

a) The number of approved driving instructors (ADIs) over a five year period who received grade three or below on a check test and subsequently received a grading of four, five or six?

Between 1 January 2005 and 31 December 2009, our reports show that 4,156 ADIs were graded three or below that subsequently received a grading of four, five or six.

Please note that we have used the period 1 January 2005 to 31 December 2009 to allow enough time for follow up check tests after the ADI received a substandard grading and for any removal process to conclude.

b) What the pass rate for category B tests is when QA [quality assurance] is being carried out for the last five years?

Between 1 January 2007 and 31 December 2011, there were 74,763 car practical tests where the 'accompanied by DSA' box was marked on the driving test report form. 32,834 of these tests were passes. This gives a pass rate of 43.9%.

These figures include those car practical tests that were being quality assured. However, examiners will have also been supervising tests for other reasons and this information will also be included in these figures.

We do hold further information relating to the pass rate for car practical tests that were being quality assured for the last five years. This information is, however, not held in a central record.

To compile this information would involve us comparing information held on our road safety information system (RSIS) to that held on our quality assurance (QA) database. We would need to go through each of the 74,763 car practical tests that were accompanied. To establish how long it would take to compile the information, we did compare information held on RSIS to that on our QA database for a one month period. There was a good match for around 70% of the information where we could establish whether it was a QA test and the test result. This took us one hour to compile but this did include time in developing the tools to make the comparison. The remaining 30% would require us to do further work, for example manually reviewing each driving test report form where the 'accompanied by DSA' box was marked to determine whether it was a quality assured test. To complete this work, we have estimated that it would take between 31 and 36 hours to determine those car practical tests that were quality assured and the pass rate. This estimate of time would exceed the 24 working hour limit prescribed.

This information is exempt from release under section 12 (1) (cost of compliance exceeds appropriate limit) of the FoIA. A full breakdown of this exemption can be found at Annex B.

The appropriate limit, as prescribed by the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004, is £600 for Central Government and £450 for other public authorities, with staff costs calculated at a rate of £25 per hour. When calculating whether the appropriate limit is exceeded, authorities can take account of the costs of determining whether the information is held, locating and retrieving the information, and extracting the information from other documents. They cannot take

account of the costs involved with considering whether information is exempt under the Act.

c) Can a candidate refuse a QA test without losing their fee?

d) Can a candidate refuse a QA test, without loss of fee, if they have previously had one?

At Annex C, you can find an extract from the reverse of the practical test appointment letter about supervised tests and whether a candidate would lose their test fee if they refused a QA test. You can also find further information online at

http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Motoring/LearnerAndNewDrivers/PracticalTest/DG_4022541

The information, found at the above link, is therefore exempt from release under section 21 (information accessible by other means). A copy of this exemption is attached at Annex D.

The information held on the appointment letter and that on the Directgov website applies even if the candidate had a QA test previously. Please note that in most circumstances the candidate will lose their test fee if they refuse to go ahead with their car practical test if it's being quality assured.

e) In the event of a QA test being conducted will the QA examiner stand down at the request of the candidate if they wish their instructor to accompany them without loss of fee?

We do not hold this information in a recorded format.

I can confirm, however, that in most instances, a vehicle presented for a car practical test will be able to accommodate the candidate, the examiner, QA examiner and an instructor. Therefore, there won't be any need for the QA examiner to stand down. In this scenario, if the candidate didn't want the QA examiner in the vehicle and refused to test, they will lose their test fee.

There will only be exceptional circumstances, where the QA examiner will have to stand down and not accompany the test. These circumstances will be outside of the QA examiner's control, for example health and safety issues.

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