



Implementation Scenarios Quality Standards Professional Driver Training United Kingdom

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Prepared by:	James Tillyer and Vicki Ball		
With contributions from:	Freight Transport Association and Skills for Logistics (Sector Skills Council)		

Standard 1: Embedding directive 2003/59/EC into national VET systems

The implementation of directive 2003/59/EC is interconnected with and embedded into the national vocational education and training systems of the participating countries.

In the UK, National Occupational Standards (NOS) are developed by Sector Skills Councils on behalf of industry, and it represents the vocational training programme for almost all vocations in the UK.

With regard to the transport and logistics sector the development of NOS requires the engagement of employers and operators of all sizes and representatives from across all four nations; England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland (although Scotland has its own Standards that are similar to NOS). The NOS provides the basis of qualifications and training programmes and are central to decisions around the public funding made available to support skills development.

There are 14 units that make up the latest requirements for vocational training for driving a goods vehicle, and cover the skills and abilities that a driver would be expected to perform or deliver as part of the job of being a goods vehicle driver. These units have been developed following feedback from industry stakeholders and experts, and are directly linked with the basic requirements set out in Directive 2003.59. The units explain;

1. What a driver will be able to do on completion of the training
2. What a driver will know and understand following completion of the training

The Driver CPC specification has already been mapped to NOS and is therefore embedded in the qualification framework. It is anticipated that any future amendments made to the specification of the Directive will be incorporated into the NOS training requirement (although this will be subject to industry consultation).

Standard 2: Entry requirements

Professional driving is perceived as an occupation that requires certain life abilities and affinities before entering into initial training for professional drivers and therefore before entering into the profession as such. It is therefore considered as an occupation that cannot be performed by anybody.

There are many challenges with regard to the recruitment of younger people into the role of a professional truck driver. For many years the occupation has had a reasonably poor public image, confounded by the perceived long working hours, the solitude of a long distance job, the pay structure and the competition from other

industries.

A career in transport and logistics is rarely discussed during school careers advice, and until there is widespread recognition of the importance that the industry plays in overall UK GDP it will always struggle to appear 'on the radar'.

Although a number of truck manufacturers are very active in identifying good young drivers through competitions and schemes it is usually confined to the European market as opposed to the UK, and so the possibilities are limited.

Campaigns aimed solely at young UK drivers are also rare, and while the UK government once have a scheme designed to promote the job of a truck driver it had limited success, and certainly not enough to warrant further investment.

The UK transport and logistics industry typically recruits young drivers through company promotion, with individuals starting off as a warehouse worker, moving into the position of a fork-lift truck operative or similar and eventually into truck driving (although this is usually limited to 7.5 tonne rigid type vehicles). However, companies are very quick to invest in young talent and can often see the bigger picture, so training costs are often borne entirely by the employer. This approach means that companies can tailor an individual's training programme according to what they need or the type of work that the company undertakes, which in turn provides the trainee with a particular set of skills. This usually helps the company to achieve a better driver retention rate, although it limits the transferable skills of the individual should they seek to further their career with another company.

While apprenticeships are proving more popular in the UK, the transport and logistics sector faces a problem in that the subsidised funds for training are currently only available to those between 16-18 years old. As a driver can only start driving a truck professionally from the age of 18, it means that apprenticeship funding is only really available for one year, although the industry is currently trying to influence the body responsible for apprenticeships (National Apprenticeships Service – NAS) to allow for a change to the funded age range, ideally to make it between 18-20 years old. This change could dramatically increase the opportunity for young UK drivers to start a career in transport and logistics and certainly help to address the aging workforce, which of course is a problem right across Europe.

In any case a career in truck driving will always rely on the mindset of the young person, because ultimately a certain life attitude is critical to performing a job well and to remaining safe on the road. While training can arm an individual with excellent skills, knowledge and understanding, unless the mind is right and the individual can demonstrate a certain maturity then the possibilities will always be limited.

Standard 3: Training design and choice of methods within initial qualification and periodic training

Choice of training design and methods within professional driver training reflect all kind of learning outcomes related to the training, the specific needs of the target group and the needs of heterogeneous groups. They incorporate a high level of practical relevance and reflect the state of the art of training possibilities for professional drivers.

The most effective and popular type of driver training environment in the UK is still classroom-based. PowerPoint format with notes and guidance is also the most popular way of presenting training material, mainly due to the commonality of the programme and the widespread recognition and experience that most trainers have with it. Training is changing though; the use of audio / visual references, interaction, non-formal tests etc. are being adopted by many training providers, as they recognise that a static training programme will not be as affective as something that involves the drivers. This approach is particularly important for periodic training, as 7 hours can be

a long time for a driver to take on and process new information.

However, many companies are now starting to recognise the benefits of e-learning and it's an area that's expanding rapidly. The flexibility that it can offer, particularly to drivers who spend long periods away from their base, is clear. What's not so clear is how measurable the training can be and how well the training meets with its objective, but this is something that would have to be explored during development of any e-learning programme. The platform for this type of learning is also flexible and with considerable opportunities, as it can be delivered using tablet computers, smart phones, laptops or even through secure networks on a public computer.

Practical learning will always be essential though. While the use of simulators, whether it be low, mid or high end), is low in the UK, the use of trucks for training on private roads and skidpans continues to be popular. It is clear that drivers are more comfortable in this environment, but of course there are limitations on what they might learn. It is, however, a perfect way of teaching about fuel efficiency and defensive driving, which is difficult to replicate in any other environment.

Standard 4: Requirements on trainers

Training for professional drivers is implemented by well qualified and accredited trainers that possess the necessary professional abilities in terms of expert knowledge, skills and competences within the subject they teach and the necessary pedagogical knowledge, skills and competences in order to implement high quality training for professional drivers.

The standard of training provided to those undertaking their driving licence C category exam is consistent across the UK because it is governed and managed by the DVLA (Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency). A driver who is outside of the 'acquired rights' to drive heavy goods vehicles must take a training course that includes a theoretical test (hazard perception), multiple choice exam and a practical driving test.

The examiner is a highly experienced individual who is required to have taken the LGV instructor course and an internal course designed by DVLA, developed with input from the industry. There is a consistent approach to the quality of the examiners, although as with every expert it relies on their ability to impart their knowledge and to deliver clear, concise training to the students, which is something that's very difficult to teach.

The initial test stipulated in the Directive 2003/59 mirrors the requirements that an individual must meet in order to pass the C driving licence exam, which was a deliberate move in order to make the process easier and to remove much of the red tape. This is also part of the reason that the UK chose the test only option for initial training.

The evaluation and assessment of trainers, the training course and the training centre with regard to periodic training is now well established, with the responsible body (JAUPT) undertaking regular assessments on all aspects of the training.

However, the market is saturated and the quality of the trainers is sometimes questionable. The UK has somewhere in the region of 1500 approved training centres with over 2500 courses available. This has inevitably led to questions over the standard of training being delivered, and there are a number of cases where training is being delivered in non-approved locations (including pubs and village halls) by trainers who charge as little as £30 per driver for a 7 hour course.

The vast majority of approved trainers are experienced professionals delivering good quality periodic training, but there is no required qualification to deliver training other than the assessment that is delivered by JAUPT.

Standard 5: Assessment & validation in initial qualification and periodic training

Assessment & validation of initial qualification and periodic training are oriented on learning outcomes, and allow the assessment of learning outcomes achieved within initial training / qualification or elsewhere.

Both initial and periodic training include an element of a learning-based assessment, and the way in which the training is delivered tends to define how detailed the assessment can be.

Unless results can be fully understood there will also be a limit on the effectiveness of the training, although in the UK this is only relevant to periodic training due to the test only option being chosen for initial training.

There are effectively two types of assessment with regard to periodic training;

- The assessment of the course trainer, the course content, centre and materials used (by JAUPT) once a year to ensure quality and consistency.
- Feedback gathered from delegates at the end of the course.

The assessment delivered by JAUPT focuses on the quality of the course material and is independently assessed by experienced training instructors. An audit is also carried out on-site to ensure suitability of the venue and the standard of training instructors being used.

The feedback process at the end of the training is normally documented and examined, and is driven by the training provider. This provides vital information about the perception of the training received and allows for alterations or fine-tuning thereafter. It also demonstrates to JAUPT that the company is committed to identifying any areas for improvement where needed.

Standard 6: Recognition of non-/informal learning

In- and non-formal learning is equally accepted and recognised as form of learning within initial and continuous/ periodic training for professional drivers that lead to the same certificates/ proofs as those acquired within formal learning environments.

The UK has a flexible training system with regard to the Directive 2003/59, and as such the ability to deliver training in a variety of situations has made for an inclusive and easy to manage system.

As part of the requirement under the approvals process, every training centre must provide the driver with a certificate of attendance on completion of a training programme, whether it is in a formal or informal training environment. The provider is also required to submit the details on the DSA (Driver Standards Agency) database on completion of the training course, which is accessible to enforcement authorities and transport companies alike.

The advent of e-learning may create some issues with maintaining and recording training information, but this will become apparent as e-learning becomes more widespread.

A number of companies have set up their own approved training centre specifically to deliver periodic training to other, smaller companies in the immediate area. This has created something of a driver CPC community, whereby issues and ideas are discussed between companies and solutions are developed much quicker.

Standard 7: Adapting content and training approaches to changing skills needs

Vocational education and training for professional drivers is responsive to changing skill needs and can be adapted without losing relevance, transparency and comparability of the driver CPC in Europe.

Vocational education and training for professional drivers in the UK has changed significantly in recent times, with more interactive and engaging ways of delivering training courses and programmes. However, not all drivers are receptive to change, and many still favour a traditional learning method based on group participation in a classroom environment, although this typically depends on a number of factors, including age, experience and mindset.

Subjects including fuel efficiency and defensive driving are popular among UK companies, and more experienced drivers occasionally struggle to change their driving behaviour to adapt to their newly acquired knowledge through training.

It is, of course, essential to match training with the age profile of the driver, in order to understand the existing skill level and to bespoke the training in order to impart as much knowledge as possible. The average age of a driver in the UK is 55, and with the majority having worked in the industry for over 10 years, so the mindset is perhaps not as receptive to new ways of training as younger drivers.

In any case the Directive has brought about an opportunity to create new and innovative ideas for driver training, and companies have started to examine the possibilities with driving simulators and other training aids, which not only makes use of new technologies but also provides a more interesting platform for the driver.

Standard 8: Quality assurance (in periodic and initial training)

Quality assurance systems and measures are put in place for the implementation of professional driver training in the framework of directive 2003/59/EC. Quality assurance is primarily based on pedagogical considerations in order to ensure a high pedagogical quality within professional driver training.

There is a strict system of quality assurance in the UK, with a dedicated organisation (JAUPT) responsible for monitoring and maintaining standards, delivering regular audits and assessments and imposing sanctions on training providers.

JAUPT work to a standard that has been developed with industry input, which requires a number of criteria to be met and that every training provider is assessed once a year. The provider is required to submit their training material for approval, while an annual audit takes place onsite to ensure that the centre is fit for purpose and that the trainers are suitably experienced individuals.

For further information on the project please consult:

www.project-profdrv.eu

For further information on the paper please contact:

jtillyer@fta.co.uk