

The National Standard for cycle training - level one

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 one 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

Level One

Outcome	Observed Demonstration	Reasoning
1 Demonstrate understanding of safety equipment and clothing	1.1 Trainees must demonstrate an understanding of how their choice of clothing may have an impact on their cycling and the training session ahead, and that their clothing and equipment must be fitted and worn correctly.	<p>Trainees should understand what type of clothing may be potentially hazardous.</p> <p>Trainees wearing a helmet should understand how to fit and adjust it.</p> <p>These demonstrations may take place indoors before moving to the training area.</p>
2 Carry out a simple bike check	<p>2.1 Trainees must be able to carry out a simple check on their bike's brakes, tyres, wheels, steering and chain.</p> <p>2.2 Trainees should understand that a bike should be set up to fit them (but can expect the instructor to ensure the bike is correctly set up).</p>	<p>While we would not necessarily expect trainees, particularly children, to make repairs to their bike, we should expect that they are able to spot simple faults that need to be dealt with.</p> <p>Some trainees will also have bikes that are the wrong size for them. While these may not be adjusted to ideal size, the trainee should be aware of what the ideal is.</p>
3 Get on and off the bike without help	3.1 The trainee must get on and off the bike with control. While doing so they should be applying the brakes.	<p>Applying the brakes while mounting and dismounting will hold the bike steady.</p> <p>Trainees should mount from the left (unless they have a particular problem with doing so). This is usually the pavement side and away from the chain and may be useful for later on-road sessions.</p>

Outcome	Observed Demonstration	Reasoning
4 Start off and pedal without help	<p>4.1 With one foot on the ground the trainee should find the 'pedal ready' position (pedal above horizontal in roughly the 2 o'clock position) with their foot on the pedal.</p> <p>4.2 They should keep their brakes applied until ready to go.</p> <p>4.3 They must keep both feet on the pedals while in motion and should pedal with the balls of their feet.</p> <p>4.4 They must look up while riding along.</p>	<p>The 'pedal ready' position is the most effective in enabling a cyclist to set off quickly and with control.</p> <p>Peddalling with the ball of the foot allows the greatest control and power to be applied when cycling.</p>
5 Stop without help	<p>5.1 The trainee must be able to demonstrate an ability to use the brakes effectively to come to a controlled stop.</p> <p>5.2 The trainee must slow down by using their brakes but not by using their feet on the ground.</p> <p>5.3 On stopping they should put a foot down on the ground.</p>	<p>Trainees should understand that braking with the front brake only could cause them to lose control and fall over the handlebars.</p> <p>They should also understand that braking with the back brake only may result in a rear wheel skid.</p>
6 Ride along without help for roughly one minute or more	<p>6.1 Trainees must cycle along observing ahead and steering to keep their balance. They should continue to cover their brakes while riding along.</p>	<p>This outcome does not need to be taught separately but may be observed during other outcomes throughout the training session.</p> <p>Trainees should cover their brakes while riding at this stage in order to be able to stop the bicycle quickly in case they are unable to steer or balance correctly.</p>
7 Make the bike go where they want	<p>7.1 Trainees must be able to manoeuvre with control turning both right and left.</p>	

Outcome	Observed Demonstration	Reasoning
8 Use gears (where present)	8.1 Trainees should cycle at a steady cadence. They should be able to stop in a low gear, ready to start again. 8.2 They should be able to make smooth gear changes.	Trainees should be able to understand how to use the gears they have on their bike. Where riding a multi-gear bike they should be able to select an appropriate gear while training.
9 Stop quickly with control	9.1 The trainee must use both brakes together to come to a sharp controlled stop. While doing so they should brace their arms and keep both feet on the pedals.	During an emergency stop the trainee's weight will be thrown forward, therefore they should brace their arms. They can also be taught to move their weight back in the saddle.
10 Manoeuvre safely to avoid objects	10.1 The trainee must be able to manoeuvre with control to avoid objects at a range of speeds.	Manoeuvring with control is gained through practice. Manoeuvring at low speed is an important skill as it requires greater balance than at higher speeds.
11 Look all around, including behind, without loss of control	11.1 The trainee must demonstrate an ability to look behind (over both shoulders) and take in information while riding in a straight line, without loss of control.	Good rear observation a key competence to be learnt, enabling the trainee to achieve most other outcomes more easily. However this outcome includes all round observation and making sure the trainee has 'seen' rather than just looked.
12 Control the bike with one hand	12.1 While riding along the trainee must be able to control the bike with one hand, for both right and left hands, without loss of control.	The ability to control the cycle with one hand is an important element and prepares the trainee to be able to signal their intentions in a variety of ways. Trainees should be taught that having both hands on the handlebars is important for turning and stopping. Although this outcome is about balance and control it can be used to develop signalling.

The following outcome is not compulsory		
Outcome	Observed Demonstration	Reasoning
13 Share space with pedestrians and other cyclists	<p>13.1 Trainees must demonstrate an ability to share space with pedestrians and other cyclists.</p> <p>13.2 They should demonstrate this with pedestrians and cyclists going in the same direction, approaching from the opposite direction and crossing their path. They should demonstrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) slowing down ii) making their presence known iii) signalling their intention. <p>13.3 Trainees should not pass too close or too quickly.</p>	<p>It is important that trainees demonstrate courteous and considerate cycling in areas where other pedestrians and other cyclists are present. In most cases this requires slowing their speed.</p> <p>The trainee should clearly communicate their intended action when encountering pedestrians. They may communicate through verbal and non-verbal communication (such as eye contact and smiling). Where there is limited space trainees may need to wait until there is sufficient space to pass.</p> <p>When approaching a pedestrian or cyclist from behind, the trainee should alert them to their presence (by ringing their bell or using their voice for example calling out “excuse me”).</p> <p>The trainee should be aware of possible hesitation, stopping or a sudden change of course by other pedestrians and other cyclists.</p>