



IAM RoadSmart - Advanced Rider Course (ARC) Frequently Asked Questions from S&DMCC Members

Q – Who are the IAM?

A – The Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM) is the UK's largest independent road safety charity that provides advanced rider and driver training via their RoadSmart courses.

Q – How did S&DMCC get involved with the IAM?

A – In early 2019, the IAM approached one of our committee members after passing his ARC to see if the club would be interested in a pilot scheme to be the first in the country to have IAM qualified observers embedded in a non-IAM affiliated club. The club President and Committee supported the initiative and training of our observers commenced in October 2019.

Q – Is this creating an elite group of riders in S&DMCC?

A – That is definitely not the intention and the whole committee is very united about that. Those members that pass their ARC are not subject to any greater opportunities or ride options than any other member nor is it a pre-requisite to be a ride leader within S&DMCC.

Q – What is the format of the IAM ARC?

A – Associate coaching sessions are 1-2-1 with an IMI qualified IAM Observer with a number of assessed rides of around an hour. A feedback session is delivered with a summary on the day (in your course handbook) with greater detail provided by email shortly after. With the Associate's consent, coaching rides can be filmed and used in the detailed feedback with images to support positive observations and any development needs. The number of sessions required depends on the experience and progress of the rider but data suggests that seven is the average number needed to be test ready.

Q – I've been riding for x years with no issues, will the course be of any value to me?

A – If you feel confident in your riding but wish to explore the course in more detail, then you could request a no-obligation 'taster' ride with one of the club observers. Based on the feedback from that session you will be better placed to decide whether the course is for you, or not.

Q – I've read Motorcycle RoadCraft – The Police Rider's Handbook, so that makes me an advanced rider, right?

A – Not really, no more than reading a book on the perfect golf swing makes you a professional golfer - both can be improved by practical coaching and practice. Also, no insurance company will take that as evidence of your riding skills.

Q – I've done the BikeSafe day course with the police, will the IAM ARC be of value to me?

A – The BikeSafe course is an excellent introduction to safer riding as it is based on the same advanced riding concepts that the IAM ARC covers. However, the IAM ARC is delivered over many more practical 1-2-1 coaching sessions with a recognised qualification at the end.

Q – Will the course make me a better rider or just a safer rider?

A – The two go hand in hand really, on the road clearly a safer rider is a better rider. We all know a rider who has less confidence in bends and fall behind in the 'twisties' on group rides, amongst safety the IAM ARC also provides techniques to improve cornering and general riding progress but it's unlikely to make you a Valentino Rossi.

Q – I want to improve my riding but am nervous about tests. Can I do the course to take on the skills without taking the test?

A – Our discounted course includes the test fee but it is not mandatory. Taking on board the skill-set itself is the primary goal of the IAM ARC, however you will have paid for the test and your observer will guide you through the test expectations and will strive to raise your confidence to take it.

Q – Are there any other benefits in achieving the IAM RoadSmart test pass?

A – Your insurance company may recognise the IAM qualification and offer you a discount on your premium. If you wish to join the Blood-Biker volunteers, an IAM or RoSPA advanced test pass is now required for you to join their ranks. BikeStop in Stevenage also provide a discount to IAM members of 15% on presentation of a valid IAM membership card.

Q – How much will the IAM ARC cost?

A – We have negotiated a substantial discount with the IAM for S&DMCC members so we get the course and test for £128.50 instead of £175. All our observers are unpaid volunteers supporting the safety goals of the IAM and as such, a £10 fuel/wear & tear contribution is collected after each session.

Q – Who do I contact to express an interest in a ‘taster’ ride or sign up for the IAM ARC?

A – You can contact any of the S&DMCC committee and they will point you to one of our IAM & IMI qualified national observers embedded in our club.

This is not an exhaustive list of questions and answers and as new ones are raised, they will be included in future.