3 Core driving skills

Core driving skills include those required to operate a vehicle's controls with a degree of finesse.

For example, the ability to change gear in a smooth and timely fashion, to steer accurately and to accelerate with due consideration. Accurate information gathering will be key to implementing these skills effectively.

The overall impression should be of a careful and competent driver who is relaxed and in control.

- **3a Information**
- **3b Position**
- **3c Speed**
- **3d Gear**
- **3e Acceleration**

Competency sheet
Core driving

To be an advanced driver, these are the competencies that you should be able to demonstrate. Consider how confident you feel with each. Read on to learn more about each competency.

	Progress
Information	
Demonstrate early and accurate identification and anticipation of hazards by raising and expanding vision	
Check the appropriate mirrors before altering your position or speed	
Through observation, be aware of how other road users may affect your decisions	
Use all appropriate signals to communicate with other road users	
Position	
Hold the steering wheel in a way that allows for a full and accurate range of movement	
Demonstrate a smooth steering action which allows for easy use of the other controls	
Steer the vehicle accurately to maintain a stable, safe and appropriate course with the capacity to change direction, if required	
Speed	
Demonstrate smooth acceleration, deceleration and accurate use of 'acceleration sense'	
Demonstrate smooth and accurate braking (make use of regenerative braking EV/Hybrid)	
Hold the steering wheel with both hands during braking/accelerating	
Gear	
Demonstrate an ability to select the correct gear on every occasion	
Make all gear changes smoothly, matching engine revolutions where appropriate	
Position the steering for the required course when a gear change needs to be made while negotiating a hazard	
Manual vehicles - select the correct gear straightaway	
Automatic vehicles - use the vehicle's gear selector to best advantage	
Electric vehicles - single-speed transmission	
Acceleration	
Accelerate smoothly when vision and speed limits permit	

Achieved all competencies **Date**

3a Information

As an advanced driver, you must be able to:

Take information

Demonstrate early and accurate anticipation and identification of hazards by raising and expanding vision

- Lift your vision and look in all directions for early signs of potential problems
- On identifying a hazard, plan how to deal with the situation
- Use your mirrors to link information on the hazard to what's happening behind you
- Always check both ways at junctions
- At roundabouts, be aware of danger from the right, and of other traffic entering the roundabout at speed
- Be aware of responding emergency vehicles

Check the appropriate mirrors before altering your position or speed

- Before slowing, check the appropriate mirror
- To move out, check offside mirror
- To move in, check nearside mirror
- Use blind-spot checks, whenever needed
- Remember: the overall aim is to maintain a safe operating space or 'safety bubble'

Use information

Through observation, be aware of how other road users may affect your decisions

- Give extra space to vulnerable road users, such as pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists and horse riders
- Always be prepared to share or give up space for safety
- Remember: planning for the worst scenario can help you deal with it safely

Give information

Use all appropriate signals to communicate with other road users

- Be aware that vehicle position assists communication
- Give signals in a timely fashion to communicate intentions
- Use indicators, brake lights and even arm signals if required
- Look at the other drivers, not just at the vehicles, to communicate
- Only use headlamps or horn to alert another road user to your presence – never as a rebuke

3b Position

As an advanced driver, you must be able to:

Hold the steering wheel in a way that allows for a full and accurate range of movement

- Maintain a light grip, ready to exert a tighter grip if required
- Keep arms slightly bent to prevent accidental movement of the steering wheel

Demonstrate a smooth steering action which allows for easy use of the other controls

- Use a steering method that is comfortable and allows for a full range of movement with little physical effort
- Remember: Pull-Push steering enables safe and efficient use of other controls
- Remember: fixed, grip steering is an option for smaller movements of the wheel as long as your arms don't cross
- Be aware that a comfortable seating position is important for accurate steering

Steer the vehicle accurately to maintain a stable, safe and appropriate course with the capacity to change direction if required

- Be aware that the type of vehicle, any power assistance and the mechanical set-up may influence your steering method

Remember:
- A straight course should require little or no steering input
- Positive inputs will be required to substantially alter your position or turn your vehicle
- Accurate and consistent outcomes are the most important factor

Additional points on positioning for specific hazards such as bends and roundabouts can be found in the relevant sections of this logbook

3c Speed

Acceleration sense is the ability to vary vehicle speed in response to changing road and traffic conditions by accurate use of the accelerator, so that you use the brakes less or not at all. It requires active OAP to be implemented correctly

As an advanced driver, you must be able to:

Demonstrate smooth deceleration and accurate use of 'acceleration sense'

- Remember: a vehicle begins to slow as soon as the accelerator is released. If this is done in a controlled fashion, it will help to maintain stability. In lower gears, the effect is more noticeable; similarly, regenerative braking systems in hybrid vehicles will further increase the retarding effect
- In addition to using acceleration sense, be aware that your brake lights may be needed to communicate in certain circumstances

Demonstrate smooth and accurate progressive braking (make use of regenerative braking EV/Hybrid)
- Use gentle pressure on the pedal to settle the vehicle onto its front suspension
- Use firmer braking to lose speed, as required
- Give a gentle release of pressure to allow the suspension to resettle
- Adjust regenerative braking where appropriate; manage transition between regeneration and mechanical braking system
- Although described in three stages, take care to ensure a smooth, progressive and seamless transition

Hold the steering wheel with both hands during braking/accelerating
- Hold the wheel with two hands while accelerating or braking to retain stability; this will help prevent accidental changes in course
- Note: in the later stages, at very slow speed, it is acceptable to release the wheel to engage a suitable gear, e.g. 'a rolling first gear'

3d Gear

As an advanced driver, you must be able to:

Demonstrate an ability to select the correct gear on every occasion

- Make smooth and accurate gear changes at all times

Make all gear changes smoothly, matching engine revolutions where appropriate

- Employ a rev on the down change or sustained accelerator pressure to match engine revs to road speed, if necessary, to achieve a smooth gear change
- Recognise when this isn't required

> For example: when selecting a rolling first gear or when road speed is very low

- Understand when a planned overlap is appropriate
- Remember: for simple junctions at slow speeds, it will be safe to overlap brakes and gears. Finish the gear change and engage the clutch before steering

Position the steering for the required course when a gear change needs to be made in a hazard

> For example: select a gear with the steering set for the required course on a roundabout; the steering position should be held constant while the gear is selected

Manual vehicles

Select the correct gear straightaway

- Know the approximate performance of your vehicle in each gear
- Preferably, select any gear without engaging an intermediate gear (block changing). Remember: this is an option, rather than an ongoing requirement. In certain high-compression modern vehicles, the manufacturer may recommend an intermediate gear to prevent the vehicle stalling. Be guided by your vehicle handbook

Automatic vehicles

Know how to use an automatic gearbox

- Be aware of how to correctly select gears using either paddles or gear selector
- Be aware of additional functions and modes
- Be able to describe circumstances in which a manual selection of a gear may assist
- Be able to operate the gearbox correctly to maintain stop/start function. Remember: the vehicle handbook will detail whether neutral or park needs to be selected when stationary for any period of time
- Be aware of additional driver selectable modes that may affect the performance of the vehicle, not necessarily only the gearbox

Electric vehicles

Single-speed transmission

- Remember: generally, electric vehicles only have one forward gear
- Secondary use of this phase in the system is to stabilise the vehicle
- Consideration of a gear that is not required will fulfil this need

3e Acceleration

As an advanced driver, you must be able to:

Accelerate smoothly when vision and speed limits permit

- Apply the correct degree of acceleration to leave the hazard safely
- Remember: acceleration should be brisk and business like, with due regard to speed limits, weather and traffic conditions
- Allow sufficient time to gather information for the next hazard requiring IPSGA application
- Consider the requirements for eco driving. Think: is it necessary to gain speed quickly? Is a higher gear more appropriate?