

# Beginning Your New Career as a Driving Instructor

A step-by-step introduction to one of the most flexible,  
rewarding jobs you'll ever experience



Steven Higgs





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## Introduction

If you've picked up this guide, then it means you're dissatisfied with your current career and looking for a change.

Perhaps you're looking for more flexibility in your working hours and the amount of work you take on? Maybe you're looking for a career that will allow you to meet and work with people of a wide variety of ages and backgrounds and make a big difference in their lives?

Well, if either of those questions sounds familiar, you should seriously consider a career as a driving instructor.

We've trained hundreds of driving instructors over the years through my driving school, 4 Wheelz, and have developed a keen understanding of not only how to train a first-rate instructor, but also how to help them establish their own successful practice, with a steady stream of students at hours that suit them perfectly. It's tremendously satisfying when I meet up with past clients and hear what a difference their new career has made to their overall quality of life, which is why I decided more people needed to be aware of what a fantastic career this has the potential to be.

And so, I decided to write this guide.

Whether you're already seriously interested in a career as a driving instructor or simply looking at potential new career paths, the pages that follow will help you decide once and for all whether this path is right for you and, equally importantly, help you prepare effectively and really get the most out of your training, should you choose to take the next step. Not only that, but we'll also look closely at acquiring your first students and establishing yourself as the leading instructor in your area.

Let's start right at the beginning...

**Steven Higgs**

**4 Wheelz Driving School**

## Why train as a driving instructor?

One of the best aspects of life as a driving instructor is its flexibility. It's so easy to organise your work around other aspects of your life, such as your children, which makes it the perfect career for anyone keen to offer a service that makes a genuine difference to people's lives, yet remain in control of their working hours. At 4 Wheelz, our instructors are free to work on either a full-time or part-time basis, taking on as many students as they feel comfortable with, so whether you want to work seven days a week or three, it's no problem – all we ask is that you give your students your very best during those hours.

## Earning Potential

If you work 20 one hour lessons per week, your gross takings would be £460 approx and after expenses such as car lease, fuel, insurance and franchise which are all tax-deductible your net takings would be over £270 per week (£13,000+ per annum).

\*\*PLUS the lease car for personal use (see below)

If you work 35 one hour lessons per week, your gross takings would be £820 approx and after expenses such as car lease, fuel, insurance and franchise which are all tax-deductible your net takings would be over £600 per week (£29,000+ per annum).

\*\*PLUS the lease car for personal use (see below)

### **\*\* The Daily Telegraph 10th March 2017**

The RAC in its published report on Motoring claims that it costs "an average of £6,689" per annum or £557 per month to own and run a car in Britain.

If you run an average family car, you will be saving between £50 to a £128 per week by selling it and using your lease car for tuition and personal use. The amount you could save is dependent on the model of car and whether it's on finance. Most driving instructor car leases include car servicing, tyres and road tax.

A full breakdown of driving instructor earnings and expenses are available, email [donna.harris@4wheelz.co.uk](mailto:donna.harris@4wheelz.co.uk) and ask for a copy of 'driving instructor earnings'.

## The first step

Should you decide to begin training as a driving instructor, the first step is to get a full Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) formerly known as a CRB check. To start this process, you need to be over 21 years of age and should have held your driving licence for at least three years, with no more than four penalty points.

To get started, we will put you in touch with the DBS, who will be responsible for the whole process. You can do this online and go through a series of questions, covering things like how long you've had your licence, whether you have any points on it, your name and address etc.

The whole process takes 2-8 weeks depending on your individual circumstances, such as past criminal convictions and changes of address. For example, I've met one person whose DBS check took just a fortnight, whereas another person's took over two months.

Once your DBS check has been approved, you will receive a certificate in the mail, which the Driver & Standards Agency will also receive a copy of, allowing us to move forward with your training. At this point, you will be expected to register with the Driver & Vehicle Standards Agency, although the good news is that this process generally doesn't take as long and can be done entirely online (typically around ten days).

In practice, we have no problem beginning your training while you're still waiting for your DBS check and getting registered with the Driver & Vehicle Standards Agency so that you're not forced to wait for weeks before getting started. Once we've received confirmation that you're registered with the DVSA, you will be able to apply for the first exam.

While you're waiting for your DBS check, you can start studying for your theory. We will provide the necessary training materials for you to study at home and arrange classroom training sessions with a DVSA ORDIT registered trainer. Don't worry if you're not sure where to start with this – when you receive your material, we will go through it with you to ensure you're completely clear how to approach it and develop effective study habits. With this level of support, we find that the vast majority of clients progress very quickly, regardless of what position they started in.

## The three exams you'll need to pass

To become an Approved Driving Instructor, there are three exams you must pass:

1. Theory plus Hazard Perception
2. Driving Ability
3. Ability to Coach (instructional ability )

### **Theory plus Hazard Perception**

As you will have received the study materials early on and will get lots of help in the classroom, including a mock test, there's no need to feel anxious about this first exam.

Indeed, we won't put you forward for the exam until we are completely confident that you have achieved a sufficiently high standard to pass on the first attempt.

### **Driving Ability**

You'll be familiar with the basic format of this exam from your own driving test, but it is far more comprehensive. You'll be tested in a greater variety of settings, such as country lanes, motorways, towns, etc. You'll also be tested on a variety of reverse manoeuvres, along with the emergency stop. It's extremely intensive, but we will make sure your driving skills are of a high enough standard to handle virtually any situation you may find yourself in and that you'll be able to teach with authority.

### **Ability to Coach (Instructional Ability)**

This exam is the part that will be new to most people and is perhaps the most important part of the whole process. No matter how good a driver you are, it's unlikely you'll ever have had to teach those same skills to someone else. You may not even have ever been in the position of a teacher before.

That's why you'll receive a minimum of 40 hours training for this exam, ten of which will take place in the classroom, while the rest will take place in the car. This involves a lot of roleplay during training. The trainers will ensure that the training is always delivered in a relaxed and comfortable manner. The subsequent exam will involve coaching a pupil while a DVSA examiner assesses the quality of your teaching skills. During your classroom training, we will use a selection of videos to ensure you are familiar with the format of these lessons and the sort of tests you should expect.

There are two options: take the Ability to Instruct Part Three exam after your training, or take the option of a trainee Licence.

Taking the Trainee Licence before you take the final exam will allow you to gain invaluable hands-on experience with real learner drivers. This is one of the very best ways to develop as an instructor, as you'll be able to hone your skills and apply what you've learnt in a real-world environment, so you'll know exactly what to expect come the day of the exam. In practice, it takes a minimum of 18 weeks for most people to reach the point where they get their trainee licence and can start taking on students. The beauty of this is that you can maintain an income while studying for your qualification, something that's not possible in many other professions. This licence is valid for six months, during this time you'll be able to take your final exam to become an ADI.

How soon can you begin as a qualified driving instructor?

Once you've received confirmation that you've passed the third exam, you are officially a DVSA-approved driving instructor (although studying with us, you will have already been teaching students well before then!).

Here are the pass rates for each of these three exams, for both 4 Wheelz and the national average as quoted by the DVSA:

	<b>National Average</b>	<b>4 Wheelz</b>
<b>Theory and Hazard Perception</b>	51%	98%
<b>Driving Ability</b>	53%	94.4%
<b>Coaching Ability</b>	31%	88.8%

As you can see from the above statistics, all the extra classroom training and support from veteran trainers that we offer during your training is more than worth it in the long run. More than anything else, we focus on treating you as an individual, not a number. Everyone learns differently, so it's important that your training as a driving instructor takes this into account and remains flexible enough to get you the result you're capable of in each exam.

The classroom training provided (something that few training companies offer) for each exam is extremely important in this regard, as it ensures continuity in your learning and that you're actually absorbing the information in the right way. It certainly takes more effort on our part, but the results are more than worth it, which is why we encourage all the instructors we train to adopt the same approach when they take on their own students.

### **Online Seminars**

We like to stay in touch with our clients regularly with online seminars and conference calls. This extra help and encouragement make your journey to becoming a driving instructor an enjoyable one.

### **Covid 19**

The following information may change as the Government advice is updated.

The training vehicle will have all car contact points cleaned before you enter the car. It is compulsory to wear a mask at all times whilst within the car. The use of gloves whilst in the vehicle is optional it is not mandatory.

Acquiring your first students and growing your business as a 4 Wheelz driving instructor

One of the main challenges faced by newly qualified driving instructors is acquiring the right number of students. Fortunately, as a 4 Wheelz driving instructor, you don't need to worry about that, as we'll do all the hard work for you!

First and foremost, we are a respected and well-established brand that's easy for novice drivers to find online due to our ongoing SEO, social media and pay-per-click campaigns. Secondly, we do everything we can to make 4 Wheelz as attractive as possible to potential students. We always have deals of some description that we offer to new students and, best of all, offer them a free theory pack, which not only gives them a headstart with their training but also gets them excited about their upcoming lessons with you. In fact, many of our students are happy to pay upfront for their lessons, which is wonderful from your point of view as it eliminates the familiar driving instructor's problem of students scheduling lessons then not bothering to show up. If they've paid upfront, they'll have a strong incentive to arrive on time and make the most of the lesson, while you'll have been paid upfront either way. As a result of this, absenteeism is rarely a problem for our instructors. We even provide every student with an appointment and progress report booklet, so you don't even need to worry about that.

No matter how many students you wish to take on and how many hours per week you wish to work, we guarantee that you'll have a student ready for you at the designated time. At the time of writing, our courses and driving lessons are so popular that we actually have a waiting list for lessons!

As an instructor, you will choose local postcodes to your home within which you'll teach, which means that you'll have a steady flow of students within your local area that's convenient for you. And that means no long, costly drives to lessons. If you do want to do more to promote yourself locally, we will supply you with quality business cards that you can hand out, as well as professionally printed flyers if you want them, although, in practice, we've found that this is not usually necessary, given the high number of students our instructors acquire through our online marketing.

Unlike many other driving schools, we will not charge you a penny for your franchise until you have acquired a base number of students that we will agree with you in advance. The purpose of this is to ensure that your new business sets off on a firm financial footing as early as possible. After all, it's in our best interests to have you be as successful as possible! You'll receive whatever support you need in order to acquire your first students. Although many driving schools start charging franchise fees straight away, regardless of whether the instructor is actually getting any work, the steady flow of new students we can provide means that there's no need for us to do this, allowing us to enjoy a much stronger working relationship with all our instructors. Furthermore, we won't ever charge you for the students we refer to you.



To ensure that you can maintain a steady income even if your own car is off the road, we will supply you with a spare dual control car. Or, if you are leasing a car from one of the many leasing companies, they would provide another dual control car within 48 hours, so there'll be very few lessons to cancel or reschedule.

## What if you struggle in your new role as an instructor?

If you do find yourself struggling in your new role for any reason, don't worry – we will do everything in our power to get you back on track and make sure your experience of life as a driving instructor is a great one. Whatever the reasons for you struggling, once you let us know you need a little extra support, we will schedule time with one of our trainers for you, so we can get to the root of the problem and take measures to remedy it. Our trainers are all veteran driving instructors themselves and so have seen first-hand the various challenges faced by newly qualified instructors. Although they will not hesitate to point out any areas of your teaching in which you need to improve, they will remain patient and objective at all times.

## Standards Check

Every 1-4 years depending on your grade you will need to pass a compulsory Standards Check test, which involves a DVSA examiner sitting in the back of the car during one of your driving lessons and rating the quality of your teaching. The Standards Check assesses three main areas, lesson planning, management of risk, your teaching and coaching strategies. 13% of ADIs fail their Standards Check. The great majority of driving instructors that have trained with 4Wheelz call and book Standards Check training when they receive notification from the DVSA and we have a 100% success rate. If you have trained with us, we discount your Standards Check training.

## Conclusion

If you've already decided you want to train as a driving instructor, then I hope this guide has answered any questions you've had about what to expect and that you're now all set to begin your training. If you're contemplating a change of career but have been unsure where to go next, I hope that everything you've read has inspired you to consider a career as a driving instructor seriously.

Now you know what to expect; the next step is to contact us to begin the process we have looked at in the preceding pages and take your first steps towards becoming a qualified driving instructor.

All you need to do is visit our website [www.4wheelz.co.uk/contact-4wheelz](http://www.4wheelz.co.uk/contact-4wheelz) or call 0845 468 1808, and you'll be able to get started straight away.

**I look forward to meeting you shortly and helping you make the transition into this uniquely rewarding career!**

**Here's what some of our successful driving instructors had to say about working with us:**

***"Waste of money training with another company..."***

*10<sup>th</sup> April 2019*

*"So my journey started with 4wheelz after I had completed a waste of money training with another company I found on the net. My experience I honestly believe I would have passed my first attempt if I had my training with Rob and H right from the beginning. But thanks to their support I managed to pass in short amount of time. I would highly recommend Rob and H top guys really know how to solve the weakness Thanks guys!"*

***Shazia Khan, ADI, Birmingham***

***"Head and shoulders above..."***

*"Compared to the company I started my instructor training with, 4 Wheelz are head and shoulders above them. I felt I left each session having achieved something and not frustrated as was my previous experience. H's attention to detail is second to none and he left no stone unturned ensuring I went for my part 3 test fully prepared. I can thank H and all the 4 Wheelz staff for getting me to an ADI."*

***Mark O'Sullivan, ADI, Coventry***

***"Easier to learn..."***

*"I have really enjoyed the training with 4 Wheelz. H has been a pleasure to train with and has made it really enjoyable. The DVD's for each P.S.T. has been really helpful and has made it easier to learn when trying to remember everything during each lesson. H has been really flexible coming to train me at a suitable location nearer where I live. I have had previous instructor training and it hasn't been anywhere near the standard of 4 Wheelz training. Thanks to H."*

***Michelle Archer, ADI, Birmingham.***

***“Recommended to 4 Wheelz...”***

*“After looking into other companies, I am glad I was later recommended to 4 Wheelz by another instructor who had passed with them. Thanks to H, training has felt more like a hobby to me, fitting in with a job and 2 children. Yet it has been very professional and well structured.”*

***Faye Timmins, ADI, Coseley.***

***“Gave me confidence...”***

*“I found the training to be enjoyable, relaxed and a great learning experience. H was very tolerant, and an informative trainer whose calm and consistent approach gave me confidence and the ability to take on the steep learning curve. I would recommend 4 Wheelz.”*

***Nigel Williams, ADI, Crewe***

***“I picked 4 Wheelz by reputation...”***

*“Thank you to H and Richard and Barry for getting me through to be an instructor. Without 4 Wheelz I don't think I would have got through it, so pick 4 Wheelz and be confident of passing. I picked 4 Wheelz by reputation. I had two friends who went with another company they are now unemployed so pick the best and get the best.”*

***Adrian Miller, ADI, Chelmsley Wood***

***“Supportive throughout...”***

*“After much research into becoming a driving instructor I opted for 4 Wheelz after an initial chat with H a training officer, I found the company extremely professional and supportive. H has been a fantastic teacher and has shown patience and support throughout, always available for any worry or query. I have enjoyed training with 4 Wheelz and found all staff helpful and friendly. I look forward to working as an ADI at 4 Wheelz and would recommend them to anyone.”*

***Lisa Kidd, ADI, Walsall***

***“Extremely competent...”***

*“4 Wheelz at Dudley is a professional training establishment with experienced and dedicated staff. I found Mr H Surti to be an extremely competent instructor who delivered well structured lessons and showed flexibility in his teaching style to meet the specific needs of the student. The teaching was pitched at exactly the right level to allow learning to take place. Thanks H, your instruction is invaluable – 5 Star.”*

***Dr Glen F. Roberts, ADI, Bromsgrove***

**Flexible training options, train on the days and times that suit you.**

**Flexible payment terms to suit your budget including Pay As You Go.**

**For more information on becoming a driving instructor:**

**Call 0845 468 1808 Monday to Friday 9 am until 5 pm**

**(ask for Donna, H, Sarah or Steve)**

**Email: [donna.harris@4wheelz.co.uk](mailto:donna.harris@4wheelz.co.uk)**

**Contact 4 Wheelz online**

**[www.4wheelz.co.uk/contact-4wheelz](http://www.4wheelz.co.uk/contact-4wheelz)**