current knowledge test, without success. As these individuals were previously advised that they would be permitted 3 attempts at the test over a 12-month period, it is proposed that they be permitted to complete their attempts should they wish to do so, and the current test will continue to be

offered to pre-registered candidates only for a further 6-months after implementation of the new test, to facilitate this. Candidates may optionally choose to transition immediately to the new test, but will be required to satisfy all of the new requirements.

Summary

2.27. The preceding paragraphs outline a number of additional aspects which could be introduced as preliminary requirements to the driver licensing process operated by the Council. Introduction of all of these elements would go a long way towards ensuring a suitable level of knowledge and language proficiency on the part of applicants, and would represent a significantly tougher process and series of checks than those which are currently carried out. The computerised knowledge test would also aid in the Council's transition program, by facilitating the paperless manner of working required by Dacorum Anywhere.

2.28. There is a cost implication to the proposals, as all of the revised proposals would increase the total cost of the preliminary knowledge test checks to £150 for applicants, from the current £40. The largest component of this increase, the DSA assessment, may allow drivers to obtain a discount of future insurance premiums (insurer dependent), offsetting this cost. The language test fee is only payable if no other qualifications are held, and the list of these has been left fairly wide – the results of the test would also be provided to the candidate who may be able to use them for other purposes. The computer test is likely to lead to a reduction in the council's costs, which may allow for a reduction in future test fees once fully assessed.

3. CONSULTATION RESULTS

3.1. Consultation took place between the 2nd August and the 4th October 2013, by way of a newsletter article and a direct mailshot to licensed drivers. The following comments were received from respondents in respect of the proposals:

*“Point 1. [Computer test] It would depend on what the additional topics are.
Point 2. [Driving test] Not sure about this one.
Point 3. [Language test] Yes I agree with this as it is a requisite part of the job”*

“On my objection to a driving test being offered? I object on the basis that I once had a look at what is involved in that driving test for taxis and I found it to be over the top in general and I got the impression it was aimed at raising the bar beyond the point that is necessary to be a Taxi or Private hire driver. For example, I remember one of the requirements was to reverse into parking places and spaces "rightwards"! Why is that a requirement? We drive on the left in the UK and reversing into a space rightwards and against the general line of parking is frowned upon in most cases. There was also a requirement that the journey had to be as smooth as possible or something like that, no bumps or jerking in anyway and what I would worry about in that scenario is the state of the roads in general and all the potholes, speed bumps, would that count against a person too or be mistaken as a fault?”

“its been harsh for the new candidates to go for a strict and hard test as the existing taxi drivers just qualified with the easy pattern .there should be

equality for everyone .still i believe the format is too tough for the new candidates to pass because latest technology is available nowadays in the form of sat nav and other gadgets .there is no point of making routes and other stuff.

if the council thinks that they should make changes in the test then the existing drivers should pass that test as well especially those who passed in the old format almost five years ago.

there should be something for the existing drivers as well .there are so many drivers who need so much training in that field.”

“Some of the things you are listing to change, should have been years ago. You let so many that can't speak English already have a licence, and as for some of there driving, has put lots of customers of using taxis so a downturn in the amount of people = downturn in earning money, and how could that be safe for customers if a driver don't understand a customer, how can he do his job, oh wait use Sat Nav, or phone a friend who understand English, and I have seen that done.

Making it hard & if they can't speak English no point them carrying on with test.

Recall licences for ones that can't speak good English, or don't let any more drivers on.”

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. Officer recommend that the proposed revisions to arrangements for knowledge testing of candidates for private hire and hackney carriage driver's licence be adopted as proposed, and ask that Committee resolve:

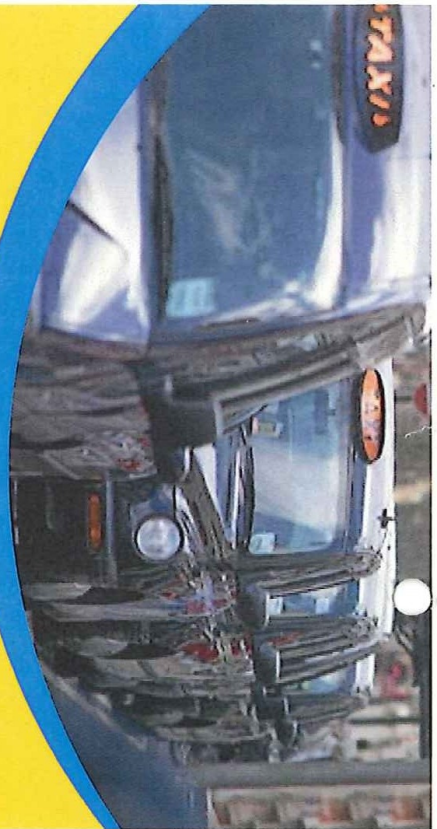
a) That all candidates for the council's taxi and private hire driver knowledge test applying for a first test on or after the 1st January 2014 shall be required to demonstrate suitable and sufficient proficiency in English-language speaking and listening skills as a component of successful completion of the test, either:

- i) By producing evidence of satisfactory completion of a recognised English language qualification awarded by an accredited examining body, such as:
 - a GCSE, GCE O-level or GCE A-level issued by a recognised examining body in the UK (grade C or higher)
 - an NVQ, City & Guilds, or similar vocational qualification (level 2 or higher) issued by a recognised examining body in the UK
 - an equivalent qualification to either of the above, issued by a recognised examining body in an English-speaking country other than the UK
 - a TOEFL, IELTS or ESOL qualification at CEFR level B2 (or equivalent); or
- ii) By undertaking a speaking and listening skill assessment with the council's approved supplier, under the supervision of licensing officers, attaining a grade equivalent to level B2 on the Common European Framework of Reference for languages. The cost of the

assessment shall be recharged in full to the applicant, and the choice of provider shall be periodically reviewed to ensure suitability and competitiveness.

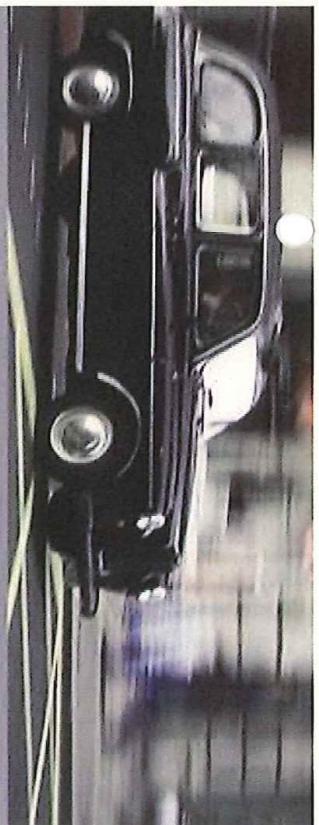
- b) That all candidates for the council's taxi and private hire driver knowledge test applying for a first test on or after the 1st April 2014 shall be required to produce evidence of successful completion of the Driving Standards Agency's taxi drivers assessment as a component of successful completion of the test;
- c) That officers arrange for the purchase and installation of a computerised testing program for knowledge tests with a view to activation by the 1st April 2014, to replace the current paper-based testing system; to review and expand the question banks; and to adjust pass marks accordingly to ensure that the required topographical knowledge of candidates remains at an approximately similar level to the current test system;
- d) To incorporate additional test sections on relevant equalities issues and numeracy to the revised test;
- e) To make the following policy amendments to the revised test:
 - i) The 12-month 'cooling-off period' following three unsuccessful test attempts to be removed, to enable candidates to sit tests as and when requested, with no upper limit on the number of test attempts;
 - ii) Previously passed test sections shall no longer be carried forward: all sections of the test must be passed in one sitting;
- f) To introduce a substitute test for candidates seeking exemption from the standard topographical private hire test due to the nature of the work carried on, to assess knowledge of national destinations and routes, for all such candidates applying for a first test on or after the 1st April 2014. Only the Dacorum-specific topographical elements of the test would be substituted, all other test requirements would remain unchanged, and candidates passing this test would be entitled to a restricted licence only, not permitting general private hire work or operation by any licensed operator other than the one in respect of which the exemption was applied.
- g) That candidates who have booked or taken a first test prior to the 1st April 2014 shall be permitted to attempt any further current tests permitted under the pre-existing limits, without being required to satisfy the new proposed requirements, subject to completion of all such attempts within the 6 months following introduction of the new system. Affected candidates may also choose to transition to the revised testing system at any time, but shall be required to satisfy all applicable requirements.
- h) That the revised knowledge test arrangements apply to any new applicant who does not currently hold a driver's licence issued by Dacorum Borough Council, or to a previous licence-holder whose driver's licence expired more than 12 months previously. Existing private hire licence-holders wishing to upgrade to a dual driver's licence shall be

required to complete the elements of the revised computer test only.
Existing hackney carriage licence-holders wishing to upgrade to a dual driver's licence shall be required to complete the elements of the revised computer test, excluding topographical sections, only.



Private hire - hackney carriage assessment

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Introduction

The Driving Standards Agency is committed to improving driving standards through its testing and assessment activities. All drivers must take responsibility for developing the correct attitude and approach towards safe and considerate driving. This, combined with a sound knowledge of defensive driving will make our roads safer, a safer environment for all road users.

As a professional driver you have a special responsibility to ensure that your passengers have a safe, comfortable and enjoyable journey. You may have years of driving experience and will be able to demonstrate a good standard of driving on the taxi assessment.

The principles of good driving practice are set out in our official publication *The Official DSA Guide to Driving - the essential skills*. Study these principles and by putting them

into practice you can demonstrate to your passengers and other road users that you are a professional driver.

There are millions of journeys made every year by Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles. Consider taking on board good sound advice. This will result in these journeys being completed in safety and in comfort by your passengers. This will ensure a service delivered by professional taxi drivers who take pride in their driving and the service they give to their customers.

Rosemary Thew
Driving Standards Agency -
Chief Executive



The Role of the Driving Standards Agency (DSA)

DSA is the only agency in Great Britain charged with setting driving standards and delivering the consistently high quality required to ensure safe driving practice. DSA has a wealth of experience in assessing all types of drivers. It is responsible for 1.6 million driving tests taken in Great Britain each year on cars, motorcycles, LGVs, PCVs and other special vehicles. DSA also trains, tests and monitors the performance of all examiners, sets the standards and syllabus against which all Approved Driving Instructors teach and authorises motorcycle training bodies to provide Compulsory Basic Training.

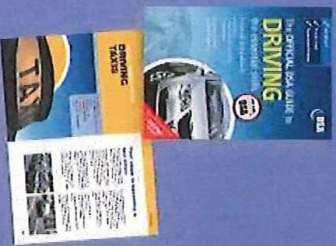
Your Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Assessment

Before you are issued with a Hackney Carriage or Private Hire Driver's Licence you must pass an assessment. It is recommended that you familiarise yourself with the contents of the assessment; these are set out on the following pages. We strongly recommend that you take professional instruction prior to taking the assessment.

Preparing for your assessment

As a professional driver you have a special responsibility to set an example to other road users by driving with courtesy and consideration.

The official range of books from DSA provide expert advice on best driving practices to ensure that you and your passengers have a safe, comfortable and enjoyable journey.



The Official DSA Guide to Driving - the essential skills

ISBN: 9780115528170 Price: £12.99

This indispensable driving manual is packed with advice to help you become a safer driver. A section devoted to taxi drivers covers:

- first steps to becoming a taxi driver - regulations and medical checks
- passenger care - passenger comfort, seat belts and dealing with lost property
- professional driving - skills, environmental consideration, awareness, communication, tiredness and distractions
- driving taxis - stopping at the roadside, manoeuvring
- passengers with special needs and requirements.

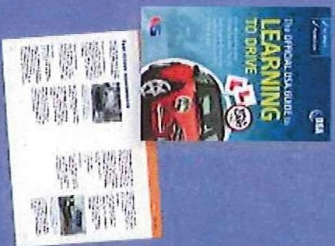
The Official DSA Guide to Learning to Drive

ISBN: 9780115528583 Price: £7.99

The only official guide which explains the standards required to pass today's practical driving test and assessment for taxi drivers. This latest edition includes references to the current version of *The Official Highway Code*. The book includes information about the 24 key skills examined and the level of ability you need to demonstrate, as a professional driver.

A section on the assessment for taxi drivers covers:

- licensing requirements
- key skills: including taxi manoeuvring exercise and stopping at the side of the road
- what to expect at your assessment and the wheelchair exercise.



5

The Official Highway Code

ISBN: 9780115528149 Price: £2.50

Essential reading for all road-users in England, Scotland and Wales. This updated edition of the only *Official Highway Code* contains the very latest rules of the road. Many of these rules are legal requirements and must be adhered to in order to avoid penalty - fines, penalty points, disqualification or even prison. *The Official Highway Code* reflects the most up-to-date legislation that road-users must adhere to, advice on road safety and best practice.

Rheola'r Ffordd Fawr Swyddogol (Welsh Language version)

ISBN: 9780115528605 Price: £2.50

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The Official Highway Code Interactive CD-ROM

ISBN: 9780115528460 Price: £9.78

The CD-ROM version of *The Official Highway Code* provides an innovative and interactive alternative for users. It is an engaging, fun, and educational product aimed at accelerating the learning process and providing a thorough understanding of road safety and best practice.

Know Your Traffic Signs

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Your taxi assessment will include five questions on traffic signs, so pick up the latest edition of this comprehensive guide which explains the vast majority of traffic signs that any driver is likely to encounter. A valuable reference for professional drivers, even those with years of experience.



6

Booking your Assessment

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7

Booking your assessment

Remember, it is important to book your assessment early. The more flexible you can be in selecting a driving test centre where you wish to take your assessment, the earlier we can book you an appointment. Secure an appointment even before your police check or your medical.

Practical assessments are available at some test centres on Saturdays, Sundays and in the summer, on weekday evenings.

Booking online or by telephone

You can book your assessment by either of these methods and you'll be given the date and time of your assessment immediately.

You can book online at www.businesslink.gov.uk/transport

To book by telephone, call 0300 200 1122. If you are a Welsh speaker call 0300 200 1133. If you are deaf and need a minicom machine call 0300 200 1144 to book your assessment.

When booking you'll need to explain that you want to take a taxi assessment and provide

- your UK driver number (from your licence)
- credit or debit card details. Please note that the card holder must be present.

Booking by post

Fill in the application form for the type of assessment you wish to take and send it, together with the correct fee, to the address shown on the back of the form. You can get application forms from driving test centres, your instructor or by phoning 0300 200 1122.

You may pay by cheque, postal order or with a credit/debit card. Postal orders or cheques should be made payable to the Driving Standards Agency. Please do not send cash. You'll receive an appointment letter within 10 days.

Appointment letter

Whether you book your assessment online, by telephone or by post you will receive an appointment letter or e-mail to take with you when you go for your assessment. It will include:

- the time and place of your assessment
- the address of the test centre.

8

Taxi assessment fees

You can change or cancel your assessment online at www.businesslink.gov.uk/transport. Alternatively, you can change or cancel an assessment appointment by calling 0300 200 1122.

You need to give at least three clear working days notice for change or cancellation of an assessment, not counting the day DSA receives your request, and the day of the assessment (Saturday is counted as a working day). If you don't give enough notice you'll lose your fee.

The assessment is intended to fulfil one of the requirements under local Council taxi licensing procedures. The assessment will be carried out in accordance with the criteria drawn up by DSA to meet the Local Authorities Service Standards. A certificate will be issued when you pass the assessment and there is no further fee for this.

Taxi assessment fees

	Normal Hours	Out of Hours
Z Hackney Saloon / Private Hire Saloon	£78.00	£94.00
Z1 Hackney Wheelchair enhanced Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles Highway Code / Traffic Signs Cabology Questions.	£91.00	£110.00
Z2 Wheelchair Exercise	£26.00	£31.99

Note: Assessment fees are correct at time of publication (1st January 2010) but please check at time of booking. Taxi fees include VAT.

9

At the Driving Test Centre

You must bring the following items to your assessment:

- an appropriately insured and taxed / licensed vehicle suitable for the assessment
- your appointment letter
- a UK/NI photo card licence. Both parts of the licence (photo card and paper counterpart) must be presented

OR

- a full British old style paper licence and current passport
- current recognisable EU licence with a UK paper counterpart (and current passport if there is no photo on the licence).

If you do not bring your documents, your assessment may not be conducted and you may lose your fee.

REMEMBER
NO LICENCE - NO PHOTO
NO ASSESSMENT
YOU WILL LOSE YOUR FEE!

If your car has a front passenger seat you will need to provide an adjustable interior mirror for the use of the examiner.

10

Important information about your assessment

- To pass, you are permitted to accumulate up to 9 driving faults. If you accumulate 10 or more driving faults you will fail. Any serious or dangerous fault will be immediately recorded as a failure but the assessment will still continue. Finally returning to the driving test centre. The taxi assessment is reflective of modern driving practices and the standard is set at a level suitable for full driving licence holders. It is important that you do not adjust your driving to what you may feel the examiner would expect to see, do not drive in an unnatural manner.
- You may be asked to complete an emergency stop, i.e demonstrate that you can stop the vehicle as in an emergency, promptly and under control (avoid skidding).
- You will be asked to carry out two manoeuvres one of which will be your own choice, e.g reverse around a corner. In both cases you will be expected to demonstrate your ability to manoeuvre your vehicle under control and with good all-round effective observations, giving consideration to other road users and pedestrians.
- You will be asked on a number of occasions to pull up on the left at a safe and convenient place, as if a fare is either going to get in or out of your vehicle. Avoid parking next to lampposts and trees - this could be potentially hazardous for your passenger.
- Whenever you have been stationary at the side of the road, remember your important safety check - check your blind spot (look over your right shoulder) before pulling away.
- You need to use all your mirrors effectively (interior and exterior) and at the appropriate times. You should demonstrate that you are aware of what is happening around your vehicle at all times.
- You need to signal correctly and in good time to let other road users know your intention - other road users need to see and understand what you plan to do.
- You will be expected to understand and comply with traffic signs and road markings, as they are there to help you anticipate and plan your journey. You will also need to see and react to signals given by the police, traffic wardens etc. and signals given by other road users.
- You must be able to demonstrate your ability to make progress when the speed signs and the road and traffic conditions dictate it is safe to do so. Equally it is important to demonstrate that you recognise and comply when in lower speed limit areas.
- You need to watch your separation distance from the vehicle in front and also your separation distance from parked cars.
- You need to use sound judgement and planning when overtaking, meeting oncoming vehicles and when turning right in front of oncoming traffic. At no time be in a situation where you cause another vehicle to brake or swerve to avoid you
- You should demonstrate that you are aware of other road users at all times; plan ahead, predict how the actions of others will affect your driving and react in good time. Be aware of vulnerable road users such as pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists etc. and act in good time, rather than at the last moment

11

- You will be asked a few questions on the Highway Code, some general cabology questions and asked to identify a few traffic signs. This may include such questions as the length, width or height, tyre pressures, what to do if you found an item of lost property in your cab.

It is important that you read *The Highway Code* and be familiar with your vehicle. It is strongly advisable to consider taking professional instruction prior to taking the assessment.

Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles

- You should demonstrate your ability to
 - securely erect the wheelchair ramps (whatever style of ramp is fitted to your vehicle)
 - safely install the wheelchair in your vehicle, backing the chair to the fold down seats, then securing both wheelchair brakes
 - secure seat belts/safety harness and also secure wheel belts/clamps if fitted to your vehicle
 - satisfy yourself that the wheelchair is secure, as if to start a journey. Then reverse the entire procedure.
- It is important that you can demonstrate all the principles of safety and security - if seat belts, wheel belts or wheel clamps etc. are fitted then they should be in good working order and applied, whatever style of wheelchair accessible vehicle you bring on assessment.

12



Assessment Explained

1a Eyesight test

At the start of the assessment the examiner asked you to read a vehicle registration number. If you need glasses or contact lenses, you must wear them whenever you drive. If you had problems with the eyesight test, perhaps you should consider consulting an optician.

1b Highway Code Safety

You will be asked questions on *The Highway Code*, traffic signs and 'Cabology' (General questions relating to taxis and taxi driving).

2 Controlled stop

You will need to be able to display a high level of skill in bringing your vehicle to a stop, safely, promptly and under full control, avoiding locking the wheels. Remember that in wet weather it can take twice as long to stop safely.

3, 4 and 5 Reverse exercises

You will need to display the ability to control the vehicle safely whilst reversing to the left, right, when parking on the road or into a parking bay.

You must take good effective all-round observation throughout the manoeuvre and show consideration to other road users.

6 Turn in the road

You will need to display the low speed control and observation skills necessary to carry out this exercise safely with due regard for other road users and pedestrians.

7 Vehicle Checks

Not applicable

8 Taxi manoeuvre

You must be able to display the ability to turn your car around by whatever means available, making sure you take effective, all-round observation, showing consideration to other road users and pedestrians.

You should control your vehicle smoothly, making proper use of the clutch, accelerator, brakes and steering. You should not use a driveway or allow your vehicle to mount the pavement as this could damage your vehicle.

9 Taxi wheelchair

You should be able to securely erect wheelchair ramps, safely install the wheelchair and an imaginary wheelchair occupant into your vehicle, ensuring the wheelchair and its occupant are secured in readiness for the journey, then reverse the entire process.

10 Vehicle and trailer combinations

Not applicable

11 Precautions

Before you start the engine make sure that you are comfortably seated and all controls can be safely operated.

12 Control

This section covers, where appropriate, the safe and controlled use of accelerator, clutch, gears, footbrake, parking brake and steering.

Always try and use the vehicle controls as smoothly as possible. This means less wear and tear on your vehicle and a smoother ride for your passengers. Make proper use of your accelerator and clutch to make a smooth start. Always depress the clutch just before you stop. Select the correct gear to match the road and traffic conditions. Change gear in good time but not too soon before a hazard. Do not allow the vehicle to coast by running on in neutral or with the clutch depressed.

There should be no need to look down at the gear lever when changing gear. Use the footbrake smoothly and progressively. Brake in plenty of time for any hazard. Make full use of the parking brake whenever it would help you to prevent the vehicle rolling backwards or forwards, and if you are parking. Steer the vehicle as smoothly as possible.

Avoid harsh steering, or steering too early or too late as it may cause you to hit the kerb or swing out towards another road user.

13 Move off

You will need to demonstrate your ability to move off smoothly and safely, on the level, on a gradient and at an angle, taking the correct precautionary observations.

14 Use of mirrors - Rear observations

Use all the mirrors fitted to your vehicle safely and effectively. You must always check carefully before signalling, changing direction or changing speed. Use the Mirrors-Signal-Manoeuvre (MSM) routine effectively.

15 Signals

You must signal clearly to let others know what you intend to do. You should only use the signals shown in *The Highway Code* if it would help other road users (including pedestrians).

Always signal in good time and ensure that the signal has been cancelled after the manoeuvre has been completed. Do not beckon to pedestrians to cross the road.

16 Clearance to obstructions

Allow plenty of room to pass stationary vehicles, obstructions and be prepared to slow down or stop. A door may open, a child may run out or a vehicle may pull out without warning.

17 Response to signs/signals

You should understand and be able to react to all traffic signs and road markings. You must act correctly at traffic lights, and check that the road is clear before proceeding when the green light shows. Obey signals given by police officers, traffic wardens and school crossing patrols. Look out for signals given by other road users, including people in charge of animals, and be ready to act accordingly.

18 Use of speed

You should make safe, reasonable progress along the road bearing in mind the road, traffic and

weather conditions and the road signs and speed limits. Make sure that you can stop safely, well within the distance you can see to be clear. Do not speed.

19 Following distance

Always keep a safe distance between yourself and other vehicles. Remember, on wet or slippery roads it takes much longer to stop. When you stop in traffic queues leave sufficient space to pull out if the vehicle in front has problems.

20 Maintain progress

In order to pass your assessment you must show that you can drive at a realistic speed appropriate to the road and traffic conditions. You should approach all hazards at a safe, controlled speed, without being over-cautious or interfering with the progress of other traffic. Always be ready to move away from junctions as soon as it is safe and correct to do so; driving excessively slowly can create dangers for yourself and other drivers.

21 Junctions (including roundabouts)

You should be able to judge the correct speed of approach so that you can enter a junction safely and stop if necessary. Position your vehicle correctly. Use the correct lane - if you are turning right, keep as near to the centre of the road as is safe. Avoid cutting the corner when turning right. If turning left, keep over to the left and do not swing out. Watch out for cyclists and motorcyclists coming up on your left and pedestrians who are crossing. You must take effective observation before moving into a junction and make sure it is safe before proceeding.

22 Judgements

Only overtake when it is safe to do so. Allow enough room when you are overtaking another vehicle. Cyclists and motorcyclists need as much space as other vehicles; they can wobble or swerve suddenly. Do not cut in too quickly after overtaking. Take care when the width of the road is restricted or when the road narrows. If there is an obstruction on your side or not enough room for two vehicles to pass safely, be prepared to wait and let the approaching vehicles through.

When you turn right across the path of an

approaching vehicle, make sure you can do so safely. Other vehicles should not have to stop, slow down or swerve to allow you to complete your turn.

23 Positioning

You should position your vehicle sensibly, normally well to the left. Keep clear of parked vehicles and position correctly for the direction that you intend to take. Where lanes are marked, keep to the middle of the lane and avoid straddling lane markings. Do not change lanes unless necessary.

24 Pedestrian Crossings

You should be able to recognise the different types of pedestrian crossing and show courtesy and consideration towards pedestrians. At all crossings you should slow down and stop if there is anyone on the crossing. At zebra crossings you should slow down and be prepared to stop if there is anyone waiting to cross. Give way to any pedestrians on a pelican crossing when the amber lights are flashing. You should give way to cyclists as well as pedestrians on a toucan crossing and act correctly at puffin crossings (refer to *The Highway Code*).

25 Position / Normal Stops

Choose a safe, legal and convenient place to stop, close to the edge of the road, where you will not obstruct the road and create a hazard. You should know how and where to stop without causing danger to other road users. See bullet 3 page 95, Learning to Drive.

26 Planning

You must be aware of other road users at all times. You should always think and plan ahead so you can judge what other road users are going to do, predict how their actions will affect you and react in good time. Take particular care to consider the actions of the more vulnerable groups of road users such as pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists and horse riders. Anticipate road and traffic conditions, and act in good time, rather than reacting to them at the last moment.

27 Ancillary Controls

You should understand the function of all the controls and switches, especially those that have a bearing on road safety. These include indicators, lights, windscreen wipers, demisters and heaters. You should be able to find these controls and operate them correctly when necessary, without looking down.

28 Eco-safe Driving

Driving skills should demonstrate recognition of the principles of Eco-safe Driving, including appropriate use of the vehicle controls.

Annex 1

Driving Test Centres

Driving Test Centres listed below in bold are able to do the Wheelchair Assessment.

Aldershot (Farnborough)	Eastbourne	North Allerton
Ashford (Kent)	Enfield	Nottingham
Aylesbury	Exeter	Nottingham (Colwick)
Ayr	Farnborough (Aldershot)	Nuneaton
Barnet	Folkestone	Peterborough
Barnsley	Gillingham LGV	Porterfract
Basilston	Girvan	Poole LGV
Basingstoke	Glasgow (Shaldhall)	Portsmouth
Barry	Goodmayes	Preston
Bedford	Grantham	Reading
Birmingham (Shirley)	Gavessend	Redditch
Birmingham (South Yardley)	Guildford LGV	Religate
Bishop Auckland	Halfax	Rotherham
Bishop Stortford	Hastings	Severoks
Blackburn	Heckmondwike	Sheffield (Handsworth)
Blackley	Hendon	Skipton
Blithley	Herne Bay M/PTC	Slough
Borehamwood	High Wycombe (Bucks)	Southernpton (Forest Hills)
Bradford (Ecclehill)	Hindley	Southernpton (Waybus)
Bradford (Heaton)	Horforth	St Albans
Bridgend	Huddersfield	St Helens
Bridlington	Hull	Stevenage
Bristol Multi Purpose Test Centre	Kimarnock	Swansea
Bristol (Brislington)	Leisworth	Taunton
Bristol (Southmead)	Keighley	Telford
Burgess Hill	Lee on the Solent	Tolworth
Burton-On-Trent	Leeds (Harehills)	Tunbridge Wells
Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk	Leicester (Gipsy Lane)	Wakenfield
Bury, Lancs	Leicester (Welford Road)	Warwick
Cambridge (Chesterton Road)	Leicester (Wigston)	Watford
Cambridge (Covley Road)	Leichworth	Weston-Super-Mare
Carnock	Lincoln	Widnes
Canterbury	Loughborough	Winchester
Cardiff (Fairwater)	Lower Gornal	Wisbech
Cardisale	Luton	Wolverhampton
Chelmsford	Madstone	Workington
Chersey	Merthyr Tydfil	Worthing
Covertry (Bayton Road)	Middlesbrough	Yeovil
Crawley	Nelson	
Croydon	Newbury	
Darby (Sinfm Lane)	Newport	
Darlington	Newton Abbott	
Dorchester		

Note: Taxi Assessment Centres were correct at time of press but are subject to change, please check at the time of booking.

Annex 2

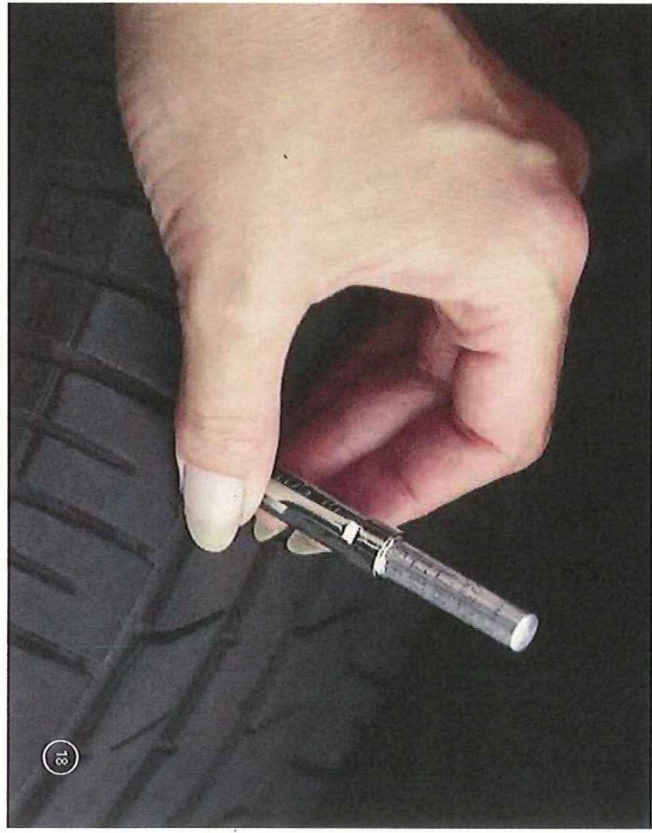
Cabology Questions

Only the questions in bold print will be used on Black Cab style taxi tests.

Example questions:

- Q. What is the length, width and/or height of the cab you are now with?**
- A. See page 26
- Q. What are the correct tyre pressures for the cab you are now with?**
- A. See page 26
- Q. Whilst driving a taxicab, how would you know if the rear automatic door locking system became inoperative?**
- A. The warning light on the dashboard will illuminate (green with black key icon)
- Q. If the tyre pressures of the vehicle you are driving are 35psi at the front and 40psi at the rear, what would you consider the correct pressure for the spare to be?**
- A. 40psi, because it would be easier to deflate than inflate a tyre at the roadside
- Q. As a Hackney Carriage driver, what is your main responsibility?**
- A. The safety and comfort of your passengers.
- Q. How would you show consideration for passengers alighting from your vehicle?**
- A. Stop close to the kerb and avoid proximity to obstructions (street furniture, trees etc).
- Q. As a licensed driver, what must you wear and display conspicuously with you at all times?**
- A. The Taxi driver's badge.
- Q. If you found an item of lost property left in your taxicab, what would you do with it?**
- A. Either hand it into a Police Station or Local Licensing Office within 24 hours, depending on local regulations.
- Q. What is the minimum legal requirement of a tyre tread depth?**
- A. 1.6mm.
- Q. If the tyre pressures of the vehicle you are driving are 35psi at the front and 40psi at the rear, what would you consider the correct pressure for the spare to be?**
- A. 40psi, because it would be easier to deflate than inflate a tyre at the roadside.
- Q. As a Private Hire taxi driver, what is your main responsibility?**
- A. The safety and comfort of your passengers.
- Q. How would you show consideration for passengers alighting from your vehicle?**
- A. Stop close to the kerb and avoid proximity to obstructions (street furniture, trees etc).

1. TAXI SPECIFICATIONS	
TX1:	
Length 4580mm	180.45in
Width (mirrors out) 2036mm	80.22in
Height 1834mm	72.26in
Tyre pressures: front 35psi rear 40psi	
LTI, FX4 Fairway:	
Length 4580mm	180.45in
Width 1750mm	69.00in
Height 1755mm	69.50in
Tyre pressures: front 35psi front 36psi	
Metrocab series 3 & TTI:	
TX11:	
Length 4505mm	177.38in
Width 1770mm	69.69in
Height 1755mm	69.50in
As for TX1 except for length, which is: 4575mm	
180.00in	
Tyre pressures: front 38psi front 38psi	



Passed your DSA test?

You could qualify for a **discount** on **insurance** from **Swinton Taxi Division**

Passing your DSA Hackney Carriage Private Hire Assessment test is a fantastic achievement. One of the added benefits is that we could give you a discount on your insurance policy, subject to terms and conditions. The team at Swinton Taxi Division can arrange your insurance quickly and efficiently, so you can get on the road and start running fares.

Swinton Taxi Division can offer:

- same-day document turnaround
 - specialist cover for private and public hire vehicles
 - cover for MPVs, executive hire and coaches
 - 3, 6 and 12 month policies available
- Terms and conditions apply



£5 I switched to Swinton Taxi Division shortly after my broker shut up shop. I'm over the moon with their service and the £350 I've saved on my insurance policy since. **33**

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Need Fleet Cover? The dedicated Fleet Management team could get you a great quote and tailored cover. Call our team today on **0800 197 0684**

To find out more and get a great deal on your insurance call **0800 197 2970** or go online to www.swinton.co.uk/taxi



Useful Contacts

Booking practical taxi assessments

Website:

www.businesslink.gov.uk/transport

Phone: 0300 200 1122

Minicom: 0300 200 1166

Driving Standards Agency

PO Box 280

Newcastle Upon Tyne

NE99 1FP

Customer enquiry unit

Email: customer.services@dsa.gsi.gov.uk

Phone: 0300 200 1122

Fax: 0300 200 1155

Driving Standards Agency

PO Box 280

Newcastle Upon Tyne

NE99 1FP

Information about Customer service and Eco Safe driving can be obtained from

www.dsa.gov.uk

The Driving Standards Agency recognises and values its customers. We will treat all our customers with respect, and deliver our services in an objective, polite and fair way.

www.businesslink.gov.uk/transport



An executive agency of the Department for Transport

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ANNEX B – VERSANT TEST – SAMPLE INSTRUCTIONS



Versant for English

Test Identification Number

1234 5678

Introduction:

Thank you for calling the Ordinate testing system.

Please enter your Test Identification Number on the telephone keypad.

Now, please say your name.

Now, please follow the instructions for Parts A through E.

Part A: Reading. *Please read the sentences as you are instructed.*

1. When it comes to art, people's tastes vary widely.
2. Some enjoy pictures that look as real as a photograph.
3. Others prefer the forms and colors of abstract works.
4. A good art museum will include all types to satisfy a variety of visitors.
5. Now that summer is here, our town has opened up a farmers market.
6. Once a week, local people sell fresh produce and flowers near the bank.
7. Not only are there vegetables, there's also entertainment for kids.
8. It's an enjoyable place for a family to spend a Saturday morning.
9. We received our electricity bill today.
10. I couldn't believe how high our electricity costs were.
11. It had more than doubled since a year ago.
12. We'll have to start using energy-efficient light bulbs.

Part B: Repeat. *Please repeat each sentence that you hear.*

Example: a voice says, "Leave town on the next train."
and you say, "Leave town on the next train."

Part C: Questions. *Now, please just give a simple answer to the questions.*

Example: a voice says, "Would you get water from a bottle or a newspaper?"
and you say, "a bottle" or "from a bottle".

Part D: Sentence Builds. *Now, please rearrange the word groups into a sentence.*

Example: a voice says, "was reading" ... "my mother" ... "her favorite magazine"
and you say, "My mother was reading her favorite magazine."

Part E: Open Questions. *You will have 20 seconds to answer each of three questions. The questions will be about family life or personal choices. Each question will be spoken twice, followed by a beep. When you hear the beep, you will have 20 seconds to answer the question. At the end of the 20 seconds, another beep will signal the end of the time you have to answer.*

01-12345 - 1

PEARSON

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Expires: 2007/11/18

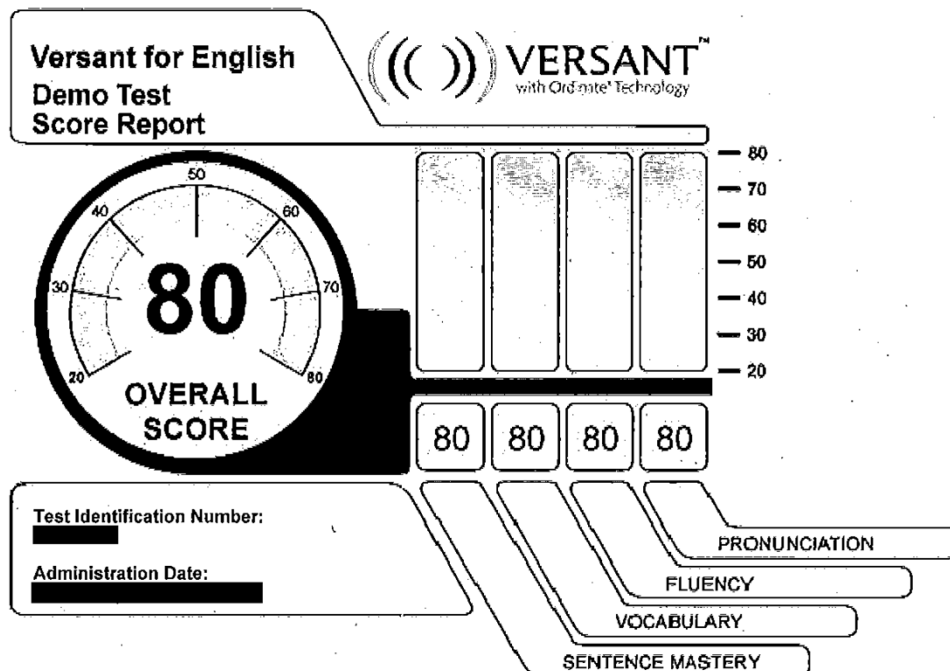
ANNEX C – VERSANT TEST – SAMPLE REPORT

Score Report

Page 1 of 3

English

See All Score Ranges



Overall (80)

The Overall Score of the test represents the ability to understand spoken English and speak it intelligibly at a native-like conversational pace on everyday topics. Scores are based on a weighted combination of four diagnostic subscores. Scores are reported in the range from 20 to 80.

- | | |
|---------|--|
| 72 - 80 | Test-taker speaks and understands effortlessly at native-speaker speeds, and can contribute readily to a native-paced discussion at length, maintaining the colloquial flow. Speech is completely fluent and intelligible; test-taker has consistent mastery of complex language structures. |
| 63 - 71 | Test-taker easily handles a wide variety of discourse and speaking styles, and can contribute to a native-paced discussion. Speech is fluent, smooth and intelligible; test-taker controls appropriate language structure for speaking about complex material. |
| 46 - 62 | Test-taker can handle many utterances using a variety of words and structures, and can follow and sometimes participate in a native-paced conversation. Pronunciation is generally intelligible; test-taker can express some composite information on familiar topics to a cooperative listener. |
| 37 - 45 | Test-taker can handle short utterances using common words and simple structures, but has difficulty following a native-paced conversation. Pronunciation may sometimes not be intelligible; test-taker speaks slowly and pauses, but can convey basic information to a cooperative listener. |
| 28 - 36 | Test-taker can manage some slow, short, isolated utterances, or spoken formulas, but has difficulty following any native conversation; test-taker may often pause to search for words and may be difficult to understand. |
| 20 - 27 | Test-taker has very limited speaking and listening skills in English. |

Sentence Mastery (80)

Sentence Mastery reflects the ability to understand, recall and produce English phrases and clauses in complete sentences. Performance depends on accurate syntactic processing and appropriate usage of words, phrases and clauses in meaningful sentence structures.

- | | |
|---------|--|
| 72 - 80 | Test-taker can understand, recall and produce a wide range of English phrases and clauses in sentence context. Test-taker can consistently produce accurate and meaningful |
|---------|--|

- complex sentences.
- 60 - 71** Test-taker can understand, recall and produce a variety of English phrases and clauses in sentence context. Test-taker generally produces accurate and meaningful sentences.
- 47 - 59** Test-taker can understand, recall and produce many English phrases and clauses in sentence context. Test-taker produces a range of meaningful sentences.
- 31 - 46** Test-taker can understand, recall and produce some English phrases and clauses in sentence context. Test-taker produces some simple meaningful sentences.
- 21 - 30** Test-taker has difficulty understanding, recalling or producing English sentences, even with simple phrases and/or clauses.
- 20** Test-taker provided few if any correct spoken responses to the relevant items; or the test-taker was silent or spoke too softly in response to these items.

Vocabulary (80)

Vocabulary reflects the ability to understand common everyday words spoken in sentence context and to produce such words as needed. Performance depends on familiarity with the form and meaning of everyday words and their use in connected speech.

- 69 - 80** Test-taker understands and produces a wide range of everyday English words as they are used in fluent colloquial speech.
- 57 - 68** Test-taker generally understands and can produce most everyday English words as they are used in clear colloquial speech.
- 45 - 56** Test-taker usually understands and can produce everyday English words when they are used in clear speech.
- 33 - 44** Test-taker has a limited understanding of basic spoken English words, even when they are used in clear, simple speech.
- 21 - 32** Test-taker may understand some very basic words in spoken English, especially if the words are used in slow, clear, simple speech.
- 20** Test-taker provided few if any correct spoken responses to the relevant items; or the test-taker was silent or spoke too softly in response to these items.

Fluency (80)

Fluency reflects the rhythm, phrasing and timing evident in constructing, reading and repeating sentences.

- 75 - 80** Test-taker speaks with good rhythm, phrasing, and overall timing. Speech is generally smooth with few, if any, hesitations, omissions, or repetitions.
- 56 - 74** Test-taker speaks with acceptable rhythm and generally appropriate phrasing; some units may be too fast or too slow. Occasional hesitation, repetition, and/or imperfect word-linking may produce an uneven phrasing.
- 38 - 55** Test-taker speaks with adequate rhythm and some inappropriate phrasing and pausing. Hesitations and possible repetitions or omissions of words result in an irregular speech rate and some disconnected phrases.
- 20 - 37** Test-taker speaks in a slow manner with hesitations, false starts, long pauses, and/or omissions. Spoken words are often not linked and/or not grouped according to their sense.

Pronunciation (80)

Pronunciation reflects the ability to produce consonants, vowels and stress in a native-like manner in sentence context. Performance depends on knowledge of the phonological structure of everyday words.

- 75 - 80** Test-taker produces vowels and consonants that are clear and unambiguous; any minor irregularities do not affect intelligibility. Stress is placed correctly in all common words, and sentence level stress is reasonable. Pronunciation is consistent with fluent speech patterns.
- 55 - 74** Test-taker produces most vowels and consonants in a clear manner, although an occasional word may be unclear. Stress is placed correctly in most words, although some unreduced vowels may render stress placement unclear. Speech is generally intelligible.
- 38 - 54** Test-taker consistently mispronounces certain consonants and vowels. Speech is mostly intelligible, but some listeners will need to adjust to the accent. Stress may be placed incorrectly in some words, or stress placement may be ambiguous.
- 25 - 37** Test-taker mispronounces many consonants and vowels, resulting in a strong, intrusive non-English accent. Listeners may have difficulty understanding a significant portion of the words. Stress placement is often unclear, and syllables may sometimes be added or skipped.
- 20 - 24** Test-taker's pronunciation is strongly non-English in character. Many consonants and vowels are mispronounced, misplaced, or omitted, and some listeners may find the speech

mostly unintelligible. Stressed and unstressed syllables are not clearly distinguished and words may have the wrong number of syllables.



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