

# *Driving Lessons in Belfast*



In this guide we will show you:

- The average time it might take for you to pass your driving test!
- How much the average Belfast driving lesson costs!
- A step by step guide to getting your full driving license!
- And much more...

So you have decided it is time to learn how to drive! Whether you want to drive a manual or automatic car there are many things to consider when making this important decision. In this guide, we will show you how to find the best driving instructor to suit your needs. If you already have a provisional driving licence, these are the steps to take. If not, please skip to the bottom on how to get your licence first.

## Before You Book Your Driving Lessons

Think about the last time you purchased a laptop. Chances are you didn't go to the yellow pages, choose a company at random, and buy from the first shop you visited. Many times, though, this scenario describes the way some people find a driving school/instructor -- they look in the phone book and call the instructor with the largest ad or the first one listed. But much like purchasing a good laptop, finding a qualified instructor requires research and comparison shopping. There are critical things you should know first....



## Good Questions To Ask YOURSELF

### ARE THEY COURTEOUS AND PATIENT?

This is a very important consideration. The entire experience, from beginning to end, needs to be as stress free as possible. Plus if the instructor enjoys their job, the quality and attention to details will be better. The instructor's attitude can and will affect your entire learning process. Hopefully this will be the first thing you notice. If you don't have a good feeling about a certain instructor, then do not go any further, you don't want to work with that person.

### DOES THE INSTRUCTOR MAKE YOU FEEL WELCOME AND CONFIDENT?

This is a key element, do not overlook it. A lot of people choose their instructor based on factors with little or no logical sense. One of the most important factors of driving well is being confident in what you are doing. If your instructor does not make you feel comfortable and confident, then you can't expect to feel comfortable and confident on the day of your test! This is something we take very seriously, we make every effort to ensure you get the best out of every single lesson and that you build up the confidence to pass your test with flying colours.

## Good Questions to Ask THEM

### WHAT SORT OF PACKAGE DO THEY OFFER?

Most schools/instructors offer special price deals for 10 or more hour-lesson packages. Ask yourself what sort of course suits you best: hourly tuition, an intensive course, or a mix-and-match option. An intensive course might be a great option if you're short on time - some people take a couple of weeks off work and choose to get all or most of their training done in that short period.

Most, if not all, driving instructors agree that having your driving lessons regularly rather than just once a week is more efficient and economical in the long run. At Advanced School of Motoring, we have an excellent intensive course package. The average course takes around 25 hours & costs £625 including test booking & use of car for the test. We recommend a one hour assessment before taking the intensive course.

If you're a complete beginner, we can offer you 3 lessons for only £15 each. That's a 40% discount! We also offer one FREE lesson when you book 5, or two FREE lessons if you would like to book 10. We understand that the value we provide to our pupils is much greater than what we charge, but we also want to make our lessons affordable to everyone.

### WILL I HAVE THE SAME CAR FOR EVERY LESSON?

It is always best to use the same car for every lesson, so you won't have to adapt to a different car every time you drive.

## WHAT AREAS DO THEY COVER?

Make sure the driving school/instructor covers the area you live in. Some instructors only cover a small region, so it's always good to ask.

## HOW LONG ARE THE LESSONS?

Lesson time usually varies from 60 to 90 minutes each, with prices varying accordingly. Make sure you know what you're signing up for!



### **Five-point Checklist for finding a good driving school/instructor:**

#### 1. Make sure the instructor is fully qualified.

So what's the difference between an ADI (Approved Driving Instructor) and a Trainee? The process for becoming an ADI is quite long and arduous (it is believed that over 75% of applicants fail their final ADI test), so it's quite common that when you sign up with a "big name" driving school, you will be taught by Trainees who still haven't passed their final test. At Advanced School of Motoring, all instructors are fully qualified ADIs, which means they are the fully prepared to teach you at a very high standard.

#### 2. Get two or more references if possible.

Any good driving instructor should be able to show that they've had happy pupils who passed their test - this shows the quality of their work. If you'd like a couple of references, feel free to call Advanced School of Motoring on 07885492157. We have had such great success in training pupils, that one of them passed his test after only 20 lessons, which is virtually unheard of in this industry.

#### 3. Know what the average price is, and stick to that.

At present (July 2010), the going rate for a one-hour lesson in the Belfast area is £25. This is not just a guess, but a price that enables honest driving instructors to provide a good service while paying the high costs of running a business. Petrol prices are always on the rise and changing a car every couple of years adds up! There are schools which do offer some unbelievably low-rate lessons, but the truth is, once you've committed to a school, they can stretch your training so that you end up paying MORE than the average price of a lesson. One other thing to look out for is to check if you're learning with an ADI or Trainee - that could stretch your training by a long time since your Trainee instructor will not be as experienced. Imagine being trained by someone who is charging you the same, but delivering less, and more slowly...

#### 4. Check what their pass rate is.

This is often an overlooked but very important point. When you hire a professional, you want to see samples of their work before you commit to handing over your hard earned money, correct? The same goes with a driving instructor. You should always ask what their pass rate is. Be warned though, that as great as an instructor will be, you as the pupil will have to put in an effort and be willing to follow his instructions.

#### 5. Book your lessons!

Yes, it's very obvious, but it's amazing what can happen when we procrastinate. There is a trend in the driving industry, which is, prices always go up. In the same way that petrol, interest rates and insurance costs go up, so does the investment for learning to drive. The solution? Take your lessons as soon as possible, and save yourself the hassle.

### *Official Facts*

How many lessons will I need?

The Driving Standards Agency (DSA) recommends an average of 45 hours of lesson time (including 22 hours of private practice). But that number can change according to your age. Generally, the younger you are the faster you will learn. It is safe to say that the majority of our students pass their test in a shorter period than this.

## TIPS

- \* Wear appropriate shoes! High heels, sandals and thick-soled shoes are NOT appropriate for driving. Flat shoes or trainers are recommended, to avoid accidents.
- \* Most Driving Instructors will offer a pick up / drop off service at no extra cost. So you can start your lesson at point A and finish it at point B (home - work, or school - home, etc).
- \* Remember, after passing your tests you should display your R Plates clearly (in the front and in the back of the car) for a year, and drive under 45 mph at all times.
- \* Relax and enjoy! Your instructor has taught dozens of pupils just like you and he's there to give you the confidence you need.
- \* If you have any questions, never ever be afraid to ask! There's no such thing as a silly question and knowing what you're doing is absolutely essential to good driving.

## Step by Step Guide to a Full Driving License:

1. Fill out a D1 Form to apply for a Provisional License. You can find them in your local Post office and/or the DVLA Form Ordering Service. You will need to send original documentation (Passport, Birth Certificate, etc) and a £50 fee. Send your completed form to: DVLA Northern Ireland, County Hall, Castlerock Road, Coleraine, BT51 3TB. It usually takes about 3 weeks for your Provisional License to arrive (You will only be able to start your driving lessons when you get your Provisional License in the post).
2. Use your time wisely and study for your Theory Test. You will have to wait about 3 weeks for your Provisional License to arrive anyway. The Driving Standards Agency (DSA) recommends all candidates to read books like "The Highway Code", "Know Your Traffic Signs" and others (available from most high street book shops and from the DSA official online store) before taking a Theory Test.
3. Your Provisional Driving License arrived! Now you can finally book your driving lessons! Call your chosen Driving School/Instructor and book your driving lessons. If you chose to learn with us, please call Francis on 07885492157. Note: you do NOT need to take your theory test before starting your lessons.
4. When you feel confident enough, book your Theory Test by calling 0845 247 2472. Remember, the Theory Test has 2 parts, a Multiple Choice Test and a Hazard Perception Test.
5. After your instructor decides you are ready, it's time to book your Practical Driving Test. You can book your Practical Test by calling 0845 247 2472, online, or simply ask your instructor and he or she will guide you through the steps on how to book your Practical Test.
6. Congratulations! You passed your Theory and Practical Tests! Don't forget, you should exchange your Test Pass Certificate for a Full Driving Licence within 2 years of the date of your tests. To do that, simply send your Provisional Driving License along with your Test Pass Certificate to: DVLA Northern Ireland, County Hall, Castlerock Road, Coleraine, BT51 3TB.
7. Enjoy driving!

**If you've found this guide to be helpful, why not call us or send us a text message on 07885492157? It'll be a pleasure getting to know you and seeing if we can work together to get you on the road as soon as possible.**

DISCLAIMER - ANY INFORMATION HEREBY GIVEN IS FOR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY AND SHOULD NOT BE TAKEN AS FACT. OUR ADVICE CANNOT BE GUARANTEED TO BE A SUCCESS TO THE READER. IF ADVICE IS PUT INTO PRACTICE, ADVANCED SCHOOL OF MOTORING TAKES NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE OUTCOME, INDIRECTLY OR DIRECTLY RELATED TO OUR MATERIAL.