

DRIVER TRAINERS AS ASSESSORS FOR LICENSING.

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Background.

The problems associated with the systems of Competency Based Assessment (CBA) for cars and heavy vehicles in South Australia and for Heavy Vehicles in NSW are, to a large extent, difficult to track due to the lack of any effective auditing and monitoring of Driver Trainers before or after these systems were introduced. As a result the “honour” of being able to “sign off” new drivers as competent was given to a large number of Driver Trainers, who were not properly trained to do a difficult job properly. This has become apparent in a recent study in South Australia, showing no difference in the crash rate of new drivers after the system was introduced.

In the case of the Heavy Vehicle Assessors in NSW, many were given the Assessor Licence after a short course but with no check of previous records as to their ability to teach or assess. The sporadic monitoring of these assessors has caused the Licensing Authorities real concern, but with no system in place to thoroughly check the ability of the individual driver trainer to either train or assess, it is very difficult to find out where the problems are, or to be able to rectify them.

If driver trainers were to individually “earn” the right to assess new drivers, rather than be given that right “en masse” there would be a greater incentive to do the job properly, particularly if the option was to lose that right, if performance expectations were not met. At present there is no hierarchal process in the Driver Training Industry with the result that many good and potentially good people are lost to the Industry through an inability to “climb the ladder.” There is the potential for many driver trainers to improve their performance markedly if there was reward for their efforts. This would result in an increase in the number of safe and competent new drivers throughout Australia.

At the Road Safety Education, Policing and Research Conference in Brisbane, November 2000, the Australian Driver Trainers Association (the national industry association) presented a paper on the development of Curriculum Guidelines and Training Packages for the use of all driving schools and driver trainers throughout Australia. Driving Schools and Driver Trainers are able to develop their own programs and training packages from these Guidelines. These are critical to the overall approach of “getting the message over”. The education and training of new drivers must be given in a thorough, sequential and organised fashion if there is to be any effect on the overall problem of new driver road safety.

SELECTION CRITERIA FOR ASSESSORS

Having developed the training packages, the next step is the development of the monitoring system that will allow external auditors to track the progress of students through the driver trainer’s course of instruction and also track the ability of the driver trainer to produce safe and competent drivers.

Driver trainers must show above average performance levels, over a period of time, to be considered for the important job of Driver Trainer / Assessors.

The performance criteria must include, the following: -

1. **The successful completion of a recognised Driver Trainer’s Course.**
2. **The ability to retain students to the completion of the course of instruction.**
3. **A high percentage of students presenting for test.**
4. **A high licence test pass rate.**
5. **Evidence of full maintenance of all training and business records.**
6. **Availability to present lessons at times required by Students and the Course.**

Only driver trainers who show results that are well above the average, in all seven areas, are to be selected. An explanation of the seven criteria is as follows: -

1. **The successful completion of a recognised Driver Trainer's Course.**
All driver trainers, to be selected as assessors, must be professionally qualified to an AQF Certificate III or equivalent, in a course in driving instruction.
2. **An ability to retain students to complete the course of instruction.**
The production of safe and competent drivers is a complicated process, involving many factors. If Driver Trainers have an excessive loss of students after a small number of lessons, it demonstrates an inability to satisfy student needs and signifies a lack of teaching and communication skills in the driver trainer. (This criterion takes into account the students who have received varying levels of instruction from others prior to joining the driver trainer.)
3. **A high licence test pass rate.**
When the course of instruction has been satisfactorily completed and the student has reached the required level of competence, there should be no problem in passing the driving test at the first attempt. Occasionally a second test may be needed for mistakes caused through nervousness. A high pass rate is an accurate pointer to the competence of the driver trainer.
4. **A high percentage of students presented for test.**
Demonstrates retention of students towards the satisfactory completion of the course. The course is complete when the licence is obtained and the presence of the trainer at the test centre puts students at ease and demonstrates the driver trainers' concern for the welfare of their students.
5. **Evidence of full maintenance of all training and business records**
The course of instruction must have a number of record systems that need to be kept. These will include student data, student logbook, lesson planner, student training record and certificate issue, upon successful completion of the course. Business records must also be kept as evidence of efficient business practice. An ability to keep these records efficiently is essential for a successful CBT&A program.
6. **Availability to present lessons at times required by students and the course**
Many students are unable to have lessons during normal working hours. A complete course of instruction also includes night driving and wet weather driving. Lessons will have to be given at times to suit these requirements.

AUDIT OF SELECTION CRITERIA

The driver trainer keeps these as auditable records. Audits will need to be done on a regular basis and will be both announced and unannounced.

The following chart is a report on the performance of five driver trainers; it demonstrates that only two Driver Trainers (Trainer 1 and Trainer 5) could be selected for the step up to Driver Trainer/Assessor.

Driver trainer	Passed test to all finalised	Passed 1 st or 2 nd test to all tests	Finalised 1 st or 2 nd lesson to all finalised	Average lessons per finalised student	Course stationary usage	Available for tuition outside normal working times
Trainer 1	57%	92%	12%	10.6	100%	41%
Trainer 2	37%	85%	43%	5.3	71%	33%
Trainer 3	35%	92%	11%	7.5	32%	18%
Trainer 4	41%	88%	18%	8.7	96%	43%
Trainer 5	59%	100%	9%	12.5	100%	42%
Selection Performance	Above 50%	Above 90%	Below 15%	Above 10	100/%	Above 40%
Industry Average	35%	80%	25%	6.5	50%	32%

FURTHER TRAINING

After selection the driver trainer will need to undertake a course in which the full process of Competency Based **Training** and **Assessment** (CBT&A) will be thoroughly learnt. In both the NSW Heavy Vehicle and the South Australian CBA systems the whole emphasis in the course was on assessment rather than **training** and assessment. This resulted in many driver trainers being unable to change from training mode to assessment mode. As a result students were being unknowingly assisted during assessment by the Driver Trainer, meaning under performing students being passed as competent.

AUDITING OF ASSESSORS

Upon successful completion of the course, the new Trainer/Assessor will need to be monitored on a regular basis until full competence is reached and then on a random basis. All audits are in-car with a student.

The Criteria for this audit is as follows: -

1. **Presentation of self and vehicle.**
2. **Selection of correct teaching and assessing locations.**
3. **Correct presentation of all new topics in the right sequence.**
4. **Correct use of all teaching aids.**
5. **Ability to switch from Training to Assessment mode.**
6. **Completion of all records.**
7. **Setting of lesson and course completion goals.**
8. **Follow appropriate rebooking procedures.**
9. **Left seat control.**

An explanation of these nine criteria is as follows: -

1. **Presentation of self and vehicle**
The auditor will observe the performance of the assessor, in the use of teaching equipment, systems and the overall appearance of the driver trainer and the teaching vehicle.
2. **Selection of correct teaching and assessing locations**
Correct location selection is most important as teaching locations are the driver Trainer's 'class room'. Locations must suit the topic and assessment locations should differ from training locations. Locations should be close together to avoid unnecessary waste of time
3. **Correct use of all teaching aids**
When teaching aids, such as diagrams, photos etc are used, they must relate fully to the topic and be used appropriately. Teaching aids are not used during assessment.

4. **Correct presentation of all new topics in the right sequence**
This is the 'what to teach, how to teach and where to teach' method of topic presentation. Sequence is most important, as the building blocks of driving are firmly structured. Presentations must include a full practice regime and appropriate student feedback.
5. **Ability to switch from training to assessment mode**
It is possible to both train and assess at the same time for example assessing gear changing while teaching Vision and Perception. However there should be an appropriate time lapse before assessment, after training in a topic.
6. **Completion of all records**
All records relating to student instruction and driver trainer assessor must be kept as prescribed. These records are important to the success of the CBT&A program.
7. **Setting of lesson and course completion goals.**
These goals are important in helping the student achieve course outcomes. They also demonstrate the trainer/assessor's ability to lay out the projected stages of the course.
8. **Follow appropriate rebooking procedures**
Both the student's and the driver trainer's time are important and if lesson and assessment times are worked out well ahead it will avoid unnecessary changes that interrupt the tuition process.
9. **Left seat control**
The driver trainer/ assessor must display safe teaching practices and demonstrate the ability to control the vehicle from the left side when required.

AUDITORS CHECK SHEET

The following chart is an example of the auditor's check sheet. An explanation of the levels of competence used on the chart is shown below.

Item	Performance				Levels
	1	2	3	4	Minimum
Required					
1. Presentation					3
2. Locations					3
3. Teaching Aids					3
4. Presentation and Sequence					3
5. Train or Assess					3
6. Record Keeping					3
7. Goal Setting					3
8. Rebooking Procedure					3
9. Left seat control					3
Total Points					30

PERFORMANCE LEVELS

- 1. Needs major attention.**
- 2. Needs minor attention.**
- 3. Competent.**
- 4. Excellent.**

A minimum level 3 must be obtained in all topics and a total of 30 points overall.

POST LICENCE AUDIT

The final step in the whole process of the preparation of new drivers is to record their performance after licensing. There are many new and exciting developments in the field of education and training of new drivers but no mechanism to monitor them in relation to safe driving. It is envisaged, that on the day the new driver receives the provisional licence, a form be completed, which outlines all education and training programs in road safety received by that driver. There will also be a consent form signed that will give future researchers permission to look into the driving record of that new driver. From this, it would be possible to go back into the training record and see what problems were exhibited at that time, which may have led to a poor driving record after licensing.

The Driver Training Industry has an important role to play in the education and training of new drivers. The industry has direct access to well over half the new licence applicants across Australia each year. It is critical that Driver Trainers are fully competent to deliver this important service and that Licensing Authorities recognise many Trainers who are doing a good job, are rewarded by the hierarchal incentives outlined above, for the development safe new drivers.

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