

Information to accompany the reply to an initial enquiry for a Foundation Course.

FREQUENTLY-ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT CAMBRIDGE AND DISTRICT AMATEUR RADIO CLUB (CDARC) FOUNDATION COURSES.

1. Foreword: Thank you for enquiring about our Foundation Course This document gives you information about the Foundation Course which we run. If there is any further information that you need please e-mail CDARC and we'll endeavour to answer your query.

2. How Often Does CDARC Run Its Foundation Courses? We plan to run two Foundation Courses every year – one in the spring and one in the autumn. A Foundation Course takes place over a weekend. Sometimes we will run additional courses if demand is high. However, we are all volunteers and arranging to be free for a whole weekend takes planning. Hence we cannot provide courses on demand.

3. Do I Have To Attend The Course – May I Not Simply Take The Exam? If you have a technical background and consider that you are well-versed in the technology you do not need to attend a course as such. However, about 50% of the Foundation Course comprises practical assessments. You **may not** sit the exam unless a registered assessor has signed-off these practical assessments. Our Foundation Course is designed for candidates who have no prior knowledge of the subject but who are keen to obtain a UK amateur call sign. Thus the practicals are integrated with the theory sessions over the weekend of the course.

If you already possess a completed, signed assessment sheet which another, RSGB registered assessor has issued within the last year, then you may just sit the exam. However, you must produce this signed assessment before registering for the exam through CDARC.

4. How Much Does The Weekend Course Cost? We do not seek to make any profit in the long term from our courses. We try to run them so that we generally break even. The cost of the course comprises two elements:

- The RSGB/Ofcom examination fee (currently £27:50 at September 2018);
- The hall hire charge and any course consumables. (~£20:00 per candidate)

Typically the total charge for the weekend course works out at around £50:00.

5. Where Do You Run The Course? We hold the course at Foxton Village Hall. It's a really pleasant, modern venue with excellent facilities in a quiet village. Foxton also has a railway station which is one stop down from Cambridge on the Kings Cross line.

6. What Are The Start And Finish Times? We start at 09:00 hrs both days. We finish no later than 17:00 hrs on the Saturday. You take the exam between 15:00 hrs and 15:55 hrs on the Sunday. You get an indicative result by about 16:30 hrs after we have marked the scripts.

7. How Soon Do I Obtain My M6 Call Sign Following Success In The Exam? The optical mark sheets and scripts go back to the RSGB for verification on the Monday following

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the examination. Once your paper arrives at RSGB HQ it will usually be processed after 6 working days have elapsed and then your official result will be posted to you and uploaded to the Ofcom system. Results are not available any sooner. You do have to validate your licence details every 5 years (or sooner - if you move house for example.) The Ofcom website will tell you all about the licence conditions.

8. May I "Have A Go" Before The Course? Yes! As you will be registered as a Foundation Candidate we can let you operate under supervision as part of your training. This is also a good opportunity to ask questions and familiarise yourself with the protocols and procedures we use as well as learning a bit about the equipment itself.

9. Do I Have To Become A Member Of CDARC Before I Can Take The Course? No – although we would, of course, be delighted if you wished to join us at any time if we are your nearest club.

As a new M6 we would strongly urge you to join your local club – particularly if you do not have a technical background. Every club has a membership with years of collective knowledge and experience. Club members will always be very happy to help you choose your own equipment and assist you practically with "*putting your new station on the air*". (Aerials, feeders, testing etc.) In the event that you have any problems then someone in your club has probably solved them before – you just have to ask. You can find your nearest radio club through the RSGB website. CDARC runs a "Buddy System" for newly licensed Foundation members. (See CDARC website for details of the "Buddy Scheme".)

If you intend to use the local Cambridge repeaters (GB3PY for example) for mobile operations then the etiquette is to join the repeater group to help fund the cost of running the repeaters. Cambridge Repeater Group (CRG) charge about £10 per year. CRG also have a good social side as well. (Camb-Hams "*Pie-and-Pint*" evenings, contests, etc.)

10. Can I Take The Intermediate and Full Licence With CDARC Later On? Yes we do offer this facility. However the process is slightly different. You will largely self-study within a framework of structured tutorials covering the syllabus. Because these two courses use significant club resources we limit enrolment to CDARC members. (ie you have to be a member of CDARC by joining the club. Currently adult membership is £20 per year.)

11. How Should I Prepare For The Foundation Course? We base the course around the RSGB book "Foundation Licence Now!" This will cost you about £5 from the RSGB on-line bookshop. It covers all of the information you need to pass the exam.

In addition go to the Training Section of the CDARC website. Download the following pdf files.

Foundation Licence Training Material;

Jolly Useful Hints and Tips For The New M6 Licencee.

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Being familiar with the book and the above downloads will be of benefit when you take the course. They will also help you with questions to ask at any "Beginners Evening" before the course.

12. How Do I Register To Attend A Foundation Course With CDARC? The first step is to ask us about the next CDARC course and express your interest. The Examinations Secretary for CDARC will send you an e-mail about four weeks or so before the course commences. The e-mail will ask you to do the following:

- Complete an EX200 Form (*This is an RSGB on-line form from their website*).

NB! If you are under 16 years of age your parent/carer/guardian must counter-sign the EX200 form.

- Return the EX200 form to the RSGB along with the examination payment.

- Send a copy of the EX200 form to the CDARC Exam Secretary along with a cheque payable to CDARC to cover the hall hire element of the course. (Currently about £22:50 per candidate).

13. I Am Registered As Disabled (Or I Have Special Needs) Is Taking The Course Still Practicable For Me? We hope yes. The RSGB recognizes that a different approach is more suitable for some candidates. The village hall at Foxton has facilities for wheel chair users and has parking right outside the entrance. Readers, scribes and carers are recognised as essential help in gaining a licence for some candidates. Provided that the RSGB have received in advance written notice of the arrangements necessary for taking the exam and which are supported by a GP's or doctor's letter (or agreed equivalent) then the examination is available to you.

The CDARC team, by agreement, will be happy to bring the practical assessment aspects of the course to a house-bound candidate. Similarly special arrangements for an examination other than at Foxton Village hall may be made by prior negotiation with the RSGB.

Please contact the CDARC Examinations Secretary in the first instance if you need special arrangements.

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CDARC Training Team