



Driving  
Standards  
Agency

# Compulsory basic training (CBT) syllabus and guidance notes

The CBT syllabus and guidance notes build on the 5 elements of approved training by adding guidance notes to make it easier for trainers and learners to understand what's required of them.

# Introduction

This CBT syllabus builds on the existing five elements of approved training by adding guidance notes in the middle and right-hand columns of each element. These notes will make it easier for trainers and learners to understand what is required of them.

## The sections of the syllabus

The syllabus is in three sections:

- what must happen
- what the learner must know and understand
- what the learner should be able to do (to show they have reached the required standard)

## What trainers should be able to show

A trainer should be able to show that:

- each element of 'what must happen' has been covered
- the learner has shown that they have the right knowledge and understanding
- the learner has performed suitable tasks to demonstrate competence

It is important to remember, however, that forcing a learner to go through subjects they already know, simply so the trainer can tick all the boxes, can be demotivating.

## The aim of the syllabus

The syllabus is about making sure learners have the skills, knowledge and understanding to go out on the road, on their own, to prepare for their riding tests.

It is not intended to set out exactly what trainers should do.

## Learning outcomes

The syllabus sets out the learning outcomes that must be achieved.

In making sure these learning outcomes are achieved, the trainer should be able to:

- identify areas where the learner is failing to demonstrate competence
- help the learner to understand the barriers that are stopping them demonstrate competence
- help the learner to find ways to overcome those barriers

## **Assessment of skills**

Trainers should be reasonably confident, when they issue a CBT certificate, that the learner has the required level of skills, knowledge and understanding. This fits with delivery in a client-centred way.

If a learner is quickly able to show they are competent at a particular element (such as if they have been riding off-road for a number of years and they are clearly able to carry out simple manoeuvres) the trainer may decide to move on in the programme.

It is also important to remember that each learner must be assessed as an individual. It is not enough, for example, to assume that everybody in a group understands because nobody asked any questions.

This means the trainer has the responsibility to decide which approach works for them.

If they are working with one or two learners they might be able to use a question and answer approach to allow them to come to a decision about each learner's competence.

If they are working with a group, or decide that it makes more business sense to carry out some part of assessment separately, they are free to use some form of written or electronic test.

Assessment of skills is about trainers applying their professional judgement. The syllabus sets out some minimum performance standards but, for each learner, trainers should remember that the question they are trying to answer is 'are you reasonably confident that this person is ready to ride on the road on their own?'

# Element A: Introduction

The aim of this element is that:

- the learner should understand the aims of CBT
- the learner should make suitable decisions about the equipment and clothing they use
- the trainer should be confident that the learner meets eyesight rules

What must happen	What the learner must know and understand	What the learner should be able to do (to show they have reached the required standard)
1. The learner must be told the aims of the CBT course and how it works.	<p>That the purpose of CBT is to make sure learners learn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the necessary theory</li> <li>• practical skills to a safe basic level</li> </ul> <p>so that they can ride on their own while they prepare for their practical motorcycling tests.</p> <p>The link between CBT and the motorcycle theory and practical tests.</p> <p>What completion of CBT does/does not allow them to do and the machines they may/may not ride.</p> <p>The five elements of CBT and their contents.</p> <p>That the trainer will only move to the next element when they are happy that the learners have learnt the necessary theory and shown the required practical skills to a safe, basic level.</p> <p>That, within each element, the trainer is free to deliver training in the order they feel is right for the learners.</p> <p>That if the trainer is confident that a learner has already learnt the necessary theory and can show the required skills, they may move on more quickly.</p>	<p>This section does not require the learner to demonstrate any competence.</p> <p>Understanding should be checked by Q and A.</p>

What must happen	What the learner must know and understand	What the learner should be able to do (to show they have reached the required standard)
<p>2. The learner must be coached to understand the importance of using the right equipment and clothing and helped to understand the options available to them.</p>	<p>That by law they must wear an approved safety helmet when riding a moped or motorcycle on the road.</p> <p>That all helmets sold in the UK, for use on the public road, must meet current safety regulations and standards.</p> <p>That if their helmet receives any serious impact they should always buy a new one. Damage won't always be visible to the naked eye.</p> <p>That they should never buy or wear a second hand helmet, as it is impossible to tell whether the helmet has been damaged.</p> <p>That they should only clean their helmet in the way recommended by the manufacturer.</p> <p>That they should not apply any paint or adhesives to their helmet unless these are of a type allowed by the manufacturer.</p> <p>That a visor, or goggles, is vital to protect their eyes from wind, rain, insects and road dirt.</p> <p>That all visors or goggles sold in the UK for use on the public road must meet current safety regulations and standards.</p> <p>That they should not wear tinted glasses, visors or goggles if they are riding in the dark or poor visibility.</p> <p>That it is vital to keep their visor/goggles clean.</p> <p>That goggles/visors should only be cleaned with warm soapy water and that solvents or petrol should never be used.</p>	<p>Show that the helmet they are using meets the regulations and standards.</p> <p>Put their helmet on, making sure it fits correctly and is secure.</p> <p>Use a visor or goggles correctly.</p> <p>Show that the visor or goggles they are using meet the regulations and standards.</p>

What must happen	What the learner must know and understand	What the learner should be able to do (to show they have reached the required standard)
	<p>That good gloves or gauntlets are vital when riding a motorcycle, because otherwise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• their hands could become painfully cold or wet and this could lead to them losing control</li> <li>• their hands could be injured if they fell</li> </ul> <p>That protective and supportive boots or shoes are vital when riding a motorcycle, because otherwise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• their feet could become painfully cold or wet and this could lead to them losing control</li> <li>• even a minor fall from their machine could result in serious injury</li> </ul> <p>That there are many types of protective clothing and what factors they should consider when deciding what to buy.</p> <p>That many road accidents involving mopeds or motorcycles occur because road users do not see them.</p> <p>That they can make themselves more visible by using suitable clothing/aids, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a light coloured helmet</li> <li>• a hi-viz, fluorescent orange, pink or yellow, jacket, 'bib' or 'Sam-brown'</li> <li>• clothing with reflective strips or patches</li> </ul> <p>That they should think about whether they can be seen from the side as well as the front and back.</p>	<p>Make an informed choice about the protective clothing and boots or shoes they will wear, given the type of machine they will ride and its use.</p> <p>Use suitable clothing or aids to maximise their visibility on the road.</p>

What must happen	What the learner must know and understand	What the learner should be able to do (to show they have reached the required standard)
<p>3. The learner's eyesight must be tested.</p>	<p>That if they need to wear glasses or corrective lenses they must be worn during the training and whenever they ride.</p> <p>That they should get their eyes tested every two years as a minimum, and if their eyesight changes they must obtain suitable glasses or corrective lenses.</p> <p>That different sorts of tinted and light-sensitive lenses or visors may react in different ways in particular riding conditions and how this may affect their ability to see clearly.</p>	<p>Read in good daylight, with glasses or contact lenses if they wear them, a motor vehicle number plate from a distance of 20 metres (about 66 feet). Older style number plates should be read from a distance of 20.5 metres (about 67 feet).</p> <p>Wear glasses or contact lenses at all times when riding, if needed to meet licence requirements.</p>

## Element B: Practical on-site training

This element does not involve riding the machine. It is about on-site, hands-on training after which the learner should:

- be able to show an understanding of how their machine works
- understand what maintenance checks are needed to keep their machine legal and roadworthy
- have a feel for the weight and balance of their machine

What must happen	What the learner must know and understand	What the learner should be able to do (to show they have reached the required standard)
<p>4. The learner must receive suitable instruction, demonstrations and coaching to make sure they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are familiar with the different controls of their machine</li> <li>• know what controls they need to understand</li> <li>• know where to find the controls on their machine</li> <li>• know, in broad terms, how the controls work</li> <li>• know, in broad terms, the sorts of variation they might come across on different types of machine</li> </ul>	<p>In broad terms the function and purpose of the main controls of their machine, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• throttle</li> <li>• front brake</li> <li>• clutch</li> <li>• indicators</li> <li>• choke</li> <li>• electric starter</li> <li>• engine cut off (kill switch)</li> <li>• lighting switches</li> <li>• horn</li> <li>• fuel tap</li> <li>• rear brake</li> <li>• kick starter</li> <li>• gear change lever</li> <li>• instrument panel</li> </ul> <p>What each of the controls does and what part they play in controlling the machine.</p> <p>In broad terms, the main differences in controls they are likely to come across, such as the difference between a 'twist and go' scooter and a motorcycle with a gear-box.</p>	<p>Point out the controls of their machine.</p> <p>Show, without actually riding the machine, how they would use the controls.</p>



What must happen	What the learner must know and understand	What the learner should be able to do (to show they have reached the required standard)
<p>5. The learner must receive suitable instruction, demonstrations and coaching to make sure they can carry out basic machine checks before setting out on a journey.</p>	<p>That failure to carry out basic machine checks may increase the chance of them being involved in a crash, for example through mechanical failure, or may make them liable to prosecution, for example for having illegal tyres.</p> <p>That if they are unable to carry out all basic safety checks (for example if they have a physical disability) they must make sure they are carried out regularly by a competent person.</p> <p>The legal rules for tyre tread depth on the type of machine they are riding.</p>	<p>Demonstrate, explain and point how they would carry out basic checks, such as oil, coolant, electrics and tyres, and confirm that their machine is fit and roadworthy to ride.</p> <p>Note: It may not always be possible for a learner to actually carry out all of these checks; they may choose to have someone else do the checks for them.</p> <p>As a minimum, however, every learner should be able to point out what they are looking for when they examine their tyres. They should also be able to check the operation of the machine's electrical systems.</p>
<p>6. The learner must receive suitable instruction, demonstrations and coaching to make sure they can take their machine off its stand(s) and put it back on its stand safely.</p>	<p>How to position themselves and use their body to put their machine on and off its stand (both side and centre, where fitted) without injuring themselves and without losing control of the machine.</p>	<p>Take their machine off its stand(s) safely, keeping control at all times.</p> <p>Put their machine on its stand(s) safely, keeping control at all times.</p>

What must happen	What the learner must know and understand	What the learner should be able to do (to show they have reached the required standard)
7. The learner must receive suitable instruction, demonstrations and coaching to make sure they can wheel their machine forward to the left and right and bring it to a controlled stop using the brakes.	<p>How to position themselves and to hold their machine so that they can wheel it, keeping control at all times.</p> <p>How the balance and weight of their machine changes as they turn.</p> <p>The effect on their machine if they apply the brake while turning.</p>	<p>Wheel their machine forwards and through right and left hand turns, keeping control at all times.</p> <p>Bring their machine to a controlled stop, using the correct brake(s), keeping control at all times.</p>
8. The learner must receive suitable instruction, demonstrations and coaching to make sure they can start and stop their machine's engine safely.	<p>The correct procedure for starting their machine including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the most suitable position to take when starting their machine</li> <li>how to check that the fuel is switched on and the machine is in neutral before starting their machine</li> <li>how to make sure they leave their machine in a safe condition when they switch it off and leave it</li> </ul>	<p>Position themselves suitably before carrying out required checks.</p> <p>Start the engine, keeping control at all times.</p> <p>Stop the engine, step off their machine, put it back on its stand and leave it in a safe state.</p>

## Element C: Practical on-site riding

In this element the learner will begin to ride their machine.

By the end of the element the learner should have developed enough basic skill to allow them to ride their machine safely before they go out onto the road – with their trainer – on Element E.

Note: The overall outcome of this element is that a learner should be able to demonstrate a range of core riding skills and show they are fully aware of what is going on around them as they carry them out. In working toward these outcomes the trainer may choose to introduce the techniques of all-round observation, blind-spot checks etc, from the beginning.

This approach is the most effective way to make sure those skills become automatic. However, it is also recognised that learning how to handle a motorcycle or moped for the first time can be challenging. In these circumstances a trainer might decide it is too much to ask the learner to start thinking about observations and blind-spot checks until they have achieved a reasonable level of stability and confidence.

Either approach is acceptable. Whichever is used, by the end of the element the trainer should be reasonably confident that the learner has demonstrated the appropriate competence.

What must happen	What the learner must know and understand	What the learner should be able to do (to show they have reached the required standard)
<p>9. The learner must receive suitable instruction, demonstrations and coaching to allow them to carry out each of the following manoeuvres safely and under full control:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• moving away</li> <li>• riding slowly</li> <li>• riding in a straight line and coming to a controlled stop</li> <li>• riding a figure of eight</li> <li>• carrying out a u-turn</li> <li>• bringing their machine to a stop in an emergency</li> <li>• carrying out simulated left and right hand turns</li> </ul>	<p>How to coordinate the use of balance and positive steering with the smooth and appropriate use of the throttle, clutch where applicable and brakes to make progress and change direction safely.</p>	<p>Move away and ride their machine:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• slowly</li> <li>• in a straight line and come to a planned stop</li> <li>• through a figure of eight</li> <li>• through a u-turn</li> <li>• through simulated left and right hand bends and turns</li> <li>• and come to a fully controlled stop as in an emergency</li> </ul> <p>while:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• maintaining full directional control of their machine at all times</li> <li>• making controlled use of both brakes</li> <li>• changing gear smoothly and appropriately without interrupting progress</li> </ul>
<p>10. Instruction must include explanation or demonstration of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• when and how to apply controlled braking, using both brakes</li> <li>• when and how to change gear</li> <li>• what to do if the engine stalls</li> </ul> <p>as appropriate in each manoeuvre.</p>	<p>What to do if their engine stalls during a manoeuvre.</p> <p>How they would adjust their braking technique to deal with changing road and weather conditions.</p>	

What must happen	What the learner must know and understand	What the learner should be able to do (to show they have reached the required standard)
<p>11. The learner must receive instruction, suitable demonstrations and coaching to make sure they understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how to safely carry out rear observations and why it is important to carry them out before any manoeuvre</li> <li>• the vital importance of making 'blind-spot' observations</li> <li>• how to use a systematic approach such as the Observation – Signal – Manoeuvre (OSM) and Position – Speed – Look (PSL) routine and how it will help to minimise the risk to themselves or other road users</li> </ul> <p>12. Learners must be allowed to practise the specified manoeuvres, with guidance, feedback and coaching from the trainer, until the trainer and learner are happy that they will be safe when they are taken on the road.</p>	<p>How their ability to see what is happening on the road behind them may be affected by the design of their helmet, the position they adopt on their machine and the limited field of view covered by their mirrors.</p> <p>That these factors will result in 'blind-spots'; areas where other road users could be hidden from them.</p> <p>That failing to be aware of other road users is a significant cause of crashes involving motorcycles or mopeds.</p> <p>That, as riders, they are just as likely as the drivers of cars, buses and trucks to fail to see cyclists and pedestrians.</p> <p>That by learning to use a systematic approach such as OSM/PSL consistently they will minimise the risk to themselves and other road users.</p>	<p>Make sure their mirrors are adjusted to provide the best possible view to the rear when they are seated on their machine.</p> <p>Ride through simulated left and right hand turns while carrying out appropriate all round observations.</p> <p>Note: It is not possible for a learner to demonstrate full competence in the use of OSM/PSL within the limits of the on-site training environment. It will only be possible for the trainer to assess whether they have fully grasped the system when they ride on the road in element E. However, at this stage the learner should be attempting to make all-round observations as a routine part of the way they negotiate simulated junctions and bends.</p>

## Element D: Practical on-road training preparation

The aim of this element is to make sure the learner has all the information they will need to ride legally and safely on the road and to prepare them for the on-road riding element of CBT.

During this element the learner may feel they are re-visiting issues already covered, such as being visible to other road users. Care should be taken not to skip over these sections. This element should be used to reinforce understanding, to build on the practical skills elements and to re-emphasise how important these issues will be when the learner goes out onto the roads.

What must happen	What the learner must know and understand	What the learner should be able to do (to show they have reached the required standard)
<p>13. The learner must be coached to understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the legal requirements they must meet before they can ride their machine on the road</li> <li>the importance of making sure their ability to ride safely and responsibly is not affected by alcohol, drugs or medication or any other factor</li> <li>that things that happen before they start to ride, such as having an argument with someone, and things that happen when they are riding, such as being cut-up by another road user, may make them angry or upset</li> <li>the importance of not riding while they are angry or upset and of making sure they do not react badly to the stupidity or incompetence of other road users</li> <li>why motorcycle and moped riders are particularly vulnerable</li> </ul>	<p>The law relating to registration/taxation of category A/P machines.</p> <p>That they must have a minimum of third-party insurance covering them for the intended use of their machine.</p> <p>That they must hold a valid MOT test certificate for their machine if it is more than three years old.</p> <p>That any learner rider must display legally compliant, red L plates. (In Wales either red L or red D plates, or both.)</p> <p>The legal limits for the amount of alcohol they are permitted to have in their bloodstream when riding.</p> <p>That over-the-counter or prescription medicines can affect their ability to ride safely.</p> <p>How particular emotional states such as anger, grief, sadness and joy can affect their ability to ride safely.</p> <p>That their machine does not provide the structural protection of other vehicles.</p>	<p>Note: The main test of whether a learner has gained the necessary competence will happen when they go out on the road.</p> <p>Show they have fully met legal requirements before they ride their machine on the road.</p> <p>Confirm that their ability to ride safely and responsibly is not affected by alcohol, drugs or medication or by any other factor.</p> <p>Explain some of the reasons why motorcycle and moped riders are particularly vulnerable.</p>

What must happen	What the learner must know and understand	What the learner should be able to do (to show they have reached the required standard)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• why it is important to be seen by other road users and how to do so</li> <li>• how to use road positioning to be seen and how to maintain a safe space around them</li> <li>• the importance of maintaining a safe separation distance and how that distance will change according to weather and road surface conditions</li> <li>• the importance of riding at an appropriate speed for the type of road they are using and the road and weather conditions</li> <li>• the importance of trying to anticipate what other road users may do or what road conditions are likely, for example around a bend in the road</li> <li>• the importance of identifying potential hazards as early as possible</li> <li>• how to use clues to help them to prepare for developing hazards as early as possible</li> <li>• the importance of making well-timed and effective rear observations</li> <li>• how understanding the rules set out in the Highway Code can help them to understand what other road users are likely to do and how they should behave</li> <li>• the key elements of the Highway Code that apply to riders of motorcycles and mopeds</li> </ul>	<p>That there are many situations on the road, particularly at junctions, when other road users fail to see approaching motorcyclists.</p> <p>That other road users may react to them in an inappropriate way.</p> <p>That weather, road surface and traffic conditions may have an effect on their ability to ride a machine safely and responsibly.</p> <p>The law about the use of dipped headlights during daylight hours and the operation of daytime running lights and fog lights if fitted.</p>	<p>Explain the situations in which they might be 'invisible' to other road users and what they can do to be seen.</p> <p>Explain how they can estimate a safe separation distance.</p> <p>Explain how they would change their separation distance to take into account weather, road conditions and speed.</p> <p>Explain the sorts of clues they will be looking for to help them to anticipate road conditions and possible hazards.</p> <p>Answer questions about elements of the Highway Code, including those about motorcyclists.</p>

## Element E: Practical on-road riding

The aim of this unit is that a learner should gain the knowledge, understanding and skills they need to ride safely and independently while they prepare for their riding test. The unit brings together the knowledge, understanding and skills gained in elements A – D.

The trainer should expose learners to the main traffic situations and hazards they are likely to come across on the road, make sure they understand those situations and allow them to practise the skills necessary to deal with them safely.

The learner will ride out on the road, with a qualified trainer, and possibly with another learner, for at least two hours.\* The trainer will:

- keep in contact with the learner(s) by radio
- manage the order of the riders on-road
- control the speed at which the group travels
- choose a suitable route, so risk is managed and as many situations as possible are covered
- manage the development of the learner(s) as their confidence increases
- protect the learner(s)

The learner's riding will be assessed constantly by the trainer, who may provide more demonstration, instruction or coaching. By the end of the element the learner should have demonstrated the knowledge, skills and understanding needed to ride independently in all of the situations listed below.

\* Note: Before starting this element trainers should make sure learners are mentally and physically ready to go out on to the road and are able to continue learning safely. It is vital that sufficient breaks have been taken and the trainer is completely satisfied that the learner has the level of ability and fitness to proceed. Comfort breaks can also be taken during the element, making sure that the time on road is at least two hours.



What must happen	What the learner must know and understand	What the learner should be able to do (to show they have reached the required standard)
<p>14. The learner must be given a chance to ride, in typical traffic conditions, on a route that provides exposure to as many situations as possible, but including as a minimum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• traffic lights</li> <li>• roundabouts</li> <li>• junctions</li> <li>• pedestrian crossings</li> <li>• gradients</li> <li>• bends</li> </ul> <p>to practise and demonstrate the required skills, knowledge and understanding.</p> <p>15. The learner must be asked to carry out a u-turn manoeuvre.</p> <p>16. The learner must be asked to demonstrate their ability to bring their machine to a stop, safely and under full control, as in an emergency.</p>	<p>The core knowledge and understanding needed to complete this element should have been covered in elements A-D.</p> <p>This element should allow the learner to understand how that knowledge and understanding applies in a range of real-world situations.</p> <p>By the end of the element the learner should know and understand the limits of their competence.</p>	<p>Complete their ride having demonstrated their ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• keep control of their machine at all times and in all situations</li> <li>• carry out effective observations when manoeuvring</li> <li>• position themselves correctly in relation to other road users</li> <li>• adapt their position to deal with all hazards safely</li> <li>• communicate their intentions to other road users clearly and effectively</li> <li>• comply with all road markings, signs and signals</li> <li>• understand what to do ('fail-safe') when they are uncertain how to proceed or what actions to take</li> </ul>