

‘Driving school monitoring’

Dear driving school owners,
dear driving instructors,

Your challenging role involves providing your learner drivers with the skills they need to become safe, responsible and environmentally conscious road users. The work you do makes an important contribution towards increasing the safety of our roads. With this in mind, however, there are various requirements that you are expected to fulfil with regard to how your driving school is organised and how you implement your driving instruction. This concerns, for example, compliance with record-keeping obligations and professional quality criteria pursuant to annex 2 FahrIAusbV (the German regulations concerning the training of driving instructors).¹

Like all other forms of instruction and training, driving instruction often differs in how it is implemented. Given the relevance of driving instruction for road safety, however, a certain minimum quality needs to be ensured with regard to how the company is managed and how the instruction is organised. Ensuring that these quality standards are upheld is the task of the legally stipulated ‘driving school monitoring’ (section 51 of the German Driving Instructors Act (FahrIG)²).

According to national law, the public authority responsible for this monitoring in the federal state of Berlin is the State Office for Civil and Regulatory Affairs (LABO). The LABO can stipulate monitoring and – depending on the findings of this monitoring – in some cases also implement follow-up measures, where these are deemed necessary, such as imposing fines (section 56 FahrIG), issuing orders for quality assurance (section 16 FahrIGDV³) or withdrawing licences (sections 14 and 34 FahrIG). To assess quality in driving schools, the LABO uses the services of an appropriate body pursuant to section 51(1), second sentence, FahrIG: the Institute for Applied Research on Childhood, Youth and the Family at the University of Potsdam (IFK). The procedures for monitoring are specified by the Senate Department for Urban Mobility, Transport, Climate Action and the Environment and are outlined in the following link:

https://www.berlin.de/labo/_assets/pqfue-anschreibenlabo.pdf

In the monitoring performed by the state of Berlin, the assessment of instruction quality uses the observational tools of ‘driving school monitoring (teaching skills)’. The quality criteria that this covers correspond to annex 2 FahrIAusbV and are explained in the following overview.

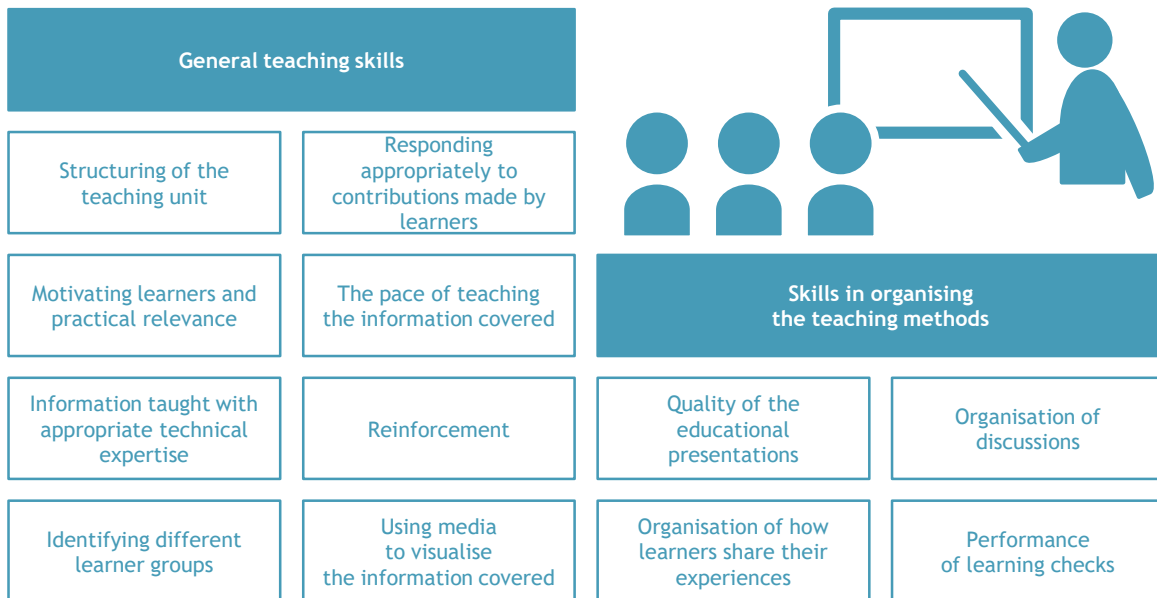
¹ German Driving Instructor Training Ordinance of 2 January 2018 (Federal Law Gazette I p. 2, 15), last amended by Article 4 of the ordinance of 18 March 2022 (FLG I p. 498)

² Driving Instructors Act of 30 June 2017 (Federal Law Gazette I p. 2162; 3784), last amended by Article 122 of the act of 10 August 2021 (FLG I p. 3436)

³ Implementing Provision for Driving Instructors Act (FahrIGDV) of 2 January 2018 (Federal Law Gazette I p. 2), last amended by Article 3 of the ordinance of 18 March 2022 (FLG I p. 498)

Twelve quality criteria for

theory classes



Structuring of the teaching unit

- ▶ Instructors should help learners to recognise links between different learning topics and to make connections, so that they can build knowledge in a structured way. To support this, each lesson should begin with an overview being given of the content and the objectives of the lesson. At the end of the lesson, a summary of the content should be provided, along with an assessment of the outcome of the lesson in terms of objectives mentioned at the beginning. Furthermore, some outlook should be provided in terms of the subsequent lessons and the practical driving instruction.

Motivating learners and practical relevance

- ▶ For many learners, the theory class at the driving school often follows a stressful day at school or work, so the instructor needs to make a special effort to make the lesson interesting (e.g. by enabling the learners to have a 'eureka' moment or to make discoveries). Accordingly, the theory class should make reference to practical examples as often as possible and a variety of teaching methods should be used. In addition, the instructors should be open and friendly in their interactions with the learners.

Information taught with appropriate technical expertise

- ▶ In addition to fully understanding what they are teaching, instructors need to be able to communicate information comprehensibly, using appropriate terms. This may involve avoiding excessively technical vocabulary in favour of other wording (e.g. referring to a 'stop sign' rather than saying 'Stop. Give way.'). Decisions in this regard should be made on the basis of the learning requirements of the learners and the use of terminology in the driving licence theory test and in the media used for teaching. General teaching principles should also be taken into account (e.g. 'from simple to complex').

Identifying different learner groups

- ▶ The instructor's ability to identify different learner groups refers to their skills in addressing the different levels of experience and knowledge and the different interests of the learners. For example, the strengths of the learners can be integrated into the lesson in useful ways by assigning individual tasks or by incorporating some work in small groups.

Responding appropriately to contributions made by learners

- ▶ Contributions made by learners should be taken seriously by the instructors and picked up on in the further course of the lesson and, where appropriate, supported by additional content. Improving or correcting contributions made by learners helps to expand on and reinforce the material being taught. Contributions should be discussed sensitively by the instructor, and learners should not be belittled or shamed.

The pace of teaching the information covered

- ▶ The pace of the lesson should neither overwhelm nor underchallenge the learners. Accordingly, the content and the scheduling need to be well coordinated. In this context, the instructor should always speak clearly, in an appropriate way for the target group. Furthermore, a reasonable portion of the available teaching time should be utilised for teaching (e.g. time spent on organisational topics or topics not related to the lesson should be kept to a minimum).

Reinforcement

- ▶ Repeating information helps learners to make connections to their existing knowledge structures, which helps them to retain the information that is taught. Instructors should therefore ensure that key learning topics are repeated (by the instructor or by the learners), increasing learners' engagement with them. Learners should also be given information on what resources can be used for independent learning outside of the theory class.

Using media to visualise the information covered

- ▶ Using media to assist in the teaching of information (e.g. presentations and films) encourages learners to provide evaluations and interpretations, which facilitates knowledge building. Making appropriate use of media in the classroom includes ensuring that the media content relates to the topics covered. The educational function of media may take different forms – in most cases, however, it should depict, clarify and explain in more detail the topics covered by the lesson. Media use that contradicts or detracts from the subject matter of the lesson should be avoided.

Quality of the educational presentations

- ▶ As they allow knowledge to be shared in a compact way, presentations are highly suitable for the time frame of driving instruction. If presentations are too lengthy, however, learners can struggle to remain attentive. A high-quality presentation should begin with a summary of the main points that the presentation will cover. Presentations should be made appealing (e.g. by using examples, anecdotes and images). Furthermore, the instructor should present the information in an engaging way, with dynamic intonation, facial expressions and body language. At the end of the presentation, a summary should be given of the key points.

Organisation of how learners share their experiences

- ▶ Asking learners to share their experiences encourages them to reflect on their experiences in detail and link them to what they have learnt. This results in more in-depth learning and helps learners to develop a network of knowledge. Instructors should therefore explicitly encourage learners to share their own experiences in the course of the lesson (for example by asking, 'Looking back, what do you think of ...'). The instructor should make use of the experiences shared by learners in the further course of the lesson (e.g. by linking it to the information being taught).

Organisation of discussions

- ▶ Instructors should allow sufficient time in their lessons for discussions and expressly encourage learners to share their opinions (e.g. by presenting a controversial theory). Discussions can be used to engage with learnt content critically, which can help to expand on and reinforce the material being taught. The instructor should moderate discussions to keep them targeted and on-topic and provide a summary of the outcome. Furthermore, individual contributions and the outcomes of discussions should be incorporated into the further course of the lesson (e.g. by linking them to the topics being taught).

Performance of learning checks

- ▶ Learning checks support the learning process, provide information on learning progress and can have a motivating effect. Tests must only cover content that has actually been taught, however. The teaching objectives stated by the instructor at the start of the lesson should therefore serve as a reference. To avoid causing unnecessary anxiety, instructors should announce learning checks in advance and let learners know what topics will be covered so that they can prepare accordingly. Learning checks may be written or oral. They should be evaluated promptly and corrected by the instructor or the learners.

Seven quality criteria for

practical driving instruction

Structuring practice lessons

Gearing lessons towards the learner's skill level

Quality of the methods used

Quality of verbal instructions

Technical correctness of teaching content and basing lessons on the instructor's training schedule



Creating a good instruction atmosphere

Responding appropriately to driving errors

Structuring practice lessons

- ▶ Each driving lesson should begin with an overview being given of the content and the objectives of the lesson. Reference should also be made to relevant topics from previous driving lessons and theory classes. At the end of the lesson, a summary of the content should be provided, along with an assessment of the outcome of the lesson in terms of objectives mentioned at the start. The instructor should also ask the learner how satisfied they are with the instruction atmosphere and provide an outlook of the following driving lessons.

Gearing lessons towards the learner's skill level

- ▶ Instructors must base their planning and implementation of driving lessons on the skill level of the learner (e.g. their level of knowledge and existing driving skills). Instructors must therefore choose the instruction route as a whole and all locations for key driving tasks (e.g. reversing) and other driving tasks (e.g. changing lanes) in a way that does not systematically overwhelm or underchallenge the learner, and instead enables additional skills to be developed incrementally. Skills should also be taught in an appropriate sequence (e.g. 'from simple to complex'). Ultimately, the intensity of instruction – i.e. the number and scope of the instructions given – should also be adjusted to suit the learner's level of skill and knowledge.

Quality of the methods used

- ▶ Driving instructors need to have an extensive repertoire of methods at their disposal that they fully understand and that they are able to use appropriately given specific learning objectives, teaching content and learner requirements. A variety of methods should be used when instructing learners in real traffic. It is often not sufficient to explain things verbally: skills often also need to be explained with sketches or demonstrated by being performed by the instructor. Furthermore, the instructor should comment on the learner's driving, guide them as appropriate and provide information to help them acquire further skills. Ultimately, the instructor should also encourage the learner to assess their own skills in relation to specific situations.

Quality of verbal instructions

- ▶ Talking at an appropriate speed and volume, communicating at a level that is appropriate for the learner and wording instructions clearly helps the learner to concentrate on the key instruction content. The instructor must issue instructions in good time. This means that the instructor must always communicate instructions in a way that gives inexperienced learners sufficient time to respond appropriately.

Technical correctness of teaching content and basing lessons on the instructor's training schedule

- ▶ Information communicated to the learner must be technically correct. Reference should also be made to relevant content from the theory class (e.g. in relation to traffic observation and the physics of driving). Understanding these interconnections not only helps to reinforce the teaching content but also helps the learner to develop a coherent and well-structured network of knowledge and physical skill.

Creating a good instruction atmosphere

- ▶ The instructor's behaviour should be geared towards the learner and be based on friendliness and patience in order to create a pleasant instruction atmosphere. Furthermore, the instructor should make positive mention of the learner's specific skills and learning progress. While good achievements should be rewarded with praise, mistakes should be responded to in a way that encourages the learner. Ultimately, the instructor should recognise what situations cause anxiety for the learner – this is essential in order to reassure the learner and help them to master new situations successfully.

Responding appropriately to driving errors

- ▶ The instructor should respond to the learner's driving errors with appropriate verbal utterances, facial expressions, body language and timing. This means that they should intervene in the learner's driving and comment on it as appropriate for the type and the severity of the driving error. Furthermore, the instructor should show the learner ways to avoid errors in future. The instructor should enable the learner to gain insights and to make corrections independently. This can be referred to as the principle of 'measured help': the instructor should provide assistance to the learner, but only where absolutely necessary. This allows the learner to ascribe at least some of their success in learning to their own efforts and skills, giving them the confidence to retain the skills they have learnt.