



SCUBA DIVER STANDARDS

V0424

Special interest points:

- This is an **optional** certification
- ACUC Scuba Divers must always dive under the direct supervision of an ACUC Divemaster or similar from another recognized organization
- The maximum depth **during training** is 12 meters / 40 feet
- This course is equivalent to the ISO 24801-1 and the RSTC Supervised Diver

Introduction

The ACUC Scuba Diver is an **optional** course. Its place, with respect to skills and level of theory, within the ACUC training ladder, is above the Introduction to Diving course and below the ACUC Open Water Diver course. This course can be taught by any ACUC Entry Level Instructor or higher level; Divemasters can assist in all facets of the course, under direct supervision of an ACUC Instructor, but must be evaluated and certified by any ACUC Entry Level Instructor or higher level. The main characteristics of this course are that candidates who successfully complete the course will **not** be able to dive if they are not, at least, under the direct supervision of someone with the ACUC Divemaster certification, or similar certification from other member organizations of the RSTC or CMAS, and, **once certified**, should only dive to a recommended maximum depth of 15 meters / 50 feet. Divers wishing to dive deeper should be encouraged to take the ACUC Open Water Diver course.

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 Scuba 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 as 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

An ACUC Scuba Diver will be trained to have sufficient competencies through knowledge, skills and experience to dive with other certified divers in open water, of at least the same level, always under the direct supervision of at least one ACUC Divemaster or similar of other organizations. ACUC Scuba Divers will dive within the following parameters:

- Dive to a recommended maximum depth, once certified, of 15 meters / 50 feet, always under the direct supervision of at least, an ACUC Divemaster or similar.
- Participate in dives that do not require mandatory decompression stops.
- 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 Scuba Diver can gain progressive experience beyond these parameters 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:** 15 years. Students between 12 and 15 years old, who meet supervised diver performance requirements, may qualify for a special certification. Parental or guardian consent is required when the applicant 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.

- **Documentation requirements:** Candidates must sign the ACUC Risk Release and the Safe Diving practices forms, both forms are included in the Scuba Diver kit or are downloadable from the ACUC private website.
- **Know how to swim.**

5 Ratios

The Instructor: Candidate ratios to be maintained during training are:

- Theory (classroom or pool): No limit.
- Confined Water: 8 candidates per Instructor, with an additional 2 candidates per Divemaster, with an absolute maximum of 12 candidates.
- Open Water: 4 candidates per Instructor, with an additional 2 candidates per 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 10,
- Diving related legislation and legal requirements.

7 Theory knowledge

The content of the course related to theory knowledge is:

- Equipment: Candidates will have a basic level of theoretical knowledge about the use and handling of diving equipment.
- Diving Physics: Candidates will have a basic understanding of the influence and effects of changing pressure, in particular with respect to:
 - Compensation (for example, ears and mask)
 - Breathing (not holding your breath and effect of pressure on air consumption)
 - Buoyancy and how to control it
 - Time and depth (the Decompression Safety Curve)
- Diving Related Medical Problems: Candidates will have a basic understanding of how to avoid problems that result from:
 - Direct effects of pressure
 - Rising pressure (descent phase)
 - Gas compression (for example: ears, sinuses, mask, lungs, suits, teeth)
 - Decreasing pressure (ascent phase)
 - Gaseous expansion (for example: ears, sinuses, lungs, stomach, intestines, teeth).
 - Decompression sickness (for example: decompression sickness, arterial embolism)
 - Other risks
 - Physical and mental stress
 - The effects of temperature on the diver
 - Medication, drugs, alcohol, etc.

- Diving environment: Candidates will have a basic understanding of the local and general conditions of the diving environment, and their possible effects on the diver, and the diver's impact on the environment.

8 Skills knowledge

Course content related to diving skills

- **8.1 Confined Water Diving Skills:** 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:
 - Use of basic equipment
 - Assembly and disassembly of diving equipment (at water's edge)
 - Water entries and exits
 - Mouthpiece rinse - snorkel and regulator
 - Regulator/snorkel exchanges, surface swimming
 - Proper descent and ascent procedures (for example: equalizing pressure in ears and mask)
 - Underwater swimming
 - Rinsing of mask, including taking them off and putting them on
 - Buoyancy control, underwater and on the surface
 - Underwater regulator recovery
 - Basic instrument monitoring
 - Surface operation of the quick release of the weight system
 - Act as a recipient of an alternative breathing gas source
 - Equipment care
 - Basic hand signals
- **8.2 Open Water Diving Skills:** Candidates should be able to perform the following skills in conditions typical of the local environment:
 - Use of basic equipment
 - Assembly and disassembly of diving equipment (at water's edge)
 - Water entries and exits
 - Mouthpiece rinse - snorkel and regulator
 - Regulator/snorkel exchanges, surface swimming
 - Proper descent and ascent procedures (e.g. equalizing pressure in ears and mask)
 - Underwater swimming
 - Rinsing of mask, including taking them off and putting them on (*) Special safety precautions will be taken during the process of removing and putting on the mask in open water, specifically in areas with cold water.
 - Buoyancy control, underwater and on the surface
 - Underwater regulator recovery
 - Basic instrument monitoring
 - Surface operation of the quick release of the weight system
 - Act as a recipient of an alternative breathing gas source
 - Equipment care
 - Basic hand signals

9 Practical training parameters

- All confined water underwater skills will be introduced, directly directed and assessed 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.

- Prior to the first open water dive the candidate will show effective proof of, or demonstrate to a diving instructor, the following aquatic skills, without the use of a mask, fins, snorkel, or other swimming aids:
 - 50m swim
 - 5 minute survival float.
- Prior to 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 prevailing conditions.
- The maximum depth during training dives will not exceed 12 meters / 40 feet
- All open water training dives will be conducted during daylight hours, in water that allows direct vertical access to the surface. Open water dives, therefore, will not be done in caves or under ice.
- During open water dives the candidate and the instructor shall at least be equipped with diving equipment according to 2.9.
- All open water underwater skills will be introduced, directly directed 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 surveillance and escort under water is four. The maximum number of candidates per qualified assistant for surveillance and escort under water is two.
- At no time should a candidate be left unattended in or under the water.
- Under no circumstances will groups of certified divers be allowed (certified diver as buddy of another certified diver and so on) and groups of candidates from a Scuba Diver course in the same dive, under direct supervision of the same instructor.
- Under no circumstances it is allowed to buddy up a certified diver with a candidate (unless said diver has the necessary certification — Divemaster as a minimum).
- 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 with a capacity to supply at least 15 l/min, for at least 20 minutes.
 - Adequate communication system to alert emergency services.
- The 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 are allowed

10 Evaluation

The evaluation and certification requirements will consider the following parameters:

- **Knowledge:** The candidate will demonstrate, by means of a written exam (see note below) 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.

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.

11 Checkout dives

To become certified, candidates will complete at least two open water training dives under the direct supervision of an ACUC instructor. The underwater duration of each of these open water dives will be at least 20 min. Divers should be evaluated in the skills specified in point 8.2

12 Candidate's certification

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

- Minimum 2 Open Water Dives
- Pass the ACUC Scuba Diver written examination
- Successfully complete the Check-out dives for the ACUC Scuba Diver course

13 Candidate's qualifications

Once the course is completed, the ACUC Scuba Diver will be able to dive in waters of similar characteristics to those in which he was trained, up to a maximum depth of 15 meters / 50 feet (12 meters / 40 feet during training), and always under the **direct supervision** of a diver with a minimum certification of Divemaster.

14 Deviations

None requested



SKILLS TO BE TESTED IN THE FIRST DIVE

Note: This first dive should be considered as an introduction to the environment, therefore, perform simple exercises so as not to add additional stress to the candidate. The dive must be performed in water between 6 and 12 meters deep. The bottom time suggested is 30 minutes (25 minutes in cold water).

1. Use of equipment and weight adjustment
2. Tank inspection.
3. Equipment assembly and disassembly (out of the water).
4. Putting the equipment on and taking it off (out of the water).
5. Water entry methods (Giant step and walking entry from shore).
6. Surface dives (feet first).
7. Snorkel clearing (Blast method).
8. Regulator / snorkel exchange swimming in surface.
9. Cramp removal
10. (*) Appropriate descent and ascent procedures (for example, equalize pressure in the ears and mask, rotation during ascent, hand up, OK signal, etc).
11. (*) Buoyancy control at the surface and under water (pivotal method).
12. Equipment care and dive log

SKILL TEST	BUDDY TEAM 2				BUDDY TEAM 2			
	DIVER 1		DIVER 2		DIVER 3		DIVER 4	
	PASS	FAIL	PASS	FAIL	PASS	FAIL	PASS	FAIL
1								
2								
3								
4								
5								
6								
7								
8								
9								
10								
11								
12								

COMMENTS



SKILLS TO BE TESTED IN THE SECOND DIVE

In this second dive more complex skills will be checked, however, consider that this is only the second dive in open water and therefore we should not add unnecessary stress to the student. Repeat some of the exercises of the first dive, to make a continuous assessment. The depth of this dive should be between 6 and 12 meters. The bottom time suggested is 25 minutes (20 minutes in cold water).

1. Equipment assembly and disassembly (out of the water).
2. Putting the equipment on and taking it off (out of the water).
3. Water entry methods (Back roll and Controlled entry)
4. Surface dives (Head first)
5. (*) Buoyancy control under water (pivotal method).
6. Snorkel clearing (Displacement method)
7. Underwater swim (Bicycle and Scissors methods)
8. (*) Appropriate descent and ascent procedures (for example, equalize pressure in the ears and mask, rotation during ascent, hand up, OK signal, etc).
9. (*) Regulator clearing (Blow method)
10. (*) To act as donor and receiver of an octopus system or similar alternate air source
11. (*) Descending and ascending using the BC
12. Instrument monitoring (often) and basic hand signals
13. Equipment care and dive log

SKILL TEST	BUDDY TEAM 1				BUDDY TEAM 2			
	DIVER 1		DIVER 2		DIVER 3		DIVER 4	
	PASS	FAIL	PASS	FAIL	PASS	FAIL	PASS	FAIL
1								
2								
3								
4								
5								
6								
7								
8								
9								
10								
11								
12								
13								

COMMENTS