

Making Tax Digital: a driving instructor's checklist

Every figure below was read from gov.uk on 3 September 2026. Re-check the sources before you rely on a number — this is a summary of published guidance, not tax advice.

1 · WORK OUT WHEN IT STARTS FOR YOU

HMRC tests you on **qualifying income** — total turnover from self-employment and property, **before expenses**, taken from the tax return you last filed. Franchise fees you have already paid out still count.

QUALIFYING INCOME	TAX YEAR MEASURED	YOU START FROM
More than £50,000	2024 to 2025	6 April 2026
More than £30,000	2025 to 2026	6 April 2027
More than £20,000	2026 to 2027	6 April 2028

2 · PUT THE FOUR DEADLINES IN THE DIARY

UPDATE PERIOD (CUMULATIVE FROM 6 APRIL)	DEADLINE
6 April to 5 July	7 August
6 April to 5 October	7 November
6 April to 5 January	7 February
6 April to 5 April	7 May, the following tax year

Each update covers from the start of the tax year to the end of the period, not just the last three months, and carries totals for each income and expense category only. HMRC does not receive individual receipts or invoices.

3 · THE MILEAGE RULE THAT CATCHES INSTRUCTORS

Simplified expenses are not available for a dual-control car. gov.uk allows the flat rate for cars "except those designed for commercial use, for example, black cabs, hackney carriages or dual control driving instructors' cars". For the car you teach in, claim actual running costs apportioned to business use, plus capital allowances on the car itself. A second car without dual controls is not carved out — the flat rate (55p for the first 10,000 miles, 25p after, from 6 April 2026) is available for that one. Track the two separately.

4 · DO THESE BEFORE YOUR FIRST UPDATE

- ☐ **Work out your qualifying income and note your start date**
From the tax return you last filed, not from this year's takings.
- ☐ **Move lesson payments into something that categorises them as they land**
A bank line you have to decode in January is the thing MTD is designed to end.
- ☐ **Log expenses with the receipt attached, at the time**
Records must be kept digitally, and kept for 5 years after the 31 January deadline.
- ☐ **Separate the dual-control car from any other vehicle in your records**
Different method, different evidence. Untangling a mixed year is far harder.

☐ **Pick the software you will file through**

MTD needs HMRC-recognised software at the submission end, whatever you use for records.

☐ **Check whether an exemption applies to you**

gov.uk lists the grounds. Partnerships are excluded for now.

5 · EACH QUARTER, BEFORE THE 7TH

☐ **Reconcile takings against your bank and your card processor**

Gross income is what the learner paid; the processing fee is a separate expense.

☐ **Categorise every expense in the period, receipts attached**

☐ **Total your business mileage and record which vehicle it was in**

☐ **Add anything the diary does not hold**

Franchise fee, vehicle lease, accountant's invoice, insurance.

☐ **Key the category totals into your filing tool and send**

SOURCES

1. Check if you're eligible for Making Tax Digital for Income Tax — HMRC. gov.uk/guidance/check-if-youre-eligible-for-making-tax-digital-for-income-tax
2. Work out your qualifying income for Making Tax Digital for Income Tax — HMRC. gov.uk/guidance/work-out-your-qualifying-income-for-making-tax-digital-for-income-tax
3. Use Making Tax Digital for Income Tax: send quarterly updates — HMRC. gov.uk/guidance/use-making-tax-digital-for-income-tax/send-quarterly-updates
4. Simplified expenses if you're self-employed: vehicles — HMRC. gov.uk/simpler-income-tax-simplified-expenses/vehicles
5. Business records if you're self-employed: how long to keep your records — HMRC. gov.uk/self-employed-records/how-long-to-keep-your-records

Passdesk is driving school management software. It produces the income, expense and mileage records a quarterly update needs — it does not submit to HMRC and is not HMRC-recognised software. Read the full guide at passdesk.co.uk/blog/making-tax-digital-driving-instructors/ · Figures read 3 September 2026 · This is a summary of published guidance, not tax advice.