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1. Background

Essex Ham conducted an online survey to gather some basic data regarding "entry-level" into amateur radio. The survey was aimed at the existing training amateur radio community, and the survey was only promoted within the RSGBTutors and Essex Ham Tutor Groups communities.

2. Responses

149 Valid responses were received between 14 Jan 2020 and 21 January 2020. 62 partial submissions were logged, but only submitted responses are included. 84 unique club names were submitted.

Respondents identified themselves as follows:

I am an active UK amateur radio trainer	111	80.4%
I am not currently a trainer, but interested in amateur radio training / licensing	27	19.6%
I am involved with an RSGB committee	10	7.2%

11 responses listed "other", which implies they are not involved with, or interested in, amateur radio training. Their results have been omitted from this summary, leaving a total of 138 responses.

We asked when respondents were first licensed:

First Licensed: Before 1964	4	2.8%
First Licensed: 1964-1978	38	27.9%
First Licensed: 1979-1990	35	25.7%
First Licensed: 1991-2001	10	7.4%
First Licensed: 2002 to date	49	36.0%

3. Entry-level Aims

We asked: "What do you think that the aims of the amateur radio entry-level should be?"

Test the minimum regulatory theory needed to comply with Ofcom requirements	121	87.7%
Provide hands-on experience of using radio equipment	103	74.6%
Assess a student's radio operation / competency	97	70.3%
Test a student's knowledge of the basic radio principles	95	68.8%
Assess a student's ability to set up a station and antenna	93	67.4%
Be part of a multi-tier system aimed at getting a student to "Full"	92	66.7%
Provide an easy-access "taster" into amateur radio	82	59.4%
Test a student's electronics theory knowledge	20	14.5%

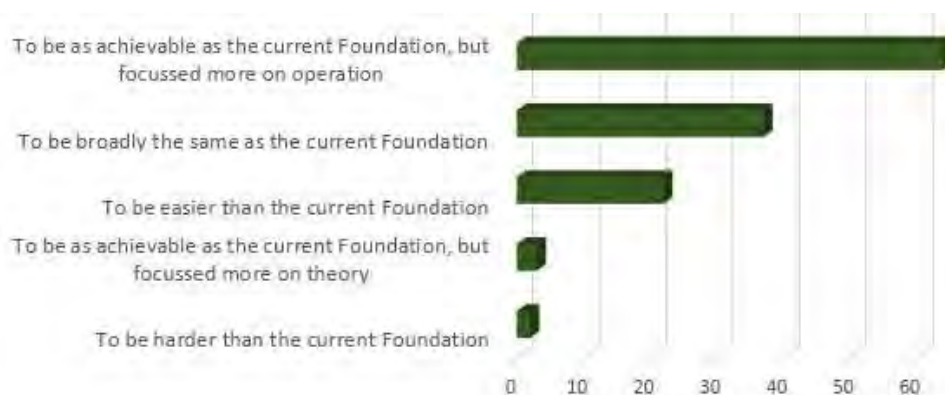
Under “Other”, the following comments were submitted:

- I think its important to provide practical training in Amateur radio procedures.
- allow lifelong learning of modules say over 3 years to gain full licence
- Provide a means for someone to join the amateur community including those who are keen to join, but may not have the capability to go to higher levels
- Access to limited spectrum and power so as to encourage further development
- Safety?
- Stimulate interest
- Test only the *strictly necessary* competencies.
- The original RA foundation concept was a perfectly good way into amateur radio until organisations started to turn it into a percentage pass exam by rewording questions and slipping in more technical concepts. I still have a copy of the original syllabus.
- let them see what fun it can be
- the answer depends on the approach quantity or quality. Being realistic its a hobby there need to be a meeting point in the middle.
- Electronics theory knowledge but very basic and given a more soft name so as to not scare the very new
- Make sure an entrant can operate safely. Give a basic introduction to the hobby and possibilities
- Have fun!
- Show what a brilliant, engaging hobby it really is.
- Test the limitations and privileges
- They should be compliant with Licensing conditions and interference and should demonstrate an ability to maintain a station competently
- Ensuring operators understand how they may cause and minimise interference to other spectrum users.
- Teach the licence conditions and the reason for them because without knowing the reasons it can be seen as dictatorship for the sake of it.

4. Entry-level Depth

We asked: “Thinking about the depth of entry-level, which would be your preferred option?”

To be as achievable as the current Foundation, but focussed more on operation	64	49.6%
To be broadly the same as the current Foundation	38	29.5%
To be easier than the current Foundation	22	17.1%
To be as achievable as the current Foundation, but focussed more on theory	3	2.3%
To be harder than the current Foundation	2	1.6%



Under “Other”, the following comments were submitted:

- Revert to previous foundation
- The Foundation should be the entry level, I do not support a 4th "entry tier". If this survey shows that the "entry level" is an "operators ticket" then the Foundation should be changed
- Most options for answers for this one are flawed
- To be level with the original foundation concept
- Just to satisfy the licence conditions. Foundation exam is full of fluff!
- have to include working for a set time with a licensed amateur so they know the correct procedure - could be covered by clubs. If its a step before foundation cant be harder if its a progression system.
- entry level should stay at Foundation
- To show accurate knowledge of what amateur radio has been in the past; and where it is likely to go in the future -- based on current types and state of activities.
- To be as achievable as the just finished foundation was with an emphasis on operating.

5. Entry-level Age

We asked “What is the minimum level you feel the course should be aimed at?”

Anyone, regardless of age or experience	63	48.1%
Key Stage 3 - Years 7 to 9 - for pupils aged between 12 and 14 years old (Secondary school)	46	35.1%
Key Stage 2 - Years 3 to 6 - for pupils aged between 8 and 11 years old (Primary school)	13	9.9%
Key Stage 4 - Years 10 to 11 - for pupils aged between 15 and 16 years old (Studying for GCSE)	7	5.3%
Key Stage 1 - Foundation year and Years 1 to 2 - for pupils aged between 5 and 7 years old (Primary school)	2	1.5%
18 years old and above	0	0.0%
Key Stage 5 - Years 12 to 13 - for pupils aged between 17 and 18 years old (Studying for "A" level)	0	0.0%

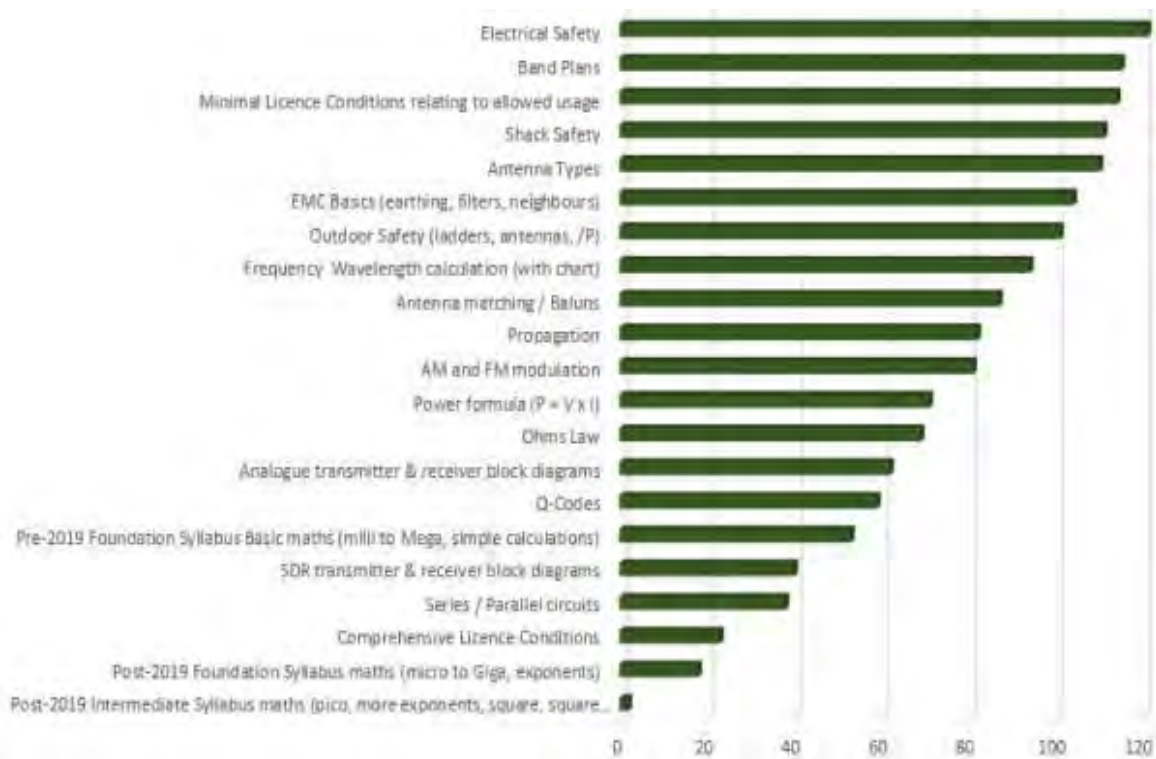
Under “Other”, the following comments were submitted:

- Key stage 4 and older
- the current foundation level (old syllabus) seemed about right.
- Anyone who doesn't just want CB with callsigns -- the attitude and mentality is totally different is
- Key stage 4 and 18+
- Some people are mature at 10 others not at 60 it depends on the person.
- While a minimum level of knowledge is required to operate safely, effectively and without interference I acknowledge that younger operators often do this with the support of adults and therefore it seems churlish to impose a lower age level. That said, you need to ensure independent operators can be responsible.

6. Assessment Content

We asked: "What should be assessed prior to a student getting an entry-level licence?"

Electrical Safety	122	88.4%
Band Plans	116	84.1%
Minimal Licence Conditions relating to allowed usage	114	82.6%
Shack Safety	112	81.2%
Antenna Types	111	80.4%
EMC Basics (earthing, filters, neighbours)	105	76.1%
Outdoor Safety (ladders, antennas, /P)	102	73.9%
Frequency Wavelength calculation (with chart)	95	68.8%
Antenna matching / Baluns	88	63.8%
Propagation	83	60.1%
AM and FM modulation	82	59.4%
Power formula ($P = V \times I$)	72	52.2%
Ohms Law	70	50.7%
Analogue transmitter & receiver block diagrams	63	45.7%
Q-Codes	59	42.8%
Pre-2019 Foundation Syllabus Basic maths (milli to Mega, simple calculations)	54	39.1%
SDR transmitter & receiver block diagrams	40	29.0%
Series / Parallel circuits	38	27.5%
Comprehensive Licence Conditions	24	17.4%
Post-2019 Foundation Syllabus maths (micro to Giga, exponents)	18	13.0%
Post-2019 Intermediate Syllabus maths (pico, more exponents, square, square root)	2	1.4%



Under "Other", the following comments were submitted:

- Reading skills
- Types of transmission
- basic operating practices
- Introduction level knowledge of operating equipment and setting it up, including antennas
- You do not need complex maths at foundation level
- Communication
- Just ONE band plan and only one or 2 Bands with licence
- No EMC necessary - limited by allowed equipment
- Look Foundation entry level
- Based as the Foundation Licence as is
- A statutory period of LISTENING ? Many newbies have no idea of HOW to listen (or where; or when) -- for them, it's all just grab a mike, and shout. THEN listen.
- SSB and FM modulation
- What about CW as well in types of modulation, it is the most simple!
- raise awareness of the breadth of the hobby by observation and doing things additional to a couple of voice contacts across the car park... to maximise the wow-factor
- Radio operation (CQ, Nets etc)
- Etiquette - answering CQ calls, not swearing, etc
- how to test their station as they should test station from time to time
- RF safety
- The basics of good operating practices. Also how to set up a station.

7. Current Opinion

We asked for a snapshot of opinion on the following issues:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The current Foundation is "fit for purpose" as entry level to the hobby	10.1%	46.2%	31.9%	11.8%
Foundation is "putting people off" from becoming radio amateurs	11.1%	29.3%	46.5%	13.1%
Reliance on clubs for practicals & exams is having an impact on entry numbers *	16.4%	48.2%	28.2%	7.3%
Making Foundation easier would increase numbers entering the hobby	16.8%	39.3%	36.4%	7.5%
Adding a "beginners" VHF/UHF licence would increase entry numbers	19.3%	39.4%	27.5%	13.8%
Adding a "direct-to-full" exam would increase numbers entering the hobby	18.6%	42.3%	33.0%	6.2%
Amateur Radio image & awareness is a bigger problem than exams/licence structure issues	40.2%	51.3%	6.0%	2.6%

* Note: In retrospect, the question about "Reliance on clubs" was poorly worded and ambiguous, as it is not clear whether respondents to this question felt the impact on entry numbers was positive or negative

8. Course Delivery

We asked; "How should a training course for an entry-level licence be delivered?"

A course at an amateur radio club	119	86.2%
Via an online / distance learning course	110	79.7%
Via book(s)	74	53.6%
By a local / regional training team	73	52.9%

Under "Other", the following comments were submitted:

- Commercial supplier
- If its largely practical, and I think it should be, then distance learning can be challenging to deliver.
- Via. Cadet A Training Course (In Place Already for Young)
- By self-study where the person already has good knowledge base
- Any method leading to an exam pass should be acceptable
- pointless question really
- Combination of all the above
- Adult education, U3A, WEA etc
- By anyone who feels competent to guide a student to a pass.
- Individual tuition for disabled at home
- Shack tuition
- Make ALL options possible - and available!
- All of the above should be options but I'm not sure how you would assess the student
- with an individual trainer, outside of the club, where necessary
- All of the above, the broader the range of options available the greater the accessibility.
- Any mix of all methods -- given that many people these days DON'T read [sic]. That era has gone. Today short video clips are replacing book-reading. We must take that into consideration.
- Books/online + local practicals
- Local tech college but I suppose these days they won't do it.
- Is it necessary to "do a course"? Individual amateurs could support an interested person to enjoy the fun that Radio etc. can offer - the learning need not be a slog?
- a course at a local technical college

9. Importance of Demonstrations

We asked: "Should demonstrations be a part of the process?"

Yes (in a classroom)	109	79.0%
Yes (online / videos)	98	71.0%
Yes, (at a club event)	92	66.7%
No	5	3.6%

10. Importance of Practicals

We asked "Should practicals be a part of the basic entry-level process?"

Yes (mandatory)	90	68.7%
Yes (optional)	23	17.6%
No	18	13.7%

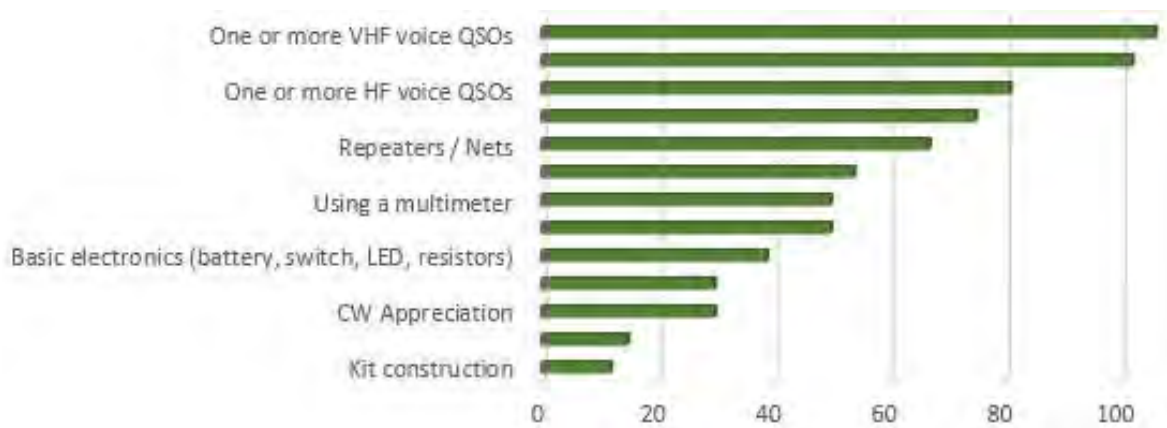
Under “Other”, the following comments were submitted:

- on air practice should be part of the process.
- Practical "workshop" where the topics required are explored and discovered, rather than "examined"
- Don't agree with an entry level
- Yes, demonstrate operating safely and within the licence
- not for V/UHF only licence
- Not the box-ticking exercise we currently have... happy to share my thoughts which were wiped when I pressed another of the above options...
- Practical operating must be included

11. Mandatory Practicals

We asked: “Which practicals should be mandatory?”

One or more VHF voice QSOs	107	94.7%
Setting up a station	103	91.2%
One or more HF voice QSOs	82	72.6%
Tuning a dipole	76	67.3%
Repeaters / Nets	68	60.2%
Wiring a mains plug	54	47.8%
Soldering coax connector(s)	50	44.2%
Using a multimeter	50	44.2%
Basic electronics (battery, switch, LED, resistors)	39	34.5%
CW Appreciation	30	26.5%
One or more data QSOs	30	26.5%
DV handset programming	15	13.3%
Kit construction	12	10.6%



Under “Other”, the following comments were submitted:

- Use of Hotspots etc.
- All good but not mandatory
- HF voice QSOs should be included if HF is allowed at entry level
- as an entry and only to 2m/70cm I think it should be all focused about gaining confidence in operation with a small amount of dipole tuning for basic comprehension and hopefully generating intrigue in to RF...

- Tuning in to a phone signal and identifying Morse and data, QSYing from the calling channel
- AMU adjustment
- It would be great to tick all the boxes but it would take months to do it all and we are volunteers.
- testing your station
- Both FM QSOs to learn protocols and pressing/releasing the mike at the right time and also SSB QSOs to learn about netting and filters.
- Some as demonstrations rather than as participation, eg datamode, hotspot, CW

12. Assessment Format

Noting that multiple choice exams are not suited to all, we asked: "What format should the final exam/assessment ideally take?"

Multi-choice exam & practicals (at a club/exam centre)	62	48.8%
Multi-choice exam (online, taken anywhere)	37	29.1%
Multi-choice exam, no practicals (at a club/exam centre)	13	10.2%
Ongoing assessment over time (perhaps by a club)	6	4.7%
Aptitude assessment using software (such as UK driving test "simulator")	6	4.7%
Practical assessment only	2	1.6%
Verbal assessment / interview	1	0.8%



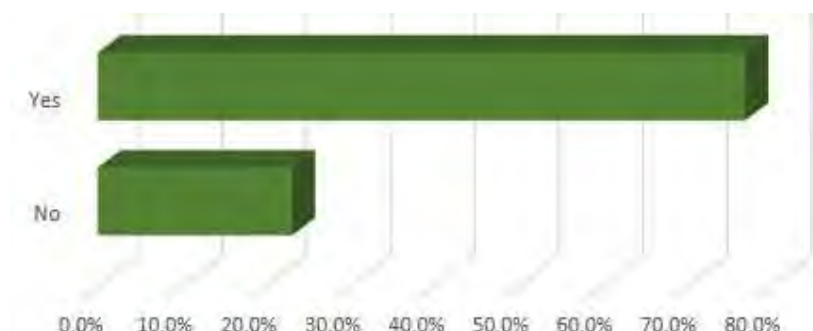
Under "Other", the following comments were submitted:

- should not be one-size fits all, practicals by an RA and exam on line should be OK as well as at a centre
- Multi-choice exam at a club or online, and practical evaluation through a "workshop" format at a different time
- open Book Multi Choice exam taken on line from any location
- somewhat dependent on how training is delivered
- a combination/selection of above
- Could choose several of the above.
- MC exam online with practical at a centre or at candidate's QTH
- Don't agree
- As per the RA foundation exam
- given the operation of CB and 12w requires nothing the 'test' / 'exam' should be very minimal if what I have read the limit of the pre Foundation licence is set to 2m/70cm and 5w (I think it should be 12w too given CB regs)
- Non multi choice test
- choice between multi-question / essay type question / verbal assessment over say half-a-dozen topic modules; of which two or three would be compulsory -- others left to choice of individual.

13. Public Domain Question Bank

We asked "Would you agree with use of a public-domain question pool (like the US)"

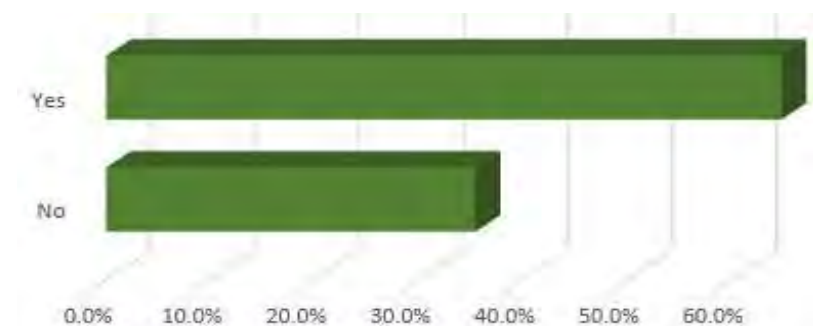
Yes	70	76.1%
No	22	23.9%



14. Open-book Assessment

We asked if respondents supported an Open-book assessment (candidates can look up answers in a book / copy of licence)

Yes	64	64.0%
No	36	36.0%



15. Opinion on licence structure changes

We canvassed opinion on possible changes to the exams & licensing structure. We asked "What are your thoughts on the following schemes?":

	Strongly in favour	In favour	Not in favour	Strongly against
The existing Foundation, Intermediate, Full structure	22.9%	64.4%	8.5%	4.2%
A new "VHF/UHF beginners licence"	19.3%	34.9%	36.7%	9.2%
A "direct to full" option (with the same practicals as FND & INT)	20.0%	55.5%	16.4%	8.2%
A "direct to full" option (with fewer practicals than FND & INT)	5.3%	25.5%	53.2%	16.0%
A "direct to full" option (with no practicals)	14.9%	4.4%	51.8%	28.9%
Switching to a two-tier system (e.g. "Basic" and "Advanced")	6.3%	21.1%	46.3%	26.3%
Switching to a single-tier system (like the pre 2003 RAE)	4.3%	6.0%	39.7%	50.0%

16. Use of licence-free radios

We asked: "it has been suggested that we might be able to make use of licence-free radio equipment to give hands-on experience of hobby radio without requiring any training or exams. Do you think that licence-free radios could be used to encourage interest in any of the following ways?"

	Yes	No
Should we use Licence-free radios for: Live demonstrations?	65.2%	34.8%
Should we use Licence-free radios for: Video demonstrations?	39.9%	60.1%
Should we use Licence-free radios for: Explaining how radio works?	66.7%	33.3%
Should we use Licence-free radios for: Hands-on activities for all?	63.0%	37.0%
It is not appropriate to use licence-free kit	13.0%	87.0%

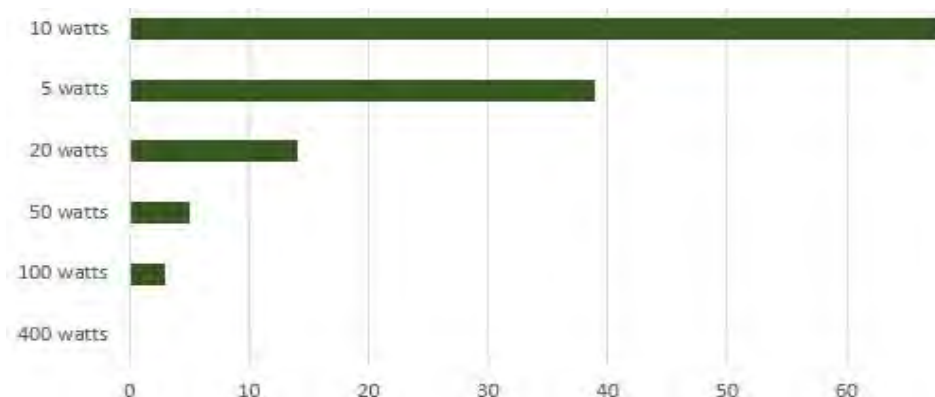
Under "Other", the following comments were submitted:

- likely to encourage folks just to use licence free
- great way to get kids in to the hobby as cost is low and groups can buy a few to have and use
- Open to too much abuse
- Use these processes where it suits the person to get knowledge/skills
- If the requirement for a licence holder to operate the PTT were reduced to the licence holder having control of the station (like a driving instructor is in control of the car without necessarily operating the controls) it would probably remove the need for using licence free equipment.
- We use Zello for this
- I use 446 as part of Foundation already.
- Yes, but we have to apply our own unique "branding". We should always show how an Amateur licence will give you more.
- useful for school stem activities as an intro to junior school children. Does prove very popular with 10 and 11 year olds
- any radio muse helps comprehension and confidence, the latter being a big thing
- If its going to encourage people into the hobby - perhaps licence for a set period of time.
- I have used cheap walkie talkies to teach basic techniques/ as practical exercises. Our RAYNET group is considering using PMR (with a PMR licence) to attract non-hams in the hope they will then get a licence
- Explain SW Listeners
- There is already licence free equipment available
- It's license free and in my opinion as far away from what's needed as you can get
- Licence free radio can be a fun and friendly environment to 'discover' radio and feels less formal.
- Unconvinced, there's little enough time to do the VHF practical without spending time on licence-free, but for students to use in their own time, sure.

17. Power Limits at Entry-level

We asked: "What should be the maximum allowed power for the entry-level licence?"

10 watts	69	53.1%
5 watts	39	30.0%
20 watts	14	10.8%
50 watts	5	3.8%
100 watts	3	2.3%
400 watts	0	0.0%



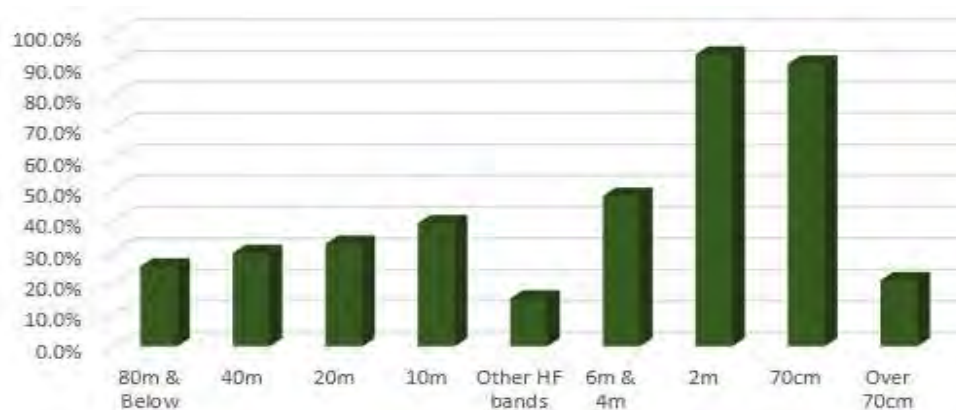
Under “Other”, the following comments were submitted:

- I believe that the Foundation with the current privileges should be the entry level. If the Foundation is too detailed change the Foundation not the licence structure
- Power is irrelevant and uncontrollable. Limited access to bands would be preferable
- To sell this to OFCOM, it has to be essentially the same as existing licence-free specs.
- not applicable
- if CB is 12w then at least the same min (if not a little more) for a 'exam' based licence system - and up the foundation a little and the int to 100w
- how measured? What band(s)?
- 50w 2m/70cm - 10w HF
- Depends on the sunspot cycle in HF!
- Should be restricted by frequency
- 10 - 20W May help safeguard against causing interference while learning.

18. Band restrictions at Entry-level

We asked “What bands should an entry-level licensee have access to?”

	80m & Below	40m	20m	10m	Other HF bands	6m & 4m	2m	70cm	Over 70cm
Yes	26.1%	30.4%	33.3%	39.9%	15.9%	48.6%	93.5%	90.6%	21.7%
No	73.9%	69.6%	66.7%	60.1%	84.1%	51.4%	6.5%	9.4%	78.3%



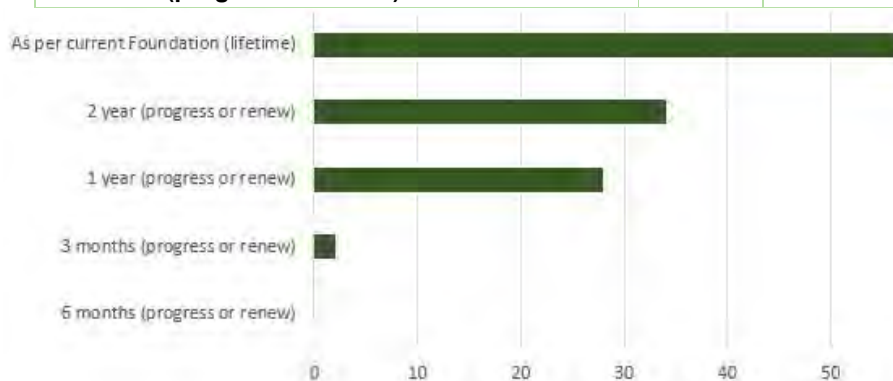
Under “Other”, the following comments were submitted:

- Possibly one HF band
- WARC bands
- Limited on 40m say 7.100 up just to give insight to hf and encourage moving on in the hobby.
- I believe that the Foundation with the current privileges should be the entry level, I would remove the LF frequencies since type approved kit isn't available, I would remove the GHz bands since type approved kit isn't available and I would add 23cm where the bulk of the ATV repeaters can be found
- Not in favour of entry level
- Non satellite
- Anything that we can get OFCOM to agree, based on existing licence-free specs.
- None
- Any new (simpler) licence could be restricted to VHF/ UHF

19. Time restrictions at Entry-level

We asked: “Thinking of the entry-level, how long should it be valid?”

As per current Foundation (lifetime)	58	47.5%
2 year (progress or renew)	34	27.9%
1 year (progress or renew)	28	23.0%
3 months (progress or renew)	2	1.6%
6 months (progress or renew)	0	0.0%



Under “Other”, the following comments were submitted:

- 5 years
- Mau
- 3-5 yrs
- By "renew", do you mean "re-sit"? Better maybe 3-5 years.
- 5 years
- 3yrs or until they reach age 18, which ever is later
- 1 year then forget it!
- 2 years - must then do an exam to renew or progress
- 2 year limit with a very strict interview and assessment as to why they haven't progressed could be learning difficulties so more help from a trainer might be needed , I also think that after three renewals without upgrade or a very good reason why should result in a limit to only VHF / UHF
- progress after 2 years or not valid
- 1 year, no renewal
- Don't mind perpetual but a 2 year limit may encourage development.

20. Respondent information

We asked for each respondent's name, club they train with and role within training. For data protection reasons, names have not been included in this report. It was noted that many responded that the views were their own, and did not represent their club.

Under "Involvement, the following notable non-role-specific entries were made:

- Trainer until syllabus change
- Up until the academic elitists got their way, i.e. syllabus 2019. Since then nil.
- used to be a trainer, but no longer. And definitely not with the new scheme.
- RAE since early '70s.. My main grumble with old system was lack of practical experience.
- Not confident to continue at present with the changes made, no time to re-write materials.
- We did a lot a couple of years ago, work pressures mean less last two years.

21. Freeform Comments

At the end of the survey, participants were asked for any further comments:

- I don't think new amateurs get enough "mic experience". Whilst digital modes like FT8 are popular don't most new Amateurs use the Mic for at least a few QSOs.
- No well done but till there is mega changes at the top we are screwed they could not even produce a training book that was free from errors (even after a revision)
- Thinking about my own progression into the hobby I would have preferred a Two tiered approach. 1. Those who want to operate with off the shelf equipment but not build and 2 those that want to build. Whilst practically this would be very difficult to police there is no reason why a non technically minded person should not have the same power / ability to operate abroad privileges that someone who is able to build there own kit. I feel the current system is putting off a lot of people due to volume of academia needed to progress.
- The ONLY training required for a beginners licence is how to install and operate a station safely and without causing interference to others.
- Very interested to see the results.
- I missed answering one question because I hit "next" twice by mistake, and there is no way to go back.
- I think the original purpose of the Foundation Licence has been lost. The idea was to give a taster to interest newcomers which would widen knowledge of the hobby. I would favour a five year term for such licences and re-allocation of those callsigns so it would not be seen as an end point . As the five year ending date approached you either move on to take the intermediate licence or drop out. If you came back to the hobby after say a lapse of three years the Foundation exam pass would still allow you to go on to take an intermediate course with the issue of a new foundation call bit only valid for a limited time e.g. two years.
- I feel that the existing Foundation course has become too long with more stuff added. It would be an advantage to get that down to a maximum of 8 hours work.
I cannot comment yet about the Intermediate as we are still working on our forthcoming course.
I have always felt it is wrong that the RSGB does not supply the PowerPoints. This means clubs have to put massive effort into writing PowerPoints. This also puts off people from becoming tutors.
I feel a new "starter" course should not exceed a full day and be very basic.
I am a little concerned that the RSGB Intermediate Exam subjects are not directly reflected in the RSGB course book. EG EMC is in the book in two separate chapters.
- Nothing much to add. Good luck Peter. I hope someone listens this time. 73
- Seems to be quiet comprehensive.

- I do know that OFCOM are already happy with the amount of training that the Cadet force (ATC) get within the first 2 badges of their Radio courses (UHF/VHF) , and consider the third badge equivalent to the Foundation Lic. So why not work and possible amend what we know already works?
Also if the new Beginners Lic. was in place just close to such a level I know we would possible have hundreds of new members to the hobby from the Cadet forces, so boosting our membership and use of the VHF/UHF frequencies straight away.
- Great idea. Look forward to seeing the results
- It seems some questions are be weighted towards an entry licence. For example if one gives an answer to a question do you think an entry level licence is a good idea, then the some of the last questions appear to assume that one is in favour of it?
- Needs a 'back' button or opportunity to review and amend answers.
- There are people I have trained who have found the foundation training challenging because of personal "limitations", like dyslexia or very poor educational opportunities when young, who passionately enjoy the hobby. Their learning often requires extra one-to-one sessions, and they eventually make it, to go on and really enjoy their (maximum possible) achievement as foundation license holders. We should take care they are not excluded by the eventual process (e.g. time limiting the license). Pre-selection by "modern" educational standards would exclude such people from even being able to try. We need to be very careful about setting up barriers which lead to exclusion.
- Some of my answers are relevant for what I consider to be a suitable entry level. If taken out of that context they may not reflect my opinions of a different entry level.
I expect that that applies to everyone's responses.
If you were to describe an entry level and then ask the same questions you might get different responses.
For example, I have assumed that an entry level would be use of shop bought equipment (so no knowledge of the internal workings are required), low power 5W (so little safety knowledge is required), limited to VHF/UHF (so little knowledge is required of propagation), etc.
The current entry level requires a greater level of knowledge than for my view of a simpler entry level. However isn't the current entry level ever so easy to achieve - everyone (who tries) passes - and isn't the current Foundation permitted use of the bands very generous. With 10W on any band (almost) why would anyone bother to progress to Intermediate?
- The current updated syllabus has been become too complicated and is in danger of putting off people not attracting them, I also feel there should in the exams things about contesting and field days as seems missing.
- The 3 tier structure reversed the trend at the end of the C&G RAE period where the numbers were in decline. however it's not just the availability of "easy" entry to the hobby that must be addressed it is then about keeping these new entrants, bringing them up through the licence structure and increasing/improving their technical knowledge. A hobby full of entry level operators is not going to maintain our status or protect our allocations, we need qualified experts to champion VDSL interference, sit on technical panels with motor manufacturers wanting to write specifications for electric vehicle charging plates that are the cheapest standards irrespective of their interference potential and who are able to lobby on our behalf when issues like the recent attempt to grab 2m became known. Basic entry level operators aren't going to be able to do this with any sort of gravitas and Basic Entry Level operators aren't going to be able to train the subsequent generation of potential hams. Keeping too much focus on the route of entry could lead to us taking our eye off the ball and killing the hobby off because we can't develop beyond the entry level.
- My club does not capacity (tutors and accommodation) to deliver any more training than the current three levels. If anything else is introduced (e.g. entry or straight to full) we wouldn't be able to deliver all 5 courses - something would have to be dropped. So we could do any three of Entry, Foundation, Intermediate, Full, Straight to Full.
- Not in favour of a entry level.
- Well done for organising this survey. Questions were apposite. I look forward to seeing the results.
- Useful but also iffy/omissions in some Q+A

- Some of the answers will change if earlier items are changed, especially the assessment options. There could be a NVQ style system - which we sort of have now. 'under pinning' knowledge and then practical competence. I see that for advanced (& may be int) there could be optional 'units' to cover interests etc. But none of this is easy
- As the original idea of a gentle way in to the hobby has changed.. I would suggest foundation power up to 20watts (after all CD is up to 12w ssb now) Intermediate up to 100 watts (most rigs do that anyway). Full licence 1Kw. Needed to compete with the diabolical noise levels these days. I liked the comments about the Top down approach. However I prefer student-centred... Find out what they know and like and build on that. How about more options in the syllabus/exams so students can choose different routes to their goal?
- I would like to make it clear that I favour a single theory test ..no practicals with a smaller number of questions as in other countries . Not a three tier system ..
- My entry into the hobby came in 2007 and followed on from CB Radio back in the late 70's early 80's. I have not been interested in building transceivers or any other equipment other than wire antennas. I just want to communicate with people using manufacturer made purpose built transceivers (Not home brewed).
I Believe that if you want to be a black box operator then that option should be available, where all the electronic tech stuff is not required but able to use the full power privileges, and there should be a module for constructors for those that wish to use self constructed equipment, a sort of Full licence plus construction use (No tech no self build).
All I want to know is where I can operate, how to do it safely within the rules and how not to cause interference whilst doing it with my shop bought kit. the rest to me is irrelevant.
- Nothing wrong with the survey, what we need is a few more Radio Amateurs to get off their back sides and start doing a bit more. Over the last 20 years I have trained and had over 80 exam passes taking the three levels cumulatively. It equates to around 60 new Radio amateurs
- Thanks for your lead in the development of effective training.
- I disagree with an entry level. The old foundation was adequate. Making it easier will bring the muppets onto ham bands were there better off on cb. If post 19 foundation is now harder , why do it ? My theory is why fix something that aint broke. and just kept foundation as it is.
- I am of the opinion that the existing format is good and an easier route is not required
The Foundation is well within the vast majority of people's intelligence levels.
Better and more hands on Tuition is what retains people's interest in the hobby.
The exams are not the problem , it all depends on the commitment of clubs and Tutors
The fast track exams which are common gets passes BUT see how most just do not engage in the hobby and many do not bother to apply for their license.
I am a retired Broadcast TX engineer and Tutoring Amateur radio is not much different from teaching an apprentice i.e. one must make the Tuition interesting
- Keep up the good work Pete!
- Thanks - a great survey, Pete.
Structurally it isn't always clear what "Entry level" means. Depending on previous answers, to some people it means the Foundation exam (either as-is or modified) but for others it would be a new exam.
I am all in favour of a new exam, with privileges based on exiting licence-free kit (because that is probably all that OFCOM would agree to) provided that (a) we keep the exam right down to a basic competency test; and (b) we make it uniquely "ours" by branding ALL the training materials with the promise (and demonstrations) that "Amateur Radio can give you much, much more".
- Well done, I hope this Q introduces some answers, regretfully I wonder if it will!!!
How one enters the "system" dictates the answers, if via school, cadets or other youth activity is one answer, a different one is if entry is via later in life interest and/or via a radio club
- Unfortunately the amateur community has lost the plot since the RSGB started playing with the original 3 level exam system. I am suggesting that we go back to 2002 syllabus and stop trying to bamboozle exam candidates with linguistics.

- Slightly missing the point in places... What is meant by entry level.... I favour a single theory only test as in other countries fewer questions less of an academic approach this is only a hobby.. There is no official structure for training courses... Only self funded volunteers.. If all volunteers gave up tomorrow what then....
- The use of the term "Maths" in the survey and in training documentation. It is not "Maths" at Foundation level, it is basic arithmetic.
- Keep up the good work - its appreciated by the hobby very much - the energy you all put in to it is amazing - thank you for inspiring many and bringing them in to the hobby with your efforts too!
- No change will let the hobby die. The views of those inside the hobby do not really matter as if nothing changes it might just last until they all die off!
- Having just gone through the questionnaire I can only recall one question on image and promotion of the hobby in general. Its all very well talking about requirements if we do not shout about the positive part of amateur radio. Then I must ask does Joe public understand the term AMATEUR radio. Many amateurs are close to professionals !! Again I must ask is the word radio from the past. I am now moving into the marketing area another area for debate.
- Are we training candidates to pass an exam or to prepare them for life as a radio amateur at whatever level? If the former, only those things labelled 'mandatory' will be done, regardless of the desirability of giving the candidate as wide an experience as possible to appreciate just what opportunities they have. Exposure to club life can assist with this but only for those who live close enough.
The survey took longer to complete than suggested, but that was good as it caused me to think, and rethink. A 'back' button would have been helpful, as I wasn't inclined to delete the whole thing and start again just to change a previous answer.
- Think you have covered everything. If honest not really sure about a level below the Foundation as I think the Foundation should be set as the entry level but set not too difficult. I have taught 8 year olds and most passed but the issues I found were some of the words in the exam paper they had never heard of in their life before. The maths was difficult for some as they hadn't even been taught the level at school i.e. fractions....
- Useful survey, good luck! 73
Comprehensive Survey
- Brill Peter. This is a fine attempt to filter where we have got to following the change of syllabus. I think that it's important to remember this is only a hobby and not a degree level project. There are people who are quite happy NOT to progress to IL or Full . Some waited over 30 years to get a call sign because of the single RAE etc exam in the past. They are excellent ops and we would have lost them had it not been for the changes.
I do support the practicals but don't worry too much if a candidate isn't too good on one aspect. I consider the practicals to be for the candidate's use rather than something that is a pass or fail exam-wise.
I am pleased that at [Redacted] we have managed to get over 100 FL through the weekend course and much more local activity on the air. We have had about 40 thro IL as well with nearly 20 go on to Full and that is since 2014.
- Bit too long to complete
- I couldn't find the back button to correct my answer on power to 10watts foundation, 5 watts new VHF/ UHF introductory licence. I think a major point is the current disconnect between the RSGB board wanting 7 yr old and up to join the hobby and the suitability of the current questions (vocabulary and style) which seem to be aimed at 15+ yr olds. Before adopting any changes, this needs to be sorted.
- It would be useful to know people's opinion/experience of generating more entry level training in cooperation with youth organisations, volunteering organisations, schools, colleges etc.
- Some of the mandatory questions I would have preferred not to answer as some of the responses seemed to contradict each other.
- it seems to me that any changes we make to encourage popularity of amateur radio inevitably reduce standards. I wish I knew how to settle this!

- I think the Foundation gives access to too many bands. Access only to 2m/70cm would be a good start and provide an incentive to study for the intermediate. The additional benefits of a Full Licence compared to an Intermediate do not reflect the extra effort involved in getting a Full Licence. For most people the Intermediate gives access to all the bands they would normally use. The higher power allowed at Full is not used by many of us. Finally, thanks for creating the survey.
- If CB radio can work with little problems when the user gains some experience provided only Commercially produced equipment is used until further training is tested as is now the only difference between the CB & RA licences is the Bands allowed. Many Amateurs I know started as illegal Cbers. I as a BT engineer working on 144 megabit systems only read the licence conditions before taking the exam to add a "ticket" to keep my employer happy. I became a tutor to fill a gap in my club.
- Entry level needs to be purely about operational considerations.
Very few amateurs are interested in the electronics aspects, and even fewer actually do anything with them. These days, most kit is COTS so I really don't see the point of forcing everyone to do electronics (although I do, professionally!) - it is a legacy we should drop, just as with mandatory CW.
- Too redolent of *current* structures [which, manifestly, are no longer fit for purpose].
Can we please have some completely new thinking ?
Multiple aspects of examination (multi-choice; essay; verbal assessment) -- where candidate chooses whichever modules are required to achieve the level / certification deemed necessary.
And, totally off-topic, why the hell doesn't someone persuade someone somewhere to make a film like "Convoy" (with appropriate music), to do for amateur radio what that film did for brain-dead jargon-riddled chatter-bods ? It's not beyond our capabilities.
The *image* of a bunch of OAPs belonging to a semi-secretive Masonic organisation rigidly adhering to past attitudes with little relevance to the modern world is hard to shake off. Can we have a little more Dan Dare and a little less Colonel Blimp, please ?
- No back button!
- Limiting new foundation holders to 10w on 70cm to 6m could increase use on these bands while advancing/renewing annually would encourage advancement.
Thank for putting this together.
- There needs to be more done to encourage Foundation licence holders to progress to Intermediate and above.
- Not bad at all given the need to keep it short
- I think we must remember that there are many people who only want to use commercial equipment and don't need the technical knowledge. They get enjoyment out of communicating.
- If you have the ear of the people who wrote the booklet for Morse appreciation, I would appreciate someone pointing out it is far too hard for students to do at this level.
Let's try and make Morse code fun not a hurdle to be struggled over, 73 [Redacted].
- "Courses" need to be long enough to give the student (bad term) a chance to experience the fun of "doing radio", not just ticking boxes in the minimum possible period.
Practicals could usefully include setting up a station on say three occasions, making 50 contacts (only three across the car park!) using three different modes. Figures here subject to discussion.
It won't all fit into a couple of weekends, but the probability that they will enjoy the hobby and progress in it is likely to be much higher...
Survey functionality - text entered in a "other" box should not be lost if another option is selected while thinking about the best option to select.
Thanks for your continued efforts Pete.
- This hobby is like life itself it lives or dies by the people who teach it you have to hold the enthusiasm of the pupil by lighting up there minds as to what they can achieve for themselves not some syllabus
- We must be careful not to allow amateur radio to be deskilled to a form of CB+. The current emphasis is strongly aimed at a school age entry with little regard for the other end of the age spectrum. I do know some experienced engineers who are contemplating taking up amateur radio and are put off by slow process of the current system. A direct route to full level should exist. Not every candidate needs a classroom course and this route should receive more attention.

- As someone who came into amateur radio as a SWL in the 1960s the drop in standards on-air on 2m is very clear and I believe is putting people off the hobby once licenced. Also I'm not sure 16-year-olds are the right target audience. Too young, too many other things in their lives and too much change about to happen to stay in the hobby medium or long-term. Sad to say but I believe the hobby is going to continue to decline in numbers due to making entry levels too easy post-CB, which then makes it a transient interest, but it will widen in technical progress and (mainly digital) areas of interest.
- I think there should also be two options for advanced level, operators license and a technician license.....
- Please don't run away with the misconception that making entry easy will automatically result in more future Full Licence holders.
This survey is a valuable contribution to life at the coal face.
- I also think for a full License the candidate should achieve a minimum of 6 words a minute Morse we still use it and it is amateur radio!
- I came to Amateur Radio through the B class licence and have worked in telecoms most of my working life.
- Any one thinking about obtaining an AR licence should have been a SWL first, for at least a few months. There are too many obtaining licences who have never listened.
- I would have liked to be able to make comments on the answers to some questions. Some of the options did not quite gel with my thinking.
- Well done!
The one bit missing is making it modular, so candidates accrue points, with licence levels achieved at various sub-totals. I'm sure that will help, but would need a chasing mechanism to keep interest alive.
- Thanks for the opportunity to give my opinion on the total mess we are in regarding the introduction of the new syllabus'. When the powers that be have no idea of what to do. A survey was done to get the opinion of the proposal to change License exams at all levels. It is obviously clear that the was not to change. But as usual the ones at the top ignored the opinions of the masses of license holders. I wonder how many revisions and alterations they are going to make to the current publications. Looks like every two to three weeks.
- Like the idea of more practical entry training but also acknowledge the value of both academic and practical training as one progresses.
- At the risk of sounding like a 'G' call, no, wait, I am a G call, following Facebook groups there seems to be a 'something for nothing' attitude that a minority want Full privileges on a Foundation licence, and the extension of CB to SSB hasn't helped that. But I've seen a vast range of candidates from those who don't need a course at all and could easily go straight to Full, to those who'll never progress beyond Foundation, so we need to provide an appropriate path for them all. I'd argue that both Intermediate and Full exams could be done direct simply by including one or two questions that test appreciation of different licence levels, and of course completing the relevant practicals.

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