

What is the Amateur Radio Foundation Licence?

The Amateur Radio Foundation Licence gives everyone the opportunity to gain an understanding of the basic technology and operation of Amateur radios. After completion of a practical test and a 20 question multiple-choice paper, the foundation licence gives you the opportunity to operate 10 watt radios on a variety of bands.

Many radio clubs up and down the country run the Foundation Licence course and a quick look at the Radio Society of Great Britain (RSGB) website: www.rsgb.org - will provide you with the location of your nearest club, as well as further information on radio licenses.

The course is usually run over a weekend, which is long enough to cover the syllabus comfortably. Most of the training is practical and includes:

- How to set up an Amateur Radio station
- How to operate your radio
- How to make a call
- How to complete a log

Checking that you can do this satisfactorily is part of the syllabus and each item will be 'signed off' as it is completed. There is a small amount of theoretical work, but only enough to appreciate things like which antenna or fuses to use and how to get the best out of your station. Safety is an important part of the training.

The course should last a total of 10~12 hours. It should be possible to complete it and come out with your 'pass' certificate in a single weekend. Some courses will be run over a few weeks, perhaps some evenings and a final day to finish. However it is run, you will be able to sit a short multiple choice written assessment at the end of the course and come away with a pass certificate which will get you your callsign. Foundation licensees are permitted to use commercially manufactured transmitters and kits

constructed in accordance with the supplied instructions. Higher licences such as the Intermediate and Full give the privilege of building equipment to your own designs, from magazine articles, or modifying second hand commercial equipment. Ex-commercial equipment is often sold at radio rallies for a small fraction of its original cost and provides a very cheap way of getting on the air.

The Foundation Licence is intended to be a 'starter' and most licensees will want to upgrade to the higher-grade licence. Extra freedom is an incentive for the Foundation licensee to upgrade, as are the extra transmit power and extra frequencies. Intermediate licensees may transmit at up to 50 watts of power, use frequencies above 440MHz, and can also send fast scan (normal) TV pictures. Full licensees may transmit up to 400 Watts, use the amateur satellites and may, in certain circumstances, apply for special permission to run even higher powers equipment (e.g. for moon bounce or meteor scatter.)

I have previously completed the course myself to gain a greater understanding of Amateur Radio. I remember being impressed by the passion and enthusiasm of my tutors who explained radio theory in an easy, fun and straightforward way. More importantly, it has provided me with a useful insight into Amateur Radio.

There was a practical element to the course with VHF and HF operation, which I felt was very entertaining. The course was well laid out and study notes were provided; although I did pay for a course accompaniment, the training course handouts, assessment and administration; all of which came to a low price. It was extremely good value because you can't put a price on the cost of learning skills and development.

So who should take the Foundation Course?

- Existing users - those who already have some radio experience can expand their knowledge into what might become a new hobby.
- Schools, air cadets and any other groups who might already have the opportunity to study from tutors and captains.
- Anybody between the ages of 5~90 who has an interest in science or engineering.

If you are interested in taking the foundation course or would like more details, visit the Radio Society of Great Britain website:
(www.rsgb.org.uk)

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Go on have a go!


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Foundation Amateur Radio Question Paper

This paper consists of 20 questions, Duration 30 minutes

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

You should have 5 items.

1. This question paper
2. The Schedule to the Foundation Licence
3. A Frequency to Wavelength Conversion Chart
4. A Frequency Allocation Table
5. Band Plans of the 14MHz band

All questions have equal marks and all questions should be attempted. Each question has 4 possible answers, identified 'A' 'B' 'C' 'D'. If one is correct, the others are wrong. You should decide which of the 4 is correct and mark the answer box for each question accordingly.

If you decide answer 'C' is correct, show this by ticking in the box 'C'. **Take care to ensure your tick does NOT cover two boxes.**

If you then change your mind, shade out the tick and tick in the box for your new choice.

The Schedule to the licence, the Frequency Allocation Table, the Frequency Conversion Chart and the Band Plans may be used to help you. You may also use a calculator.

This paper will contain your answers and must be kept safe.

Please fill in the details below before the start.

Family Name:

First names: