

Driver and Rider Test and Instructor Statistics, Great Britain: Quarter 4 2013/14 (January to March 2014)

This publication presents information on the number and pass rate for driving and riding theory and practical tests conducted in Great Britain to 31 March 2014 and statistics from the ADI register and the Integrated Register of Driver Trainers.

The test and instructor statistics are derived from data held by the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) (formerly the Driving Standards Agency), which administers the driving test and training schemes in Great Britain.

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The key findings include:

- There were 389,717 **car theory tests** conducted between January and March 2014, 34.6 per cent more than in the same quarter of the previous year. The **pass rate** for these tests was 50.5 per cent, 1.9 percentage points lower than in the same period of 2013.
- There were 387,884 **car practical tests** conducted between January and March 2014, 17.9 per cent more than in the same quarter of the previous year. The **pass rate** for these tests was 46.9 per cent, 0.3 percentage points lower than the same period in 2013.
- The number of **motorcycle theory tests** was 26.3 per cent up in January to March 2014 compared with the same period of the previous year. The number of **motorcycle practical tests** was 3.5 per cent down for module 1 and 27.6 per cent down for module 2 in January to March 2014 compared with same period of the previous year.
- The introduction of new questions in the **large goods vehicle (LGV)** and **passenger carrying vehicle (PCV)** multiple choice theory tests in May 2013 caused a drop in the pass rate. During the period January to March 2014 the **LGV practical test** was up 7.0 per cent on the same period of the previous year whilst **PCV practical tests** were 2 per cent up.
- At the end of quarter 4, there were 43,330 **approved driving instructors** on the Register which is a drop of 2.8 per cent compared with the same quarter of the previous year. The number of riding instructors in this quarter is 2,598 which is 9.8 per cent lower than the same quarter of the previous year.

FURTHER INFORMATION

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1. General context

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) administers the driving test and training schemes in Great Britain. A driver or rider must pass both theory and practical tests in order to obtain full entitlement to drive a particular vehicle type on the road.

The total number of practical tests (which is dominated by car driving tests) had been on a downward medium-term trend, decreasing by 16 per cent between 2007/8 and 2012/13. There are a number of factors potentially influencing this, including:

- Generally increasing practical **test pass rates**, meaning fewer candidates taking retests.
- A **demographic trend** of declining birth rates during the 1990s, meaning that there are now fewer young people in the peak age-group for driving tests (17-20). Population data suggests that this trend is likely to continue until late in the current decade, before reversing.
- The economic recession from 2008 may have discouraged some people from taking a test. However during the latest financial year (2013/14), there have been increases in test volumes predominantly for car and vocational test. This is the first year since 2007/08 when the total number of tests conducted has increased from the previous year. This comes at a time when economic indicators are improving.

Short-term variation in test numbers can be driven by seasonal and weather factors (there are generally fewer practical tests in the winter, particularly in months with severe weather).

Regulatory and administrative changes can also have an effect – examples mentioned below include changes to the theory test question banks, and new rules for motorcycle riders.

Summary table: Driver and rider tests taken, and pass rates: Great Britain

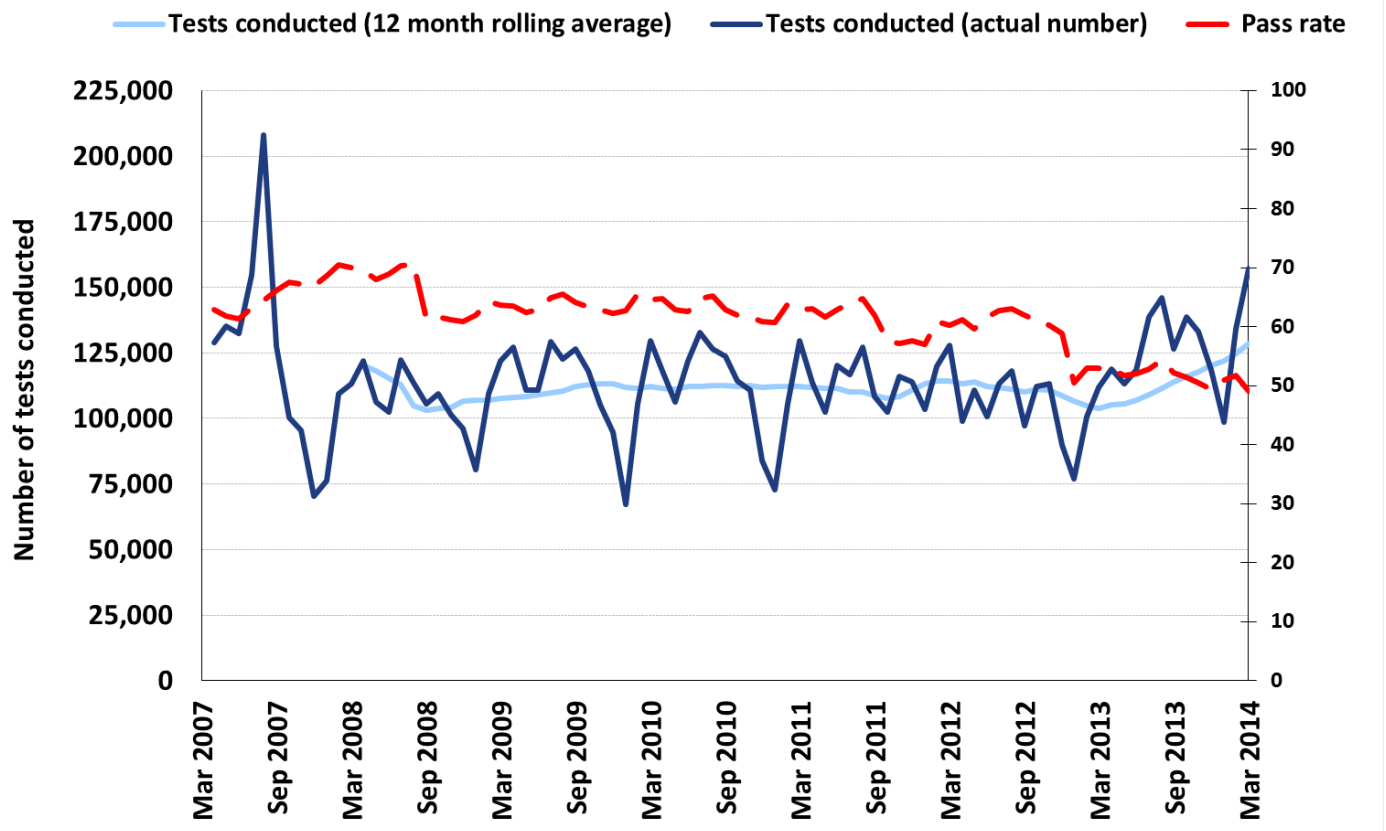
Test Type	Latest Quarter (January – March 2014)			
	Number of tests taken (thousands)	Compared to same qtr previous yr	Pass rate (percentage)	Compared to same qtr previous year (percentage points)
Car theory	390	⬆️ +34.6%	50.5	⬇️ -1.9
Car practical	388	⬆️ +17.9%	46.9	⬇️ -0.3
Motorcycle theory	10.3	⬆️ +26.3%	76.1	⬇️ -0.1
Motorcycle practical module 1	7.9	⬇️ -3.5%	69.7	⬇️ -0.2
Motorcycle practical module 2	7.0	⬇️ -27.6%	71.6	⬆️ +1.3
LGV theory multiple choice	8.1	⬆️ +22.7%	68.8	⬇️ -9.8
LGV theory hazard perception	7.3	⬆️ +11.7%	79.6	⬇️ -1.1
Large Goods Vehicle (LGV) practical	11.9	⬆️ +7.0%	55.1	⬆️ +1.1
LGV theory CPC *	4.6	⬆️ +23.8%	66.7	⬆️ +5.8
PCV theory multiple choice	1.9	⬆️ +17.1%	68.0	⬇️ -9.0
PCV theory hazard perception	1.8	⬆️ +13.3%	77.3	⬇️ -4.0
Passenger Carrying Vehicle (PCV) practical	2.1	⬇️ -2.0%	54.3	⬆️ +0.3
PCV theory CPC *	1.5	⬆️ +5.8%	45.5	⬇️ -2.8

* - CPC = Certificate of Professional Competence

2. Car tests

Theory car tests: Great Britain, April 2007 to March 2014

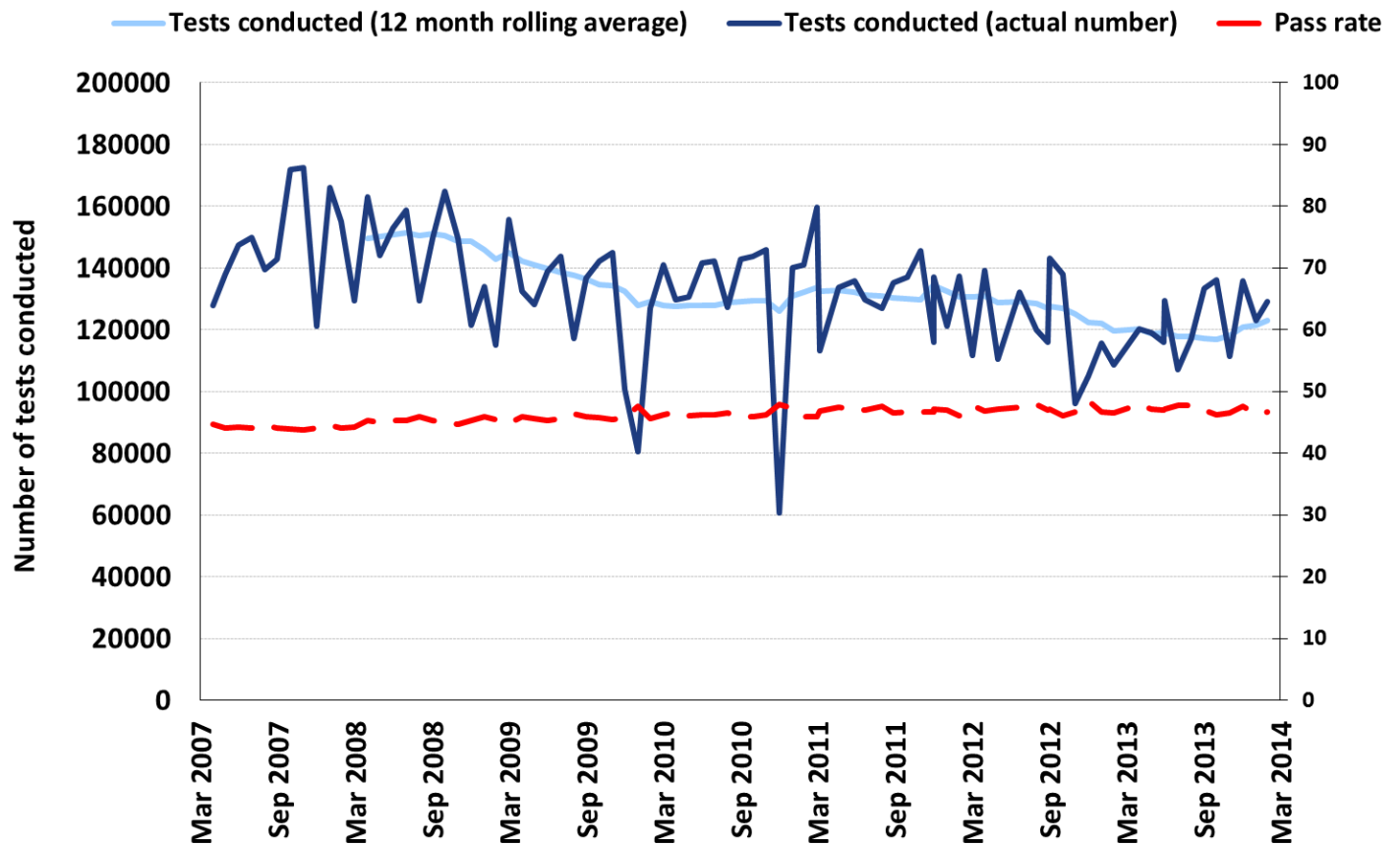
(Driving and Riding Tests web table DRT5201)



- In January to March 2014, there were 389,717 car theory tests. This is 34.6 per cent higher than in the same quarter of 2013, when test numbers were unusually low, partly as a result of changes to the test questions in January 2013.
- Over the 2013/14 financial year, 1,541,896 theory tests were conducted 23.9 per cent more than in the previous financial year.
- In this quarter, and for the financial year, every month saw a positive change, and in all but three months the number of tests conducted was 20 per cent or more higher than in the same month a year earlier.
- The pass rate for this quarter was 50.5 per cent. This is 1.9 percentage points lower than the same period last year. This may be affected by the withdrawal of voiceovers and translators for foreign language tests from April 2014 resulting in a surge of less well prepared candidates taking their test.
- Over the financial year of 2013/14, the pass rate fell 7.5 percentage points to 51.6 per cent. This was largely due to a sustained drop in the pass rate following the changes to the test questions in January 2013. The lower pass rate will have contributed to the increase in the number of tests (re-tests) taken since the change.

Practical car tests: Great Britain, April 2007 to March 2014

(Driving and Riding Tests web table DRT0201)



- There were 387,884 car practical tests conducted in January to March 2014. When compared to the same quarter last year this is 17.9 per cent higher, partly because there was an unusually low number of tests in that period due to the severe weather.
- Over the course of the 2013/14 financial year 1,477,585 car practical tests were conducted. This is 2.9 per cent higher than the previous financial year.
- The pass rate for this quarter was 46.9 per cent. This is 0.4 percentage points lower than the same quarter a year ago.
- Over the financial year 2013/14 the pass rate was 47.1 per cent. This is the same as the previous financial year.

3. Motorcycle tests

On 19th January 2013, the EU Third Directive came into force in the UK. This directive limits the engine size available to riders under the age of 24 at the date of attempting the practical test. This led to a trough in tests for this age group for both theory and practical tests following its introduction – which accounts for the substantial year-on-year changes reported for some statistics below.

Theory Test

- There were 10,302 motorcycle theory tests conducted in January to March 2014. In comparison, there were 8,160 conducted in the same quarter a year earlier representing a 26.3 per cent increase.
- During the financial year 2013/14 52,319 theory tests were conducted. This represents a decrease of 28.9 per cent when compared to the previous financial year.
- There was a negligible change in the pass rate of 0.1 percentage points to 76.1 per cent for January to March compared to the same quarter a year ago.
- For the financial year, the pass rate increased 1.2 percentage points to 75.7 per cent.

Practical (module 1 and 2) Tests

- During January to March 2014 there were 7,870 module 1 tests conducted. This is 3.5 per cent lower than the same quarter in the previous year.
- The module 1 pass rate was 69.7 per cent. This is 0.2 percentage points lower than the same quarter last year.
- Over the financial year 2013/14, the number of module 1 tests taken was 46,263. This is 30.0 per cent lower than the previous financial year.
- The number of module 2 tests conducted in January to March 2013/14 was 7,025. This is a 27.6 per cent decrease on the same period in the previous year.
- The pass rate for January to March 2013/14 was 71.6 per cent on the module 2 test. This is 1.3 percentage points higher than the same period in 2012/13.

4. Large goods vehicle (LGV) tests

For both LGVs and PCVs (see following section), separate multiple choice and hazard perception tests must be passed before candidates can take the practical test. In May 2013 there was a question refresh for the multiple choice tests for both LGV and PCV. As with the change to the car theory test in January 2013, this led to an increase in the number of LGV and PCV multiple choice tests before the change, and a reduction in the pass rate after the change.

Theory Test

- During January to March 2014, 8,081 multiple choice LGV theory tests were conducted. This is an increase of 22.7 per cent when compared to the same quarter a year earlier.

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- There were 33,086 multiple choice LGV theory tests conducted over the financial year of 2013/14, an increase of 21.4 per cent when compared to the previous financial year. The increase in the number of tests conducted has been caused by the fall in pass rate as a result of changes to the questions in May 2013, and underlying growth in this area.
 - In January to March 2014, 7,349 hazard perception tests were conducted. This is 11.7 per cent higher than the same period a year before. This gives a better indication of the growth in the industry as there have been no changes to the test.
 - Over the financial year 2013/14, the number of hazard perception tests conducted was 11.5 per cent (3,081 tests) higher than the previous financial year. The overall pass rate fell 1.1 percentage points to 80.0 per cent.

Practical Test

- There were 11,850 LGV practical tests conducted in January to March 2014, a 7.0 per cent increase on the same quarter a year ago.
- Over the course of the financial year 2013/14, 48,283 LGV tests were conducted. This is an increase of 4.4 per cent in the number of LGV tests conducted when compared to the previous financial year.
- The January to March 2014 pass rate for LGV tests was 55.1 per cent; 1.1 percentage points higher than the same period a year ago. The LGV pass rate for the financial year was 54.3 per cent; an increase of 1.3 percentage points compared to the previous financial year.

5. Passenger carrying vehicle (PCV) tests

Theory Test

- There were 1,913 multiple choice theory tests conducted in January to March 2014. This represents a 17.1 per cent increase compared to the same quarter a year ago.
- Over the financial year of 2013/14, there were 8,325 multiple choice tests conducted. This is 15.9 per cent higher than the previous financial year. As with LGV the increase in the number of tests conducted has been caused by the fall in pass rate as a result of changes to the questions in May 2013.
- During January to March 2014, there were 1,819 hazard perception tests conducted. This is a 13.3 per cent (213 tests) increase on the previous financial year.
- During the financial year of 2013/14, 7,731 hazard perception tests were conducted. This is 9.8 per cent higher than the previous financial year.

Practical Test

- The number of PCV tests conducted in January to March 2014 was 2,109. This is 2.0 per cent (44 tests) lower than the same quarter a year ago.
- Over the financial year 2013/14 the number of tests conducted was 9,026. This equates to a fall of 1.5 per cent (136 tests) compared to the previous financial year.
- The pass rate for women increased by 0.3 percentage points in January to March 2014 compared to the same quarter a year ago. As the number of PCV tests taken by women is small (fewer than 400 per quarter), the pass rate is more liable to chance fluctuations. This is also true for the changes in the financial year pass rate for women which fell to

54.5 per cent in 2012/13 but increased to 59.7 per cent in 2013/14 (an increase of 5.2 percentage points). The overall pass rate increased by 2.3 percentage points to 55.1 per cent when compared to the previous financial year.

6. Driving and riding instructors

Numbers of instructors currently registered

- At the end of March 2014, there were 43,330 approved driving instructors on the Register. This is 2.8 per cent fewer than the number registered at the end of March 2013, continuing a longer downward trend.
- Alongside the ADIs, there were 2,598 riding instructors on the Statutory Register at end of the year.

Checks on existing instructors

- During this quarter, 789 check tests have been conducted on ADIs. This is a decrease of 82.2 per cent when compared with the same quarter in the previous year. A new standards check was introduced on 7 April and time has been needed to train examiners in this new process resulting in a reduction of the number of check tests conducted in the last quarter. At the end of March 2014, 47.9 per cent of all ADIs scored a grade four, 35.1 per cent a grade five and 6.3 per cent a grade six. No ADI scored a grade one and 0.2 per cent scored a grade two or three.
- Compulsory basic test (CBT) instructors also undergo check tests. Of the 103 tests undertaken during quarter 4, 84 (81.6 per cent) resulted in a satisfactory result.

New applicants, and theory and practical ADI tests

- In contrast, the number of first applications to become a potential driving instructor has increased by 7.3 per cent in January to March 2014 when compared to the same period last year. For the financial year 2013/14 there were 7,414 first applications equating to a 16.1 per cent increase on the previous year.
- There were 1,466 theory tests conducted in January to March of 2014. This represents an increase of 10.6 per cent in comparison to the same quarter a year ago.
- For the financial year 2013/14 the number of theory tests conducted reduced by 0.9 per cent to 5,991. This is the smallest fall for 4 years, during which time the number of tests has been on a downward trend from around 19,000 in 2009/10. The pass rate for January to March (48.4 per cent) and for the financial year (47.8 per cent) fell by 2.7 percentage points when compared to the same time periods a year ago.
- During January to March 2014 there were 1,043 ADI part 2 tests conducted. This is a 3.5 per cent (35 tests) increase from the same quarter last year. Over the financial year the number of ADI part 2 tests conducted has fallen 13.1 per cent to 4,202 when compared to the previous financial year.
- In January to March 4 2014 there were 1,048 ADI part 3 tests conducted. This represents a fall of 14.3 per cent compared to the same period a year ago. For the financial year 2013/14 there were 4,600 ADI part 3 test conducted. This is a fall of 21.8 per cent when compared to the last financial year.

We have seen continued year on year falls in the number of ADI theory, part 2 and part 3 tests being conducted. This may be linked to the drop in demand due to falling numbers of car practical tests being conducted, as well as the still relatively high numbers of instructors on the ADI register.

7. Background notes

1. Practical test categories included are B (car), B1 (tricycles and quadricycles), A, A1 and A2 (motorcycles), C, C1 (medium and large goods vehicles), C+E, C1+E (medium/large goods vehicles with trailers), D, D1 (minibuses and buses), D+E and D1+E (minibuses / buses with trailers).
2. The [Driver and Rider Tests and Instructors](#) web page provides further detail of the key findings presented in this statistical release, including detailed data tables.
3. These official statistics are not designated National Statistics. They are produced to high professional standards set out in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure that they meet customer needs. They are produced free from any political interference.
4. The next release of statistics will be published in August 2014 and will provide information for the first quarter of the 2014 financial year (April to June 2014).
5. Details of ministers and officials who receive pre-release access to these statistics up to 24 hours before release can be found in the [Pre-release access list](#).
6. These statistics are provided by the driver's side of the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA). The DVSA also publishes [operational data](#) by test centre.
7. Additional data on ethnicity of candidates are released via www.data.gov.uk. This information is not published as part of the statistical release as only circa 30 per cent of candidates declare their ethnicity. It is, therefore, highly likely that the information is subject to self-selection and reporting biases and neither the DVSA nor DfT would recommend that users rely on these data being a true reflection of the ethnicity of all candidates. The data are being provided simply for information and as they are frequently request under the Freedom of Information Act.
8. For further information on the impact of the EU 3rd Directive to rider licensing please visit - <https://www.gov.uk/ride-motorcycle-moped/bike-categories-ages-and-licence-requirements>.
9. Grades run from 1 – extremely poor overall performance, to 6 – very high overall performance