



## Special consideration points

- *There are no specific ISO standards for this course;*
- *Second mandatory course in the ACUC diver training system*
- *It is superior and additional in academic and skills content to the ISO 24801-2 (Autonomous Diver) standard.*

## Introduction

The ACUC Advanced Diver course is the **second** mandatory level within the ACUC training ladder. This course can be taught, evaluated and certified by any ACUC Open Water Instructor or higher level. The main characteristics of this course are that it reviews and extends the subjects learned in previous courses and also introduces candidates to different types of dives. This course is also an introduction to different diving specialties; however, **candidates are not certified in those specialties**, therefore it is not a course intended to replace specialty courses, rather it is a course designed to introduce the candidate to different specialty courses. However, this level can also be obtained by completing four specialty courses, three of which must be the following: Deep Diving; Night Diving and Underwater Orientation. The fourth specialty is left to the candidate's choice. The candidate who decides on this option will obtain basically the same level of theory knowledge as if he took the Advanced Diver course, but will gain more experience in the water. Therefore, for the purpose of this standard, the theory technical content and aquatic skills are similar or superior to taking the Advanced Diver course.

This course has been designed as a fun course where the students learn some theory and then do one dive where that theory is applied. Because the candidates are already divers, there is no need to wait for the end of the course in order to do the Check-out dives. Check out dives can be done right after the theory has been completed for each type of dive. For example, once the theory for reduced visibility diving has been finished the students can be taken for a supervised night dive, there is no need to wait for the completion of all the theory of the course. Nevertheless, this is left at the discretion and logistics of the Instructor.

This is an ACUC International standard and therefore is always subject to the different national or local legislations. In cases where legislations exist that differ from this standard, the ACUC country or area delegation if it exists, must request in writing to the ACUC main office a **“Deviation”** from this standard to satisfy the legislation of the area, supporting their request with the appropriate documentation. Deviations, if requested, to be considered valid, must appear at the end of each specific standard document.

In cases where the local or national legislations are more restrictive than the ACUC Standard, then the local legislation will prevail, but if the ACUC Standard is more restrictive, then the ACUC Standard will prevail, because by complying with the more restrictive ACUC Standard, logically the local legislation will be also complied with. Regarding required training hours, none are specified because these could vary depending on many factors (number of candidates, diving environment, etc), therefore the training hours needed are dependent on the fulfilment of learning objectives. In the ACUC manuals and documents where hours are specified, these are only to be considered recommendations.

## 1. Scope

This Standard specifies safety related minimum competencies to be achieved in recreational scuba **training** at the ACUC Advanced Diver level. This Standard applies only to **contractual training** and certification in recreational scuba diving.

## 2. Definitions

For the purposes of the ACUC standards, the following definitions apply. Please note that not all terms shown next might appear in any one specific standard.

**2.1 ACUC:** Entity providing recreational scuba diving training systems and certification.

**2.2 basic equipment:** Equipment consisting of the following items:

- Mask
- Fins
- Snorkel

**2.3 breathing gas:** Appropriate mixture of oxygen and nitrogen.

**2.4 certification:** Confirmation that a student has completed all requirements of a course according to the specific standard, as issued by ACUC.

**2.5 cold water:** Water less than 10°C / 50°F from its highest average temperature or water of 10°C / 50°F or less

**2.6 competencies:** What a diver can do once certified

**2.7 confined spaces:** condition that applies when there is no direct access to the surface, such inside a wreck, cave, etc.

**2.8 confined water:** Swimming pool with a depth appropriate to the activity, or body of water that offers similar conditions (maximum depth 6 meters)

**2.9 diving equipment:** Equipment consisting of the following items:

- Mask,
- Fins,
- Snorkel,
- Cylinder,
- Regulator,
- Alternative breathing gas system, which could range from a simple octopus system to a duplicate breathing system with a separate breathing gas supply,
- Cylinder-support-system and buoyancy control device including (if appropriate) a quick release weight system,
- Submersible pressure gauge (breathing gas pressure monitor),
- Means to measure depth and time and to safely limit exposure to inert gas,
- Diving suit (if appropriate).

Note: Specific environments may require appropriate additional equipment (e.g. an underwater navigational aid, knife/cutting device).

**2.10 dry specialty:** Specialty course where no water training takes place, such as for example, First Aid, Oxygen Administration, etc

**2.11 knowledge levels:**

- Basic: knows how...
- Intermediate: knows how and why...
- Advanced: knows how, why and also, knows how to teach it...

**2.12 non certification scuba course:** Scuba course where the participants do not receive an ACUC certification at the end of the course, such as for example, scuba introduction, scuba refreshment, scuba buoyancy, etc

**2.13 open water:** Body of water significantly larger than a swimming pool offering conditions typical of a natural body of water encountered in the region where training takes place.

**2.14 prerequisites for training:** What a diver needs or conditions to be met prior to start training

**2.15 reduced visibility:** condition that applies when diving at night or when visibility is less than an arm's length, for whatever the reason

**2.16 scuba:** Self-contained under-water breathing apparatus.

**2.17 scuba instructor:** A qualified individual, certified by ACUC to teach, evaluate and certify divers.

**2.18 theory knowledge:** knowledge imparted in a dry environment (classroom, pool deck, etc)

**2.19 training definitions:**

- To observe: to be an observer in a course but without any type of participation
- To assist: besides the above, to assist in the training of a course under the direct supervision of a higher level instructor
- To train: besides all of the above, to train in a course without the need of a higher level instructor's supervision
- To evaluate: besides all of the above, to evaluate by one self or with other evaluators, candidates' performances
- To certify: besides all of the above, to issue candidates' certifications

**2.20 training open water dive:** open water training experience under direct supervision of a qualified instructor, comprising at least the following activities:

- Briefing
- Preparation to dive
- Pre-dive checks
- Entry into water
- Descent procedures
- Under-water activity
- Ascent and surfacing procedures
- Exit from water
- Debriefing
- Post dive procedures
- Recording the dive.

**2.21 water skills:** knowledge imparted inside a wet environment (pool water, sea water, etc)

### 3. Competencies

In addition to the competencies of an ACUC Open Water Diver, an ACUC Advanced Diver will be trained to have sufficient competencies through knowledge, skills and experience to dive with other certified divers of any level in open water. ACUC Advanced Divers must dive within the following parameters:

- Dive to a maximum depth of 40 meters / 130 feet
- Only dive when appropriate surface support is available.
- Diving under conditions that are equal to or better than the conditions in which they were trained.

If accompanied by an ACUC instructor, a certified ACUC Advanced Diver can gain progressive experience beyond these parameters (except depth) and develop proficiency managing dives with more challenging conditions designed to earn higher certifications. Where additional experience is required, this can be provided by an appropriately qualified ACUC Divemaster. Where additional instruction is required, it can only be provided by a suitably qualified ACUC instructor.

### 4 Training prerequisites

To qualify for enrolment in a course according to this Standard, the candidate shall meet the following prerequisites:

- **Minimum age:** 12 years. The consent of parents or guardians is required when the candidate is a minor. (The definition "minor" will be according to the legislation of each country).
- **Health requirements:** Candidates must pass a medical examination suitable for recreational diving, or if the legislation of the country where the course takes place allows it, fill in an appropriate questionnaire. In case of doubt, candidates should be referred to an appropriate doctor.

If the candidate is not examined by a doctor, the candidate shall be required to confirm, by signing it, written information given by the instructor about illnesses or physical conditions that may be a risk related to diving. Candidates will be advised on the importance of appropriate regular medical examinations.

- **Previous Certification:** To sign up for the course, ACUC Open Water Diver or similar with at least 2 hours of **bottom time** experience (see also certification requirements). Candidates coming from organisations other than ACUC must first complete the written examination of the ACUC OWD course. The Instructor must ensure that these candidates have all the knowledge and skills required by an ACUC OWD before they are allowed to proceed to the ACUC Advanced Diver course. Special attention shall be placed in the knowledge of the ACUC Deco Tables
- **Documentation requirements:** Candidates must sign the ACUC Risk Release and the Safe Diving practices forms, both forms are downloadable from the ACUC private website.

## 5 Training Instructor: Candidate ratios

- **Theory (dry lessons):** No limit
- **Confined water:** 10 candidates per instructor, with an additional 4 candidates per certified Divemaster, with an absolute maximum of 18 candidates.
- **Open Water:** 4 candidates per Instructor, with an additional 2 candidates per certified Divemaster with an absolute maximum of 8 candidates.

## 6 Initial information

The following information shall be made available to the candidates prior to, or during the first class.

- Prerequisites according to 4,
- Limitations of eventual qualification,
- Scope of course,
- Course procedures,
- Costs, insurance and contractual issues according to national regulations,
- Equipment requirements,
- Certification requirements according to point 10,
- Diving related legislation and legal requirements.

## 7 Course content related to theory knowledge

Candidates must already have the knowledge of an Open Water Diver, and also:

**7.1 Equipment Maintenance:** Candidates will have a basic understanding of diving equipment maintenance.

**7.2 Surface Air Consumption:** Candidates will have an intermediate knowledge of surface air consumption calculations

**7.3 Physiology Review:** Candidates will have an intermediate knowledge of:

- The circulatory system
  - The heart
  - The blood vessels
  - The blood
- The respiratory system
  - The airways
  - The lungs
  - The phases of the respiratory cycle
  - The respiratory rhythm

**7.4 Diving with Reduced Visibility:** Candidates will have a basic knowledge of:

- Lack of light in open spaces
- Cloudy conditions in open spaces
- Cloudy conditions or lack of light in closed spaces

**7.5 Diving in Confined Spaces:** Candidates will have a basic knowledge of:

- Differences with Decompression Dives
- Risks of this type of diving
- Rules to keep in mind in this type of diving

**7.6 Underwater Navigation:** Candidates will have basic to intermediate knowledge of:

- Procedures to obtain the correct direction
- Use of the compass

**7.7 Underwater Biology and Notions of Ecology:** Candidates will have basic to intermediate knowledge of:

- The Marine Environment
- Underwater life

**7.8 Notions of Navigation:** Candidates will have a basic knowledge of:

- Small boats
- Basic navigation notions

In addition to the above subjects, instructors can also offer, within the scope of this course, additional training regarding diving conditions related to their specific areas, such as, for example, Drift diving, Dry suit diving, etc, however, instructor must remember that candidates will not be issued a specialty certification, as these parts of the Advanced Diver course are considered only as an introduction to the specialties, not as a certification in those specialties. Also, instructors can only introduce divers in the specialties in which instructors hold a specialty certification themselves.

## 8 Course contents related to diving skills

**8.1 Confined Water Diving Skills:** Besides the ones already acquired as Open Water divers, candidates should be able to perform the following skills. Each skill must be mastered in confined water before that skill is performed in open water.

- Assembly and disassembly of the equipment while blindfolded
- Putting on and taking off equipment while blindfolded
- Act as donor and receiver in a buddy breathing exercise, blindfolded
- Correct use of a flashlight underwater
- Basic underwater hand signals with a flashlight
- Reconnaissance of a diving area during daylight hours
- Shore to water signs
- Take off and put on the vest and tank underwater
- Finning techniques specific to confined spaces
- Using the compass
- compass readings
- Distance estimation methods

In addition to the above subjects, instructors can also offer, within the scope of this course, additional training regarding diving conditions related to their specific areas, such as, for example, Drift diving, Dry suit diving, etc, however, instructor must remember that candidates will not be issued a specialty certification, as these parts of the Advanced Diver course are considered only as an introduction to the specialties, not as a certification in those specialties. Also, instructors can only introduce divers in the specialties in which instructors hold a specialty certification themselves.

**8.2 Open Water Diving Skills:** Besides the ones already acquired as Open Water divers, candidates should be able to perform the following skills in conditions typical of the local environment.

- Putting on and taking off the equipment while blindfolded
- Correct use of a flashlight underwater
- Basic underwater hand signals with a flashlight
- Reconnaissance of a diving area during daylight hours
- Shore to water signs
- Finning techniques specific to confined spaces
- Using the compass
- Compass readings
- Distance estimation methods

In addition to the above subjects, instructors can also offer, within the scope of this course, additional training regarding diving conditions related to their specific areas, such as, for example, Drift diving, Dry suit diving, etc, however, instructor must remember that candidates will not be issued a specialty certification, as these parts of the Advanced Diver course are considered only as an introduction to the specialties, not as a certification in those specialties. Also, instructors can only introduce divers in the specialties in which instructors hold a specialty certification themselves.

## 9 Practical training parameters

- All confined water underwater skills will be introduced, directly supervised and evaluated by an ACUC instructor who will be in the water during each session. The diving instructor will be in direct control of the candidates throughout all sessions.
- Before participating in open water dives, the candidate will have demonstrated in confined water sufficient theory knowledge and diving skills to be able to perform open water dives in the prevailing conditions.
- The maximum depth during training dives will not exceed 25 meters / 80 feet, except in the case of a deep dive, where the absolute maximum depth may be 40 meters / 130 feet.
- During open water dives the candidate will be equipped with at least the diving equipment according to point 2.9. (see the Definitions section)
- All open water underwater skills will be introduced, directly supervised and evaluated by an ACUC Instructor. The dive instructor will be in the water and in charge of each open water dive.
- According to clause 5, the absolute maximum number of candidates per diving instructor, under ideal conditions, for direct supervision and accompaniment under open water is four. The maximum number of candidates per qualified assistant for direct supervision and accompaniment under open water is two. At no time should a candidate be left without direct supervision in or under the water.
- Before each dive the diving instructor will prepare an “emergency plan”. In the immediate vicinity of the dive site there will be:
  - A proper first aid kit
  - An emergency oxygen unit which delivers at least 15 l/min., for at least 20 minutes
  - Adequate communication system to alert emergency services.
- The diving instructor will cancel or abort the open water dive if environmental conditions or a candidate’s physical or mental condition so require.
- A maximum of 3 training dives per day will be allowed
- Under no circumstances will candidates from another type of course or divers already certified under the supervision of the same instructor be mixed in the same dive.

## 10 Evaluation and certification requirements

- **Knowledge:** The candidate will demonstrate, by means of a written exam<sup>1</sup> provided by ACUC, knowledge of diving theory according to point 7 and knowledge of skills according to point 8.
- **Scuba Skills:** The candidate will satisfactorily demonstrate to an ACUC instructor the diving skills as per point 8.
- **Minimum Dives:** The candidate must have at least 10 hours of bottom time (20 dives) before obtaining certification.

## 11 Checkout dives

Important: Although the Advanced Diver course can be given by any Open Water Instructor or higher level, depending on the course dives to be taken, the Instructor may need to be a Specialty Instructor for some of the course dives to be completed.

If the instructor does specialized dives during the Advanced Diver course defined as NR2 (see [ACUC specialties standards document](#)), the instructor does not need to be an instructor of said specialties to do these specialized dives, since it is considered that the instructor already has the experience necessary to perform such specialty dives, but if the instructor is going to do specialty dives during the course of those defined as NR3 or R, then the instructor must be an instructor of that specialty.

To become certified, candidates will complete at least four open water training dives under the direct supervision of an ACUC instructor. Of the four dives, one should preferably be a night dive (night training dives must be done in a location with direct access to the surface, therefore, night training dives in wrecks, caves or under ice are not allowed. See also point 9 above on depth), another an easy penetration of a wreck (easy entry and exit) or easy cavern (exit always visible) and another must be an underwater navigation dive. Instructors can add additional dives according to their environments, to complete the minimum 10 hours of bottom time.

The underwater duration of each of these dives must be at least 20 minutes. (except in case of extreme cold water - below 10°C / 50°F - where 15 minutes will suffice, or in case of deep dives, where the maximum bottom time will be one that does not require mandatory decompression stops, depending on the depth reached). In no event shall training dives be dives where mandatory decompression stops are required unless a decompression dive is scheduled as part of the course experience.

## 12 Candidate's certification

Candidates will be certified as ACUC Advanced Divers when they have complied with all the requirements. These include:

- Minimum 20 Open Water Dives
- Pass the ACUC Advanced Diver written examination
- Successfully complete the Check-out dives for the ACUC Advanced Diver course

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<sup>1</sup> Note: If for any reason, the candidate is unable to take a written exam, then the Instructor may give the candidate an oral exam based on the written exam provided by ACUC and if this is the case, the Instructor will transfer the candidate's oral answers to the written exam. In either case, the written examination must be completed, either directly by the candidate or indirectly by the Instructor, using the candidate's oral responses. Instructors may, if they wish, do additional exams to the candidate, however, the exam provided by ACUC must be taken.

### **13 Candidate's qualifications**

Once completed the course, the ACUC Advanced Diver will be able to dive in waters of similar characteristics as those in which he was trained up to a maximum depth of 40 meters / 130 feet, and always accompanied by at least another certified diver.

### **14 Deviations**

None requested