

## Driving to success with EDI

### Taxi drivers improve customer service and professionalism with EDI's new Road Passenger Vehicle Driving Qualification

Recession drives increase in numbers entering taxi profession as a second income or a solution to redundancy – numbers forecast to grow by 25% in the next ten years.

Drivers in the private hire industry looking to increase their skill sets and offer a more professional service can now do so with a new qualification from recognised Awarding Body, EDI ([www.ediplc.com](http://www.ediplc.com)). One of the drivers who has benefitted from the new Level 2 NVQ in Road Passenger Vehicle Driving (RPVD) is 41-year-old Ali Taoui.

Ali is based in Bournemouth, where the council has mandated all taxi drivers to undertake the qualification. Ali worked in a variety of jobs before becoming a self-employed taxi driver five years ago. He now works full-time mainly on night shifts.

Ali comments: "Two years ago, the council made it compulsory for all drivers wishing to qualify for a Hackney carriage license to pass the EDI qualification but I wanted to take the qualification anyway. I think people feel safer and more comfortable getting in to a taxi with someone who has professional qualifications. It's great being a taxi driver – I love the variety of people I talk to throughout the day. Every day is different and I can be flexible about when I work – it's really convenient for me."

Ali attributes EDI's Level 2 RPVD NVQ with helping him to develop a range of transferable skills including dealing effectively with difficult passengers and helping passengers who require assistance.

He says: "I wasn't aware beforehand of all the extra things that can really make a difference with helping disabled or elderly people in and out of a taxi. I now make sure I speak directly to the person rather than to the people they are with. The qualification has also really helped me to develop my personal skills – many of which I can use in other parts of my life. I am now more confident about meeting and dealing with new people and building a rapport with a person from when I first meet them."

The course also covers health and safety, vehicle safety, dealing with emergencies while in transit and has encouraged Ali to consider his work and its responsibilities.

He adds: "The course made me realise how responsible my job is so I am much more aware of the safety elements of the role now - I am even more careful watching my speed and how I behave on the road. The course focused on how we should deal with accidents if they happen and that was really useful. I also now know the legal specifications required of me, such as keeping a fire extinguisher and a first aid kit in the car. Prior to passing the qualification, I also wasn't aware that if I was delivering a parcel, that I was legally required to know what was in it."

For the past two years, Bournemouth Borough Council has funded the RPVD course which has been delivered by Bournemouth College.

Ali comments, "Application was easy. All we had to do was simply fill in a form. The six week course consisted of a three hour session once a week at the college. Then I had homework to complete. I did the course with my friend which was great as we could share our experiences."

The EDI qualification has three routes; Taxi/Private Hire, Community Transport and Chauffeur. No prior qualifications, formal entry requirements or learning are required for this NVQ although drivers must have achieved the appropriate driving license for the vehicle on which they are employed. Where training for the appropriate licence is given by the employer, a minimum of six months on-the-job driving experience is necessary before drivers can fulfil the requirements of the qualification.

Chris Bolton, director of communications and external relations at EDI, commented: "Since launch, take-up for this qualification has exceeded expectations. Recognising this work with a qualification will give drivers accredited skills in communication and problem-solving and ultimately improve standards on the job."

Ali concludes: "I think this qualification will help to professionalise the taxi industry, which most people think isn't really that skilled. Personally, having my work recognised with a qualification has given me some extra self esteem. Getting my certificate was great. We have to show this to the council to get our license but mine is now on display in a safe place!"

For more information about EDI, please contact the Customer Enquiries Team on 08707 202909, email [enquiries@ediplc.com](mailto:enquiries@ediplc.com), website: [www.ediplc.com](http://www.ediplc.com).