

The National Standard for cycle training - level three

The National Standard for cycle training was reviewed and updated in 2012. This introduction sets the revised National Standard into context and presents the primary principles for the delivery of Bikeability cycle training. After this introduction, the level three outcomes are presented.

The purpose of the National Standard

The primary purpose of the National Standard is to get more people cycling, more often and with less risk. It helps break down some of the biggest barriers to cycling, opening up opportunities for people to get on their bikes and enabling cycling to become a normal everyday activity.

The National Standard for cycling is designed to encourage and empower people of all ages to make independent cycle journeys in a wide range of road conditions. Launched in 2005, it was developed by over 20 organisations and is maintained by the Department for Transport (DfT). There are three levels and a series of progressive outcomes within each level which can be used in training to take the complete beginner all the way to being able to ride on any road where cycling is permitted.

In 2012, following consultation with stakeholders, the National Standard was revised and re-launched alongside a new quality assurance framework.

The National Standard is promoted through Bikeability in England. Bikeability involves organisations registering with the DfT to become schemes that deliver National Standard training using registered NSI/NSIAs trained and assessed by NSITs and registered with Instructor Training Organisations recognised by the DfT. Only registered schemes and instructors are permitted to award Bikeability materials and awards. Scheme registration, instructor training and on-going internal and external monitoring, are part of a quality assurance framework designed to ensure good practice cycle training is delivered to the National Standard.

What is the National Standard?

The National Standard comprises a set of outcomes which competent and confident cyclists should be able to demonstrate, accompanied by detailed guidance for training providers on the rationale for each outcome and how it should be demonstrated and assessed. National Standard outcomes are presented progressively at three levels:

Level 1 involves mastery and control of the bicycle in off-road settings and prepares the trainees for on-road cycling

Level 2 involves cycling on quieter roads and simple junctions and covers effective road positioning, communication with other road users and rights of way

Level 3 involves cycling on busier roads and more complex junctions, including hazard awareness and risk management on all roads where cycling is permitted.

Additional sets of outcomes have also been developed for National Standard Instructors and Assistant Instructors (NSI/NSAIs) and National Standard Instructor Trainers (NSITs).

What is Bikeability?

The National Standard is promoted through Bikeability in England and Scotland. Bikeability was launched in 2007 and refers to schemes registered with the DfT delivering National Standard training using NSI/NSIAs trained and assessed by NSITs and registered with Instructor Training Organisations accredited by the DfT. Only registered schemes and instructors are permitted to award Bikeability materials and awards. Scheme registration,

instructor training and on-going internal and external monitoring, are part of a quality assurance framework designed to ensure good practice cycle training is delivered to the National Standard.

Good practice principles for training to the National Standard

In order to reach the aim of getting more people cycling, more often with less risk, the delivery of all training to the National Standard should adhere to the following principles, and be:

Realistic

Training at Levels 2 and 3 must be delivered in real road environments where trainees encounter other road users and use the variety of local road infrastructure available. In these environments, they are able to demonstrate skills of observation and communication with other people, and become confident in sharing space with other road users.

Training can take place without needing specialised equipment or clothing as this encourages cycling as a normal activity.

Empowering

Training must empower trainees to make independent decisions in order to build their competence and confidence in a wide range of cycling environments.

Positive

Instructors should make the training a positive experience, helping make cycling practical and possible; the aim is to empower trainees to cycle to their full potential.

Progressive

Training must allow trainees to progress to more challenging environments and help them find practical techniques to master these.

Trainee led

Training must address individual trainees' development needs and aspirations, starting with a baseline assessment of their current areas of strength and priority areas for development against the National Standard.

Outcome orientated

The National Standard is outcome-orientated. That means the trainees are assessed on their achievement of the set outcomes. The amount of time required to achieve these outcomes may vary from person to person.

Continuous assessment

Training should progress through continual ongoing observation of the trainee outcomes using ongoing feedback to input into the development of the trainees riding. Trainees should not be expected to undergo a test at the end of training as instructors would have assessed their riding skills continuously.

The National Standard for cycle training is broken down into a series of outcomes:

- i) Trainee Level 1 outcomes
- ii) Trainee Level 2 outcomes
- iii) Trainee level 3 outcomes
- iv) Instructor outcomes
- v) Assistant instructor outcomes
- vi) Instructor Trainer outcomes

National Standard for Cycle Training 2012

Level 3 outcomes

Outcome	Observed Demonstration	Reasoning
1 All Level 2 manoeuvres	1.1 All compulsory Level 2 outcomes	They should demonstrate Level 2 on roads appropriate to Level 2 by riding a circuit that includes all the relevant manoeuvres, accompanied by their instructor.
2 Preparing for a journey	<p>2.1 The trainee should demonstrate an awareness of how to prepare for a cycling journey. This may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) route planning using maps or electronic journey planners ii) an awareness of how weather conditions can affect their cycling and choice of clothing/equipment iii) an awareness of options for carrying luggage safely when cycling iv) an understanding of how to carry a child safely on a bike v) equipment and techniques for cycling at night. 	<p>Cyclists may want to take the quickest as well as the safest route to their destination. If there are particular junctions or road features that they would prefer not to use, trainees can plan their route to avoid these using maps or electronic journey planners. However, a key part of Level 3 training is to stretch the trainee's ability, so where the instructor feels the trainee is capable of dealing with difficult junctions safely they should not unnecessarily avoid these.</p> <p>It is important that both the instructor and trainee are prepared for their cycle trip in the prevailing and forecast conditions. This may involve carrying luggage or additional clothing, locks or accessories. It is also important to make the trainee aware that some conditions raise the risk of injuring themselves, such as snow and ice.</p> <p>Lights must be used at night and reflective clothing is recommended, though good positioning remains an important way of making themselves visible when cycling at night. In poor visibility, all movements should be made more cautiously and the trainee should allow greater time for other road users to see them and understand their intentions.</p>

Outcome	Observed Demonstration	Reasoning
3 Understanding advanced road positioning	3.1 The trainee must demonstrate confident use of the primary position in a variety of traffic environments. 3.2 They must also demonstrate an understanding of when other positions in the road may be more suitable and be able to explain why.	<p>The primary position is the default position for negotiating Level 3 junctions but there are some circumstances when a different position may be taken:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A trainee waiting in a traffic queue may position themselves to the right of the lane to be visible in the wing mirrors of queuing vehicles, particularly when queuing behind HGVs. 2. When waiting behind or in front of large vehicles such as HGVs, trainees must not wait or cycle too close. 3. At junctions where there are many cyclists present, trainees should find a safe place to wait in situations where they are unable to position themselves in their preferred position (e.g. when the cycle box is full). This should be a position where they are visible to other drivers – it may be in the primary position within the traffic queue or between lanes.

Outcome	Observed Demonstration	Reasoning
4 Passing queuing traffic	<p>4.1 Upon encountering queuing traffic, the trainee may pass it (on the right or left) or may choose to wait in the queue.</p> <p>4.2 Trainees who choose to pass queuing traffic must do so with care and make frequent observations.</p> <p>4.3 If traffic speed changes while they are passing, trainees will need to check for a gap that will enable them to move into the stream of traffic in order to negotiate junctions safely. This may require them to move out across more than one lane of traffic.</p> <p>4.4 Trainees who choose to wait in the queue should take the primary position in the centre of the lane.</p> <p>4.5 Upon completing the manoeuvre, trainees must be able to explain the reason for their choice, identify any hazards they may have encountered and explain how they dealt with them.</p> <p>4.6 Where there is a left turn trainees must never pass to the left of a long vehicle, bus/lorry at the head of a junction. (See outcome 6 understanding driver blind spots.)</p>	<p>Passing queuing traffic gives the cyclist a great advantage in busy urban conditions but must be carried out carefully. The choice of whether to pass or wait rests with the trainee who must judge if there is sufficient space and time to do so safely. Their choice should also be informed by whether they are turning left or right or going straight on.</p> <p>Whichever option the trainee chooses, they should communicate with drivers in the queue to make them aware of their presence and their intended manoeuvre.</p> <p>Trainees should be able to demonstrate patience and a willingness to wait if passing the queue does not help their journey.</p> <p>Trainees should be able to change their riding strategy if the situation in the queue changes (e.g. the queue starts to move or a vehicle starts to signal).</p> <p>Trainees who choose to pass queuing traffic should be encouraged to pass on the right where they are more visible to drivers and other road users. All round observation and awareness is essential as other vehicles may move unexpectedly or be hidden from view.</p> <p>If passing a queue, trainees must make careful observations and be prepared to stop for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • traffic in the queue that may turn across them • nearside doors opening in queuing cars so that passengers can get out • oncoming traffic that drivers in the queue allow to turn right through a gap in the queue • vehicles from the left pulling out of side roads or driveways etc. into their path.

Outcome	Observed Demonstration	Reasoning
5 Hazard perception and strategy to deal with hazards	5.1 Trainees must understand that a safe strategy is founded on good observation and planning, confident clear road positioning and good communication with other road users. 5.2 They should demonstrate from their observations, positioning and signalling that they are confident and in control of their cycling. 5.3 If stopped and questioned they should be able to name hazards ahead and around them and explain how they would deal with these.	<p>A safe cycling strategy, which will include hazard perception, must be acquired by a cyclist if they are to complete Level 3 of the National Standard. This can be assessed watching practical cycling and careful questioning of the cyclist.</p> <p>An example, breaking the system into three parts, used by one cyclist training provider, is as follows:</p> <p>Where am I going? - Look ahead and identify the course needed to avoid hazards and make manoeuvres.</p> <p>What do I need to know? - Observe all around for other road users (including pedestrians) who may cause obstruction in the course selected or who need warning of intentions (a signal).</p> <p>What do I need to do? - This will depend on the information gathered in the previous part. It may mean stop, signal, before taking up the position required and/or completion of the manoeuvre. Completing a manoeuvre as a pedestrian is a valid choice.</p>

Outcome	Observed Demonstration	Reasoning
<p>6 Understanding driver blind spots, particularly for large vehicles</p>	<p>6.1 The trainee must demonstrate an ability to avoid cycling or waiting in driver blind spots, particularly the blind spots of drivers of large vehicles.</p> <p>6.2 They must demonstrate an understanding of what a blind spot is, identify vehicles for which blind spots are a particular problem (large vehicles such as Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) and buses) and the danger that cycling in a driver's blind spot poses.</p> <p>6.3 To avoid cycling or waiting in a driver's blind spot at a junction, the trainee may choose to wait behind or overtake but should only overtake on the right, not on the left.</p> <p>6.4 When waiting behind a large vehicle or overtaking a large vehicle, trainees should position themselves where the driver can see them.</p> <p>6.5 Trainees must never cycle up the left side of a large vehicle stopped at a junction.</p>	<p>This may be combined with the passing queuing traffic outcome, or as a separate demonstration. Cycling in the blind spot of a driver of a large vehicle is extremely hazardous and should always be avoided. Particular hazards are when large vehicles turn left or when cyclists stop too close to the front of a stopped large vehicle.</p> <p>The 'stay safe, stay back' advice applies to cyclists when cycling near to a moving large vehicle or approaching a stationary one on the road, at junctions, traffic lights or in slow moving traffic.</p> <p>Whether they choose to overtake a large vehicle or wait behind, trainees should look into the driver's mirror and seek to make eye contact so that the driver is aware of the trainee and the trainee's intention. Trainees who choose to overtake a large vehicle should look over their shoulder and seek to make eye contact with the driver once they are past.</p>

Outcome	Observed Demonstration	Reasoning
7 Reacting to hazardous road surfaces	7.1 Trainees must be able to identify potentially hazardous surfaces and make appropriate responses. 7.2 On encountering a potentially hazardous surface, the trainee may choose to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) cycle over the hazardous surface ii) avoid the hazardous surface 7.3 The trainee should be encouraged to explain the reason for their choice and any other actions they take.	Surfaces that are particularly hazardous to cyclists include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slippery surfaces (ice, water, oil, wet leaves etc.) • Roads with potholes • Uneven surfaces (such as cobbles) • Metal surfaces (grids, manhole covers) • Poorly maintained surfaces (e.g. unswept cycle lanes) • Tram lines • Level crossings • Speed humps and cushions Trainees should spot the hazardous surface early and decide their course of action well in advance. If trainees encounter a slippery surface, they should reduce their speed and take extra care turning or braking. They should not brake or steer suddenly. Trainees who choose to cycle over a hazardous surface should steer as straight as possible and meet the defect square-on, take their weight off the saddle (to reduce discomfort) and release the brakes. When crossing a tramline, trainees must do so at as close to a 90 degree angle as possible.

The following outcomes are not compulsory.		
Outcome	Observed Demonstration	Reasoning
8 How to use roundabouts	<p>8.1 As the trainee approaches the roundabout they must check behind and move into the primary position when safe to do so, signalling if necessary.</p> <p>8.2 They should stop at the give way line, if it is necessary to give way to traffic on the roundabout.</p> <p>8.3 They should carry out a final check behind before setting off. They should maintain the primary position while on the roundabout.</p> <p>8.4 Before exiting the roundabout, they must check to the left and behind and signal left, if necessary.</p>	<p>The primary position should be used on roundabouts as it makes the trainee more visible and prevents vehicles from overtaking.</p> <p>Trainees will therefore use the roundabout in the same way that any other vehicles would and when using a lane they have chosen should take up the primary position. Observing how cars use the roundabout can help them understand this. This position should be maintained throughout the manoeuvre.</p> <p>Trainees need to identify the hazard spots at all points during the manoeuvre. They should make eye contact with drivers who need to be aware of them and/or signal clearly.</p>
9 How to use junctions controlled by traffic lights	<p>9.1 When using a junction with traffic lights trainees should always take up a position in the centre of the lane that is appropriate for the manoeuvre they wish to carry out whether or not the traffic is flowing or stationary as they approach the lights. They must carry out observations and signalling as necessary in the same manner that they would for an ordinary junction.</p> <p>9.2 Where the lights change to red they should stop in the appropriate position (see outcome 3), unless it is safe to move to the head of the queuing traffic (see outcome 4).</p> <p>9.3 If they are turning left at the junction they must carry out a left shoulder final check for undertaking traffic before completing their turn.</p> <p>9.4 When cycling across the junction to complete the manoeuvre, trainees must continue to carry out observations as appropriate for traffic that might not stop at the red light and cross their path.</p>	<p>To ensure they are visible to other road users, trainees should use traffic lights in the same way that any other vehicles would and when using a lane they have chosen should take up position in the middle of it, as a car would. This position should be maintained throughout the manoeuvre.</p> <p>If present in the training area, trainees should also be observed using toucan crossings and/or cycle-only traffic lights.</p>

<p>10 How to use multi-lane roads</p>	<p>10.1 Where the trainee can match the speed of the traffic flow they should take the lane that will facilitate the manoeuvre they intend to carry out.</p> <p>10.2 Where there is a long length of multi-lane carriageway before a turning that the trainee wishes to take and the traffic speed is faster, they can choose to stay in the left hand lane until nearing the point where lane selection is necessary and then move across making appropriate observations and signals (see other outcomes for appropriate methods).</p> <p>10.3 When turning into a multi-lane road the same will apply. If they can match the speed of the traffic then they should take the lane appropriate to the manoeuvre they intend to carry out ahead. If not, they should use the left hand lane until they need to move across.</p>	<p>Lane discipline exists on many urban roads and on many of these it is usually best for the cyclist to take the lane and cycle with the traffic. However, where speed limits are above 30 mph they will be unlikely to feel safe in doing so and they may therefore take the secondary or other appropriate position.</p> <p>Where frequent changes of lane in fast moving traffic would be required to undertake a journey on a chosen route this might be a case where an alternative, quieter route might be chosen.</p>
---------------------------------------	---	---

<p>11 How to use both on and off road cycle infrastructure</p>	<p>11.1 The trainee must demonstrate good observation, signalling and clear, confident positioning when cycling in areas with on and off road cycle facilities.</p> <p>11.2 Trainees must demonstrate how to use advance stop lines (ASLs), cycle boxes and knowledge of how they might help their journey.</p>	<p>In the UK no cycle facilities are compulsory for cyclists to use. Therefore the choice over whether to use any facilities provided should be on the basis of whether or not they will give the cyclist any advantage in terms of safety and/or access. This will be for the individual cyclist to decide. Staying in the normal flow of traffic rather than use a cycle facility is therefore a valid choice.</p> <p>Cycle facilities are of varying quality. The choice of whether to use facilities should always lie with the cyclist. If they feel confident and safe using a facility then they should use it as appropriate. Trainees should, however, be aware that some drivers may not know that cycle lanes are optional for cyclists. In this case, the trainee should take extra caution when moving to a position outside the cycle lane that drivers may not expect them to take.</p> <p>Confident and competent cyclists should always be able to set off more quickly than motorists. This is not only because they can accelerate more quickly over the first 20-30 metres but because they can also see more and therefore be better prepared for setting off. The provision of advance stop lines (ASLs) with cycle boxes is a recognition of this and also the fact that the cyclist is safer when they can set off ahead of other traffic rather than alongside it. An ASL makes it easier for the cyclist to take the lane they have chosen.</p> <p>The downside of some ASL designs is that the lights may change as the cyclist filters up on the left and they may be trapped there and unable to move across safely into the lane from which they want to exit the junction. In this case cyclists may feel forced to move across lanes of traffic moving at different speeds and expose themselves to additional risk. If the cyclist is uncomfortable with using the ASL and its filter lane they should simply carry out the manoeuvre as if the ASL was not there.</p>
--	---	---

<p>12 Dealing with vehicles that pull in and stop front of you</p>	<p>12.1 Trainees must demonstrate an ability to deal with vehicles that may stop in front of them such as buses, taxis and delivery vehicles.</p> <p>12.2 Trainees must be able to decide whether to overtake the vehicle once it has stopped in front of them and, if appropriate, demonstrate overtaking it safely.</p> <p>12.3 Trainees should allow extra room when passing and ensure that they have sufficient time and space to overtake, particularly when passing long vehicles.</p> <p>12.4 If questioned, the trainee should be able to explain the reason for their choice of manoeuvre.</p>	<p>Cyclists are likely to encounter vehicles that stop or turn in front of them on most urban journeys and in most cases, will be required to overtake such vehicles.</p> <p>The technique for safely overtaking is the same as the Level 2 outcome 7 – ‘pass parked or slower moving vehicles’, but with the additional skills of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identifying when a vehicle is likely to stop (e.g. buses approaching bus stops, taxis approaching ranks) • reacting to vehicles which stop suddenly • overtaking vehicles which may start to move off shortly before or while the trainee is overtaking. • good decision-making skills when choosing whether or not to overtake, bearing in mind that the vehicle may move off at any moment. <p>Vehicles that stop or turn suddenly in front of cyclists include (but are not limited to) taxis / private hire vehicles, buses and delivery vehicles.</p> <p>Trainees do not need to give way to vehicles trying to pull out but must take extra care when passing such vehicles and should seek to ensure that the driver has seen them. However, trainees should give priority to buses when they signal to pull away from stops, if they can do so safely.</p> <p>If a vehicle starts to move during the overtaking manoeuvre, the trainee may choose to slip back behind the vehicle if it is the safest thing to do.</p>
--	--	---

<p>13 Sharing the road with other cyclists</p>	<p>13.1 Trainees must demonstrate effective communication and positioning techniques when cycling in areas where other cyclists are present.</p> <p>13.2 This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Awareness of other cyclists passing inside them - this is demonstrated by making appropriate observations over the left shoulder. ii) An ability to overtake a cyclist and awareness of when it is safe to overtake and when they should wait. iii) Taking an appropriate position at junctions where the ASL reservoir (cycle box) is congested with other cyclists. This may be in the primary position within the traffic queue, in the filter lane, or on the line between lanes. 	<p>When overtaking a cyclist, trainees should use the same technique as for the Level 2 outcome 'passing parked cars or slow-moving vehicles'.</p> <p>When overtaking a cyclist using a cycle lane, the trainee must combine the techniques for the Level 2 outcome 'passing parked cars or slow-moving vehicles' with the Level 3 technique 'how to use multi-lane roads'. Trainees should be aware that overtaking a cyclist in a cycle lane is effectively the same as changing traffic lanes. They should be aware that following drivers may not expect a cyclist to leave the cycle lane and make appropriate observations to ensure following drivers have understood their intention to overtake.</p> <p>When using the primary position at junctions in areas where other cyclists are present, trainees should be aware of other cyclists using the secondary position. They should look over their left shoulder frequently.</p>
<p>14 Cycling on roads with a speed limit above 30 mph</p>	<p>14.1 The trainee should demonstrate that they allow more time before manoeuvring and that they can judge the speed and distance of vehicles around them. They should be able to explain the reasoning for the decisions that they make.</p>	<p>On roads with higher speed limits, trainees should be aware that drivers have less time to react and stopping distances are greater.</p> <p>Whilst the principles of positioning remain the same on faster roads cyclists may opt to take the secondary position more often. When using the primary position, trainees should take greater care to ensure that drivers have enough time and space to see them. When manoeuvring, trainees should signal earlier (where necessary), move out earlier and allow more time to complete the manoeuvre.</p>

<p>15 Cycling in bus lanes</p>	<p>15.1 Trainees must be able to interpret bus lane signage and understand how it affects their journey.</p> <p>15.2 When cycling in a bus lane, trainees should take the centre of the lane unless it is safe to let vehicles pass. Trainees should demonstrate an ability to decide when to allow a vehicle to pass them when cycling in a bus lane.</p>	<p>Cyclists are permitted to use most bus lanes but there are some which do not permit cyclists. Bus lanes may operate at different times of the day and may also be shared with taxis and motorcycles.</p> <p>As with cycle lanes, the trainee should not allow the presence of a bus lane to influence their positioning.</p> <p>Buses should normally overtake a cyclist by straddling the lane line but this may not always be possible. Trainees should not allow a bus to pass them if they feel there is insufficient room to do so.</p> <p>Trainees should take particular care where bus lanes cross side roads, in case drivers cut across them to turn left. Trainees should also be aware of illegal use of bus lanes by unauthorised vehicles trying to jump a queue of traffic; they may not be looking out for a cyclist.</p>
<p>16 Cycling in pairs or groups</p>	<p>16.1 Level 3 training itself requires cycling in a group or a pair so the trainee will gain an understanding of group cycling techniques during the session.</p> <p>16.2 Trainees should demonstrate taking responsibility for their own positioning, signalling and communication when riding in a group.</p> <p>16.3 If the training session has more than one trainee they should demonstrate that they can effectively communicate to cycle together safely.</p>	<p>Each cyclist remains responsible for their own positioning, signalling and communication with other road users but cyclists may help each other by calling out any hazards such as potholes or other vehicles. In general, cyclists should not ride so close to each other that they cannot react to a sudden movement or stopping of the cyclist in front. It is up to the trainee to determine the appropriate distance based on how experienced the other members of the group are, how effectively they communicate with each other and how well they know each other's style of riding.</p> <p>Although cyclists may ride two abreast, trainees should be aware that this may aggravate some other road users. When riding two abreast, trainees should make extra effort to communicate with following traffic and be aware when they might need to move back into single file.</p>

<p>17 Locking a bike securely</p>	<p>17.1 Trainees should demonstrate an understanding of safer places to lock their bike (busy, overlooked cycle parking) and the preferred type of cycle stand to use (i.e. those which allow both wheels and the frame to be secured).</p> <p>17.2 They should be aware of the pros and cons of different types of lock and which parts of the bicycle to lock to the stand.</p> <p>17.3 They should also demonstrate awareness of different parts of a bicycle that can be removed by thieves (saddles and wheels with quick release catches, lights and light brackets, pannier bags etc.)</p>	<p>Cycle parking in busy areas or areas overlooked by people in buildings is generally safer than more isolated cycle parking areas. Bikes that are parked overnight in a public area are particularly vulnerable to theft.</p> <p>Cycle stands which allow both wheels and the frame to be secured to the stand are preferable to cycle stands which allow only one wheel to be secured. The trainee may choose to remove any parts of the bike that a thief may be able to detach easily.</p> <p>Recommended locks are rigid steel locks in a D or U shape (and therefore known as D-locks or U-locks) which are generally more difficult to cut. Cable locks tend to be less strong and easier to cut. Trainees should fill the D part of a lock with as much of the cycle as possible to reduce the chance of it being smashed open.</p> <p>Where a cycle parking area is poorly located in an isolated area, the trainee may choose to lock their bike to an immovable object (e.g. railings or a road sign) in a more visible area where this does not obstruct pedestrians. In such cases, the trainee should look out for any signage prohibiting cycle parking.</p>
-----------------------------------	---	--