



Special consideration points

- *This is the second mandatory professional level of the ACUC training ladder*
- *Candidates must already be at least Divemasters*
- *A Civil Liability insurance covering the activities which the candidate will be performing is required.*
- *It is equivalent to the ISO 24802-2 and to the RSTC Recreational Scuba Instructor*

Foreword

The ACUC Open Water Instructor course can be taught by any ACUC Instructor Trainer or higher level but must be evaluated and certified by an ACUC Instructor Trainer Evaluator. The main characteristic of this course is that besides doing the same as an ACUC Entry Level Instructor, the candidates that successfully complete the course, can also teach, evaluate and certify, the Advanced Diver, the ACUC Rescue Diver and the Divemaster courses, and can assist, under direct supervision of an ACUC Instructor Trainer or higher level, in the training of the ACUC Entry Level Instructor course. They can also teach certain specialties for which they have requested and obtained from ACUC, the corresponding Specialty Instructor rating. The instructor course concentrates on **teaching the candidates to teach** the contents of the above mentioned courses, not on the contents themselves, which the candidate, should already know.

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, these are specified later in this document. In any case, the training hours needed are dependent on the fulfilment of learning objectives.

1 Scope

This Standard specifies safety related minimum competencies to be achieved in recreational scuba **training** at the ACUC Open Water Instructor 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 of a certified, recreational ACUC Open Water Instructor

An ACUC Open Water Instructor shall be trained to have sufficient competencies by knowledge, skill and experience to, in addition of what an Entry Level Instructor must know, teach, evaluate and certify, the ACUC Advanced Diver, the ACUC Rescuer Diver and the ACUC Divemaster courses and to assist in the training of the Entry Level Instructor program. ACUC Open Water Instructors shall dive within the following parameters:

- Dive and lead divers to a maximum depth of 40 meters / 130 feet
- Dive and ensure that others dive only when appropriate support is available at the surface,
- Dive and ensure that others dive under conditions that are equal or better than the conditions where they were trained.
- Assist certified divers in new environments which the Open Water Instructor is familiar with.

If accompanied by an ACUC instructor of superior level, certified ACUC Open Water Instructors may gain progressive experience beyond these parameters (except depth) and develop competency in managing more challenging diving conditions designed to lead to higher qualifications. Where further instruction or experience is required, this can only be provided by a suitably qualified ACUC instructor.

4. Prerequisites for enrolment in the training

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

- **Minimum age:** To start training: 18 years. (see also point 11, Assessment and Certification requirements)
- **Health requirements:** Candidates shall be medically screened as suitable for recreational diving by means of an appropriate medical examination. Candidates shall be advised of the importance of appropriate regular medical examinations.
- **Previous Certification and minimum dive experience:** ACUC Divemaster, Entry Level Instructor or similar, with at least 41 hours (around 82 dives) **bottom time** experience. Minimum 6 months diving experience (see also point 11, Assessment and Certification requirements)

- **Minimum candidate diving equipment:** This equipment includes, as a minimum: fins, mask, snorkel, scuba tank, buoyancy control device, regulator, alternate air source (for example, octopus system), submersible pressure gauge, watch and depth gauge (or computer with all those functions), weight ballast system and exposure suit (if appropriate), knife (unless prohibited by law or regulation at the dive site), ACUC dive tables, compass and emergency signalling device.
- **Documentation requirements:** Candidates must sign a risk waiver form, safety norms, ethical conduct form, etc....these forms are downloadable from the ACUC private website and are included in the Instructor's kit.

5. Instructor: Candidate Ratios during training

- **Theory (classroom or pool):** No limit
- **Confined Water:** 10 candidates per Instructor, with an additional 4 candidates per Divemaster, with an absolute maximum of 20 candidates.
- **Open Water:** 8 candidates per Instructor, with an additional 2 candidates per Divemaster, with an absolute maximum of 12 candidates.

6. Introductory information

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

- 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 11,
- Diving related legislation and legal requirements.

7. General course content relating to theory knowledge

If the candidate is an ACUC Divemaster: Candidates must already have the knowledge of a Divemaster, plus:

7.1 Teaching Techniques: Candidates shall have an advanced knowledge of:

- Teaching and Evaluating the ACUC Scuba Diver course
- Teaching and Evaluating the ACUC Open Water Diver course
- Teaching and Evaluating the ACUC Advanced Diver course
- Teaching and Evaluating the ACUC Rescue Diver course
- Teaching and Evaluating the ACUC Divemaster course

If the candidate is an ACUC Entry Level Instructor: Candidates must already have the knowledge of an Entry Level Instructor plus:

7.2 Teaching Techniques: Candidates shall have an advanced knowledge of:

- Teaching and Evaluating the ACUC Advanced Diver course
- Teaching and Evaluating the ACUC Rescue Diver course
- Teaching and Evaluating the ACUC Divemaster course

More specific training guidelines and lessons plans on the above subjects are available in the specific training guides for each course and in the Teaching Techniques section.

8. General course content relating to scuba skills

If the candidate is an ACUC Divemaster.

8.1 Confined water scuba skills: Besides the already acquired skills of a Divemaster, candidates shall be able to perform the following skills. Each skill shall be mastered in confined water before that skill is performed in open water.

- Teaching and Evaluating the ACUC Scuba Diver course
- Teaching and Evaluating the ACUC Open Water Diver course
- Teaching and Evaluating the ACUC Advanced Diver course
- Teaching and Evaluating the ACUC Rescue Diver course
- Teaching and Evaluating the ACUC Divemaster course

8.2 Open water scuba skills: Besides the already acquired skills of a Divemaster, candidates shall be able to perform the following skills in conditions typical of the local environment.

- Teaching and Evaluating the ACUC Scuba Diver course
- Teaching and Evaluating the ACUC Open Water Diver course
- Teaching and Evaluating the ACUC Advanced Diver course
- Teaching and Evaluating the ACUC Rescue Diver course
- Teaching and Evaluating the ACUC Divemaster course

If the candidate is an ACUC Entry Level Instructor:

8.3 Confined water scuba skills: Besides the already acquired skills of an Entry Level Instructor, candidates shall be able to perform the following skills. Each skill shall be mastered in confined water before that skill is performed in open water.

- Teaching and Evaluating the ACUC Advanced Diver course
- Teaching and Evaluating the ACUC Rescue Diver course
- Teaching and Evaluating the ACUC Divemaster course

8.4 Open water scuba skills: Besides the already acquired skills of an Entry Level Instructor, candidates shall be able to perform the following skills in conditions typical of the local environment.

- Teaching and Evaluating the ACUC Advanced Diver course
- Teaching and Evaluating the ACUC Rescue Diver course
- Teaching and Evaluating the ACUC Divemaster course

More specific training guidelines and lessons plans on the above subjects are available in the specific training guides for each course and in the Teaching Techniques section.

9. Additional course contents

Course Topics. The candidate shall complete training under the supervision of an instructor trainer/evaluator. Training is to include the following topics:

- Lesson preparation and lesson delivery
- Confined water and open water procedures
- Confined water and open water problem solving
- ACUC training standards for the levels which they will be able to teach (note: to study ACUC's standards, students must be referred to the Standards' section of the ACUC public web, which contain the most up to date documents).
- ACUC's procedures and documents (Requirements and forms for diver certification, ordering training materials, medical forms, liability discharge forms, safety recommendation forms and documents, accident report forms, etc...).

- Professional and ethical responsibility and control of an ACUC professional (Divemaster or higher level)
- Checking of Instructor-level knowledge of dive equipment, physics, physiology, medical problems related to diving, decompression theory, use of ACUC dive tables and dive environment.
- Dive marketing
- Dive site selection

10. Practical training parameters

- All skills shall be introduced and directly supervised by an ACUC Instructor Trainer, who shall be in the water during each session. The Instructor Trainer shall be in direct control of candidates throughout all sessions.
- All skills shall be evaluated by an ACUC Instructor Evaluator, who shall be in the water during each evaluation session.
- When open water dives are involved, before participating in open water dives a candidate shall have demonstrated sufficient theoretical knowledge and scuba skills in confined water to be able to perform the open water dives in the prevailing conditions.
- The maximum depth during training dives shall not exceed 25 meters / 80 feet
- All training open water dives shall be conducted during daylight hours in water that allows direct vertical access to the surface. Open water dives therefore shall not be conducted in underwater caves or below ice.
- During open water dives the candidate shall at least be equipped with diving equipment according to 2.9 (see the Definitions section).
- As per clause 5, the absolute maximum number of candidates per scuba instructor in ideal conditions for supervision and escorting under water is eight. The maximum number of candidates per qualified assistant for supervision and escorting under water is two. At no time shall a candidate in or under water be left without supervision.
- Prior to open water dives the scuba instructor shall prepare an “emergency plan”. In the immediate vicinity of the dive site there shall be:
 - A suitable first aid kit
 - An emergency oxygen unit which delivers at least 15 l/min. for at least 20 minutes.
 - A communication system suitable for alerting emergency services.
- The scuba instructor shall cancel or abort the open water dive if environmental conditions or a candidate’s physical or mental condition make this necessary.
- A maximum of 3 daily training dives will be allowed.

11. Assessment and certification requirements

11.1 Watermanship skills: The candidate shall effectively demonstrate basic watermanship ability. This watermanship evaluation shall include a continuous 400 yard (366 metre) surface distance swim and a 10 minute survival swim/float without the use of mask, fins, or snorkel, or of other swimming aids.

11.2 Training hours: The candidate shall complete at least 100 total training hours of specialized training/evaluation. A minimum of 50 training hours are to occur under the supervision of an instructor trainer/evaluator and include the topics outlined in points 11.4 and 11.5 below. The remaining hours are to include, but are not limited to, the training outlined in points 9.1 above and 11.10 below.

11.3 Knowledge: The candidate shall demonstrate, by means of the written test¹ supplied by ACUC, knowledge of scuba diving theory according to 7 and knowledge of skills according to 8.

¹ If for some reason, the candidate cannot do a written test, then the instructor can do an oral examination to the candidate based on the written test provided by ACUC and if this is the case, the instructor will transfer the candidate’s oral answers to the written test. Whatever the case, the written test must be completed, either directly by the candidate or indirectly by the instructor, using the candidate’s oral answers. Instructors can, if they wish, offer additional tests to the candidate, however, the ACUC provided test must be done.

11.4 Theory Teaching Techniques²: The candidate shall demonstrate, by means of at least 3 classroom presentations, knowledge of teaching techniques. Two of the presentation topics will be selected by the trainer and one by the candidate; the presentations will be evaluated following the instructions shown of the corresponding ACUC presentations evaluation form; some of the topics could be:

- Equipment
- Diving Physics
- Medical problems related to diving
- Use of ACUC dive tables
- Dive Environment
- Dive planning
- Stress recognition and assistance
- Emergency procedures (for example, loss of buddy, out of air, etc...)
- Accident management, prevention and report
- Communications, both underwater and on the surface
- Diver assistance (self/buddy)
- etc...

11.5 Scuba Skills: The candidate shall satisfactorily demonstrate to an ACUC Instructor Trainer Evaluator, the scuba skills according to 8 and shall be evaluated using the ACUC water practices evaluation form. **These should include Rescue and Divers's first aid evaluations**, as indicated in the corresponding evaluation form. Candidates must do at least 3 confined water presentations (two topics selected by the trainer and another by the candidate) and 3 open water presentations (two topics selected by the trainer and another by the candidate). Some of the **confined water** topics could be:

- Diving system assembly and disassembly (at water's edge)
- Equipment inspection (at water's edge)
- Entries and exits
- Mouthpiece clearing - snorkel and regulator
- Regulator/snorkel exchanges at the surface
- Controlled descents and ascents
- Underwater swimming (different styles)
- Mask clearing underwater, including removal and replacement
- Buddy system techniques, including out of air emergency
- Underwater (pivotal) and surface buoyancy control
- Underwater regulator recovery/retrieval
- Surface operation, including removal and replacement, of the quick release function of the weight system
- Removal and replacement of scuba system underwater
- Equipment care and maintenance (at water's edge)

Some of the **open water** topics could be:

- Entries and exits (from a boat, from a raised platform, from the shore, etc...)
- Proper Weighting
- Mouthpiece clearing - snorkel and regulator
- Controlled descents and ascents
- Underwater swimming (different styles)
- Mask clearing underwater
- Cramp removal
- Underwater and surface buoyancy control
- Diver assistance techniques (self/buddy), including out of air emergency handling
- Surface snorkel swimming with full diving system
- Underwater problem-solving (regulator recovery/retrieval, etc.)
- Underwater navigation

11.6 Minimum Dives: The candidate must have at least 70 hours of bottom time (140 dives) before obtaining the certification.

² Candidates who are ACUC Divemasters should already be familiar with the theory teaching techniques, because they have already studied this matter during their Divemaster preparation, but they should be checked in any case. However, if the Divemasters come from other organisations, it is possible that they have not seen this matter before, so they should not only be checked, but also trained in this matter.

11.7 Minimum Dive Experience: at least 6 months since initial dive certification

11.8 Minimum Age: To obtain the certification: 19 years.

11.9 Rescue and First Aid, including CPR, oxygen administration and defibrillator: At the time of certification, the candidate should have current, training in **Diving First Aid**, including defibrillator (for example ACUC's DER – Diving Emergency Responder). The candidate should be competent in the practical use of **emergency oxygen** during a diving emergency (for example ACUC's O2ER – Oxygen Emergency Responder - or DAN certification), unless prohibited by local law; First Aid and O2 administration may be taught during the instructor course, but may not be counted toward the 100 total training hours. **Diver Rescue:** The candidate must demonstrate diver rescue skills; the candidate must also satisfactorily demonstrate, to an instructor trainer/evaluator, at least one complete open water rescue. As candidates must already be at least Divemasters, and to be Divemasters they must already be Rescue Divers, they should not need much training, but if they do, rescue may be taught during the instructor course but may not be counted toward the 100 total training hours. **CPR:** At the time of certification, the candidate should have current training in CPR. CPR may be taught during the instructor course, but may not be counted toward the 100 total training hours.

11.10 Dive Supervision. As the candidate must already be a Divemaster, he must already know group control and supervision of diver activities. If not, Dive Supervisor skills may be taught during the instructor course and may be counted toward the 100 total training hours.

11.11 Diving Specialties: Candidates must have experience in at least, the following ACUC specialties to be able to teach the Advanced Diver level, for example: Night Diving, Wreck Diving, Underwater Orientation, etc... If they do not have them, these could be done during the instructor course, however the time may not be counted towards the 100 total training hours.

12 Course Dives

No additional training dives, except those needed to demonstrate the skills mentioned in point 11.5 above, and those in which the candidate participates as a Divemaster, Entry Level Instructor or Open Water Instructor-in-training, are required for this level.

13 Candidate's certification

Candidates will be certified as ACUC Open Water Instructors when they have complied with all the requirements. These include:

- Minimum 140 Open Water Dives (70 hours bottom time)
- Pass the ACUC Open Water Instructor written and practical examinations

14 Candidate's qualifications

Once completed the course, the ACUC Open Water Instructor will be able to:

- Dive up to a maximum depth of 40 meters and always accompanied by at least another certified diver.
- Be able to guide groups of divers in open water without supervision.
- Be able to teach, evaluate and certify all levels up to and including, the Divemaster level courses without supervision
- Be able to teach any specialties for which the Open Water Instructor holds or obtains the Specialty Instructor certification

15 Deviations

None requested