



# DVSA: THE SEQUEL

**D**VSA's 'next generation testing' project in 2014 moved annual inspections of HGVs, buses, coaches and municipal vehicles from government-owned to government-licensed facilities, now called ATFs.

However, the people doing the work remained in the employ of DVSA, who would need to travel to a customer site and carry out inspections in their facilities. With the change in their circumstances, their job title changed, from 'inspector' to 'vehicle standards assessor.'

Bringing in the irtec qualification was another element of the changes, according to a DVSA spokesman. He says: "We wanted front-line staff to have the opportunity to gain a nationally-recognised award. This accreditation gives confidence to our testers. For our customers, the award underpins the competence and professionalism of our staff."

Unsurprisingly, DVSA chose the 'inspection technician' level of irtec. The qualification is positioned above

**DVSA has announced plans to reaccredit all of its nearly 500 MOT vehicle assessors to the irtec inspection technician level. Will Dalrymple explains its proposal in the context of the original arrangement**

the entry level 'service maintenance technician' and below 'advanced technician'. Three inspection technician routes are available: large commercial vehicles, passenger-carrying vehicle and heavy vehicle trailer. Candidates are expected to have three years' work experience. They must take, and pass, a 90-minute practical and one-hour theory assessment (see box). The latter tests underpinning knowledge mainly about the DVSA testers' manual, including both technical (mostly) and legislative questions, though the exact ratio depends on the route. (Those manuals are available online: [www.is.gd/ulikiq](http://www.is.gd/ulikiq) for HGVs and [www.is.gd/dicaji](http://www.is.gd/dicaji) for PSVs.)

As far as the original testing went, IRTE's irtec testing partner, IMI, carried out assessments of assessors in 2014. Following this, DVSA was awarded status as an assessment body, and then started conducting assessments for its own staff.

From that point, irtec has been part of DVSA's 16-week induction programme for new vehicle assessors. "This ensures all new staff are accredited by the time they have completed their formal training programme," the spokesman continues. Only the inspection technician level has been incorporated in the training, and VSAs are the only roles in DVSA to be assessed for the qualification, although some staff recruited by the organisation may have qualified for prior roles.

If a vehicle standards assessor were to fail the irtec test, DVSA has 'a number of development measures' to support them to pass, the spokesman says. "When setting out with NGT, it was a requirement for everyone in front-line testing to be accredited, and this requirement has not changed."

## IRTEC INSPECTION TECHNICIAN REQUIREMENTS (SELECTED)

### SKILLS

- Work in a logical sequence when conducting a vehicle/trailer inspection
- Correctly assess the security, serviceability and operation of a vehicle systems/components
- Correctly identify non-compliance against statutory and vehicle manufacturers' specifications
- Correctly complete the relevant inspection records

### KNOWLEDGE

- Tools and equipment used in the inspection of large commercial vehicles/passenger carrying vehicles/trailers
- Approved vehicle inspection techniques and methods
- Vehicle inspection routines
- Categorisation of vehicle deficiencies and defects
- Legislative framework including OCRS (operator compliance risk system)





Following the initial qualification, assessors' performance is formally managed. The performance of individual VSAs is measured by the accuracy of the results of their vehicle testing, which is 'quality assured' by line managers. Adds the spokesman: "The continuing support of the irtec provides further assurance of their competence, which is why DVSA

will continue to re-accredit all inspection assessors."

This is because irtec licences were designed to only last five years; toward the end of that time the candidate must be re-assessed, to make sure that their knowledge remains fresh. (During the COVID-19 pandemic, IRTE is offering a 90-day extension to all irtec licences due to expire in March, April and May).

At DVSA, renewals have already started, and will continue over the next five years. There are currently 480 vehicle standards assessors carrying out testing at 575 ATFs across the UK.

The spokesman points out that demand is quite low initially, due to lower take-up levels at the beginning of

the roll-out, but will ramp up over the next five years, reflecting increasing take-up and new entrants coming through. In the meantime, he continues, "the DVSA team will continue to assess new starters, as well as pick up on a limited number of renewals. We will also use a third-party provider to help deliver renewals within the parameters of the scheme."

In conclusion, the spokesman explains DVSA's rationale for sticking with irtec like this: "It is important for our customers to know we help keep vehicles safe to drive by providing continuing support to our team, that our assessors have been professionally developed, and they are assessed to maintain standards." **TE**

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