



Before you meet an Associate!

Your first contact with a new Associate is usually by telephone. This is important and the Associate's first impressions will be formed here. Make sure that you are friendly but professional, and that you have a clear idea of what you want to say before you call. Have a time and meeting place in mind, and chat for a few minutes.

The first time you meet with an Associate

Remember that the new Associate will be nervous. This may not be obvious. The very first objective is to put the Associate at his/her ease by an informal approach. Spend a moment or two on general chat before getting down to talking about the Run. A few minutes of small talk can help to show that we are not obsessive! Admire their bike, ask how long they've been riding, generally let them know that you're human and don't make things sound too formal or serious. Remove your helmet whenever possible and encourage them to do the same as it helps communication

Give some background to the Sussex Group

The new Associate may know little about the Group, so do mention how many are in the group, how many bikers, and how the Sussex group ties in with the national organisation.

Find out about the Associate

1. Experience, what training has already been done, e.g. BMF Blue Riband, IAM Advanced, commercial courses
2. Try and get the Associate to divulge their weak points.
3. Have they read Roadcraft?

How the run will be done

?? Explain what Advanced Riding is about.

Explain how you will follow, how you may be in strange positions, how you will indicate directions, and how you will bring the run to a stop

?? Explain and show the route on a map, and the stops (if known). Explain that it is not the end of the world if they miss a turn that you have indicated. Remember that road numbers and names of villages may mean nothing to your Associate, but give an idea of overall length of run, how long before a stop

?? Explain that you may alter the route, and that they should not worry about this.

?? Explain that you may ride closer to them than they might expect.

?? Explain that they should not consider you, the Observer, before manoeuvres, but equally there is no point in losing you completely.

?? Stress that you will be out of position and that this must not be taken as any indication or hint or clue as to how the Associate should ride.

?? Stress that safety is paramount, and that everything they do must be safe.

?? Speed limits observance & RoSPA policy that all speed limits must be adhered to. If that looks like it might be unchallenging, choose tight back-roads where the issue of exceeding those limits will not arise as often as it might on a wide section of A road.

Explain what the objective is: safety, increased confidence, increased awareness of danger, increased defensiveness leading to a consistent style regardless of the conditions or hazards.

Has the Associate any concerns or questions?

Ask the Associate if they have any questions or concerns. Watch for facial expressions of puzzlement or surprise as you explain things to ensure that they are clear about your instructions.

Spell out the benefits

Remember that selling safety can be difficult, so choose progress and confidence as motivators.

Then tell the Associate to enjoy the run!

Notes for Observers on the move:

1. Try to keep with the Associate as much as possible. Keeping with him in the faster bits means that 30's and 40s are entered at the same time. So if you are close to him at the start of a 30, it will be apparent to him that he is speeding if you drop back. Also, if you're too far back, it will be difficult for him to see indications, and will make the ride ragged as he checks his mirrors unduly. You will not be able to give directions if you are 4 cars behind.
2. It may be a good idea to drop to your parking light to help the Associate to see your indicators.
3. Give indicator commands in good time. It will help if you know the route you are on.
4. When indicating, try to be offset to the Associate so that they can see you clearly without having to look in both mirrors.
5. Try to anticipate overtakes so that you can close up and follow through with the Associate wherever possible- there is usually some indication of preparation for an overtake- if there isn't, there should be! Look out for the body language, the mirror checks etc.
6. Some riders will consciously or unconsciously be out to test you, prove how good they are, and controlling this is critical.
7. Don't forget your own safety.
8. Consider suggesting giving a demo of some aspect, e.g. positioning- so as not to be always behind. This will help more than lots of words, will establish your credentials with the Associate, and or take the heat off them for a few minutes. Using a number of set routes will allow an observer pick the right sections of road that will demonstrate the point they want.
9. Give demos more frequently. It can be a good idea to do a demo run to give the Associate a breather, or to break the run up if it is going badly and the Associate could do with a "fresh start".
10. Watch out for signs of concentration falling off and stop the run.
11. Make sure that any advice you give is not taken as an order to do something beyond the Associate's capability.
12. Try and leave the word "safety" ringing in their ears at each stop.

Route selection

1. Pick a route to suit the weather, time of year etc- stick more to A roads in winter for safety. Especially for a first run, try and pick a route that might be known to the associate. They have enough to think about without complicated instructions. We want them to relax and show how they ride rather than their navigation skills. So try to avoid too many complicated instructions. It is best if you can choose a challenging road but one where you can say "no turns for 10 miles"

2. Keep the overall length to 25-35 miles overall, stop regularly, and remember that the Associate may be tired from concentration and may not want to tell you, so don't overdo it.
3. For your own sake, frequent beaks will help you to remember items that could be forgotten on longer runs.
4. You may find it useful to make up acronyms to remember faults or advice for the next stop. For example, LOOPS could be Lifesavers, Overtakes, Observation, Positioning, Speed. Or HIS for Head immobile and Speed limits. Gather your thought before stopping for a debrief.
5. Try and have very specific examples of a fault so that it is credible.
6. Sometimes, an overview might be best such as "Nothing wrong with the ride, ie it was safe, but it lacked incisiveness and felt vague"
7. It can be useful to ask the Associate what they thought of the ride. Sometimes it is surprising. They may think it was dreadful and it may not have appeared that way, so encouragement may be the answer.
8. Reassure the Associate that it is not important that they are faultless in each run, it is more important that they are learning. If their ride was faultless, they should be observing you!
9. The Assessment form should not be filled out item by item as it is tedious for all-better to mark key points that we want the Associate to work on (perhaps mark the 2nd copy afterwards with other smaller points for our own info).
10. Identify specific short stretches of road suitable for particular practice such as twisty sections, overtaking sections which could be run repeatedly in one session.

Completing The Assessment Form

1. Important not to overload the associate with too many negative points- try and find positive things to praise.
2. Having a big de-brief before the end might help to relax the associate in the final part of the run and get more out of him/her as a result.
3. Don't list too many items in one go- these can be marked on the form-try to pick one aspect to work on. There is a tendency to want to prove that you have spotted everything and to want to show how diligent you have been as an Observer
4. Despite what Associates say, they still like a few compliments before you lay into them! Try and sandwich criticism between compliments.
5. Draw diagrams for them, rather than verbal descriptions if possible
6. Associates may not know the names of villages or landmarks or road numbers when you refer to particular incidents.
7. Better to suggest that 6 more runs are necessary than to be over-optimistic about how soon the test can be attempted. We don't want to submit people who are not ready.
8. Finish the de brief on a high note. Leave the associate happy and positive.
9. Fix a date for the next run if possible-at least until a few runs have been done

The RoSPA Advanced Motorcycle Test

Reproduced from a RoSPA HQ publication

The following notes give points which examiners will look for during a Test, but in no way do these notes replace a full knowledge of Motorcycle Roadcraft and the Highway Code.

1. The general appearance of a motorcycle says a lot about the rider: the examiner will expect to see that your motorcycle appears to be in a roadworthy condition; it is comparatively easy to see a motorcycle transmission and you should have the chain and braking linkages (where appropriate) properly adjusted.
2. The clothing you wear as a rider is all-important to your own safety: the examiner will expect you to wear appropriate clothing and footwear and especially expect to see your helmet in good condition, securely fastened on with a clean unscratched visor. Any bags or containers must be securely fastened to the machine. Before starting you should carry out a full safety check. An Examiner will look for a check of the brakes as you first move away.
3. It is unlikely that anyone will gain a Gold grade pass without a good knowledge of Motorcycle Roadcraft, the police riding manual, which is available to the public at most bookshops. The RoSPA publication "Turn to better driving" will also help. You may not be fully practised in the application of the police system of riding, as the Class One police rider has spent many weeks of full-time training in order to achieve this standard and will usually also be a holder of the Police Class 1 certificate for cars as well. It is appreciated that most members of the public will not have the riding time to reach these standards. However, the examiner will be looking for a satisfactory display of systematic riding and will explain in the de-brief which will follow the test, any points which are causing difficulty, giving verbal and sometimes practical ways of overcoming these difficulties.
4. At the rendezvous the examiner will do his best to put you at ease; you will be given a route to follow, and the examiner will follow you along this route, normally on another motorcycle but on occasion in a motor car. The association does not use observers on foot.

The use of the controls.

1. Your use of the steering will be watched to see that you can manoeuvre the vehicle at high and low speeds.
2. Your use of the clutch should show smoothness, delicacy and timing with the gear change lever.
3. The use of the gearbox will tell the examiner a lot about your ability. When you make the change; matching engine revolutions to road speed; How you use the gearbox when slowing to a stop, will be looked at closely.
4. The use of brakes will play a big part in the examiners final assessment. He will look for smoothness, early braking at the right place in the system; the careful balance of front and rear brakes to avoid pitching and skipping and the tapering of the brake pressure to bring the motorcycle to a smooth stop without any jerkiness.
5. Is the throttle being used correctly? The throttle mechanism is spring loaded to its closed position and the rider must accustom himself to the tension if he is to operate it smoothly. Is the rider displaying acceleration sense as defined and most critical on a motorcycle, varying the amount of power supplied to meet changing road surfaces and weather conditions?
6. Rear observation plays a big part in the system, as it is important that the rider is aware of conditions to the rear as well as to the front to enable the early formulation of a riding plan that deals with every eventuality. The timing of rear observation by using the mirror and shoulder checks will be closely observed as they should be made only when the act of looking away from the front is not in itself a hazard.
7. An examiner will take note of any audible warnings given. The horn should only be sounded when necessary and only in its correct place in the system, when all the other safety features have been implemented. The reasons for giving a horn warning are:-to attract the

attention of others to your presence -when approaching hazards with reduced visibility -In certain circumstances prior to overtaking.

8. Clean mirrors, windscreens and helmet visors are essential, particularly in wet conditions. Using de-mister fluids and polishes to keep a clear view in rain is very important to a motorcyclist. The examiner will comment favourably on any candidate who takes a responsible approach to these problems.

Riding Performance

1. Is your moving off and stopping smooth and safe? Good shoulder checks on all sides are essential prior to moving off. Can the machine be controlled at low speeds without unnecessary wobbles? The careful balance of speed and brakes will be looked for, as will which foot goes down at temporary stops, left or right? The thinking rider will try to avoid "tap dancing" and place the brake foot down, using front brake only for the last two or three feet seeking smoothness and control.
2. The examiner will want to see a knowledge of the system displayed so that your riding actions are always in the correct sequence. Amongst other things he will observe your hand and foot actions for balance and timing and whether your signals are late or early. To do this, the examiner may not be in the position behind you that you may expect. Do not be disconcerted. Treat him purely as following traffic and look for him. He may be checking that rear observations are really to seek information, and not just a habitual or reflex action.
3. Your ability to read situations so that you position correctly for safety, stability and view on the approach to roundabouts and other hazards, as well as on the open road (including lane discipline), will be scrutinised and commented on.
4. Your ability to corner both at lower speeds in town and at higher speeds outside built-up areas is a very important factor. The examiner will look for the principles of cornering to be applied correctly. The natural consequence of doing that will mean the laid down safety factors will be apparent to both rider and examiner.
5. It should always be remembered that signals are the language of the road, being the means by which we warn other road users of our presence and intentions. They should therefore be given clearly and in good time. Arm signals should be given when they're appropriate to reinforce the need any mechanical signal. All these points will be noted by the examiner, who will also be observing the rider's reaction to traffic signs. This of course, should be to consider all features of the system in sequence, and by careful application to give that one ingredient essential to safe riding - time to react.
6. Advanced riders must be capable of controlling their machines at speeds up to the maximum limits. Whilst the use of speed must at all times be safe and legal, the examiner will want to see a brisk ride with good progress being made where possible.
7. Overtaking manoeuvres require the rider to mentally and rapidly ask himself a number of questions and examiners will look for evidence that those questions are being considered. The examiner expects a brisk ride, but nobody who puts themselves or others at risk will pass.

General ability

1. Rider and machine must blend harmoniously at all times. The controls should be adjusted so as to become extensions of the riders limbs. Posture should be natural and comfortable whilst tricks such as lying flat on the tank or hanging off the seat when cornering should be treated as unnecessary for the road rider. Quiet efficiency is the hallmark of the expert.

Your consideration for other road users and your self-discipline will reveal itself, as will your temperament, which, at least when riding, should be calm and relaxed, but decisive.

2. We expect an Association member to respect his vehicle and develop motorcycle sympathy to its fullest extent, so as to benefit the present and future rider.
3. One of the principal differences between the novice and the expert rider is the huge amount which the latter sees and the applies to his riding plan, looking far ahead, covering a field of vision considerably wider than the road itself - and looking always for clues which will give a clue as to what is likely to happen around the next corner.
4. In congested traffic, whilst not able to look so far ahead, he will always still be fitting observations into a riding plan, watching it not just the vehicle ahead but the one in front of the one in front of that and never be forced into an unplanned action or a move out of the correct sequence of the system.
5. Ability to judge distance, relating this to the speed of your own and other vehicles, will be noted, as will the way you link this ability with your braking and acceleration.
6. At the conclusion of the Test you will be asked several questions on the Highway Code and basic motorcycle mechanics. The examiner will certainly want to see evidence that you know the code which is a must for everyone, but will not expect to you to hold a BSC in engineering. However, there are a few things that every rider should know and this is what you are likely to be questioned on. Your motorcycle handbook should provide sufficient data for this part of the test. Be assured, no-one will be trying to catch you out. Know your subject well and you will not go far wrong.
7. It is worth mentioning that through membership of RoSPA local groups you are likely to have many questions answered by the members who have already taken the test.