



## ABOUT ACUC SPECIALTIES

ACUC classifies its specialties in two ways: the first one according to the level of safety and the second as restricted or not restricted. The level of safety refers to the risk or the knowledge which that specialty bears. There are 3 degrees: SL1; SL2 and SL3. “SL” means “Safety Level”. The higher the SL is, the higher level of risk or special knowledge that specialty bears.

The specialties rated SL1 can be taken by people starting with a minimum certification of Open Water Diver. The SL2 specialties start from Advanced Diver and the SL3 specialties start from Rescue Diver. Some specialties also have a classification of SL0. These specialties can be taken by people who are not divers.

Whether the specialties are restricted or not depends on the requirements that the Instructor must complete before being able to teach these specialties. The “Not Restricted” (NR) specialties are those in which the Instructor does not have to complete any specific requirement, except of course, being a diving Instructor. The “Non Restricted” specialties are themselves divided in two types:

- NR1: The Instructor does not have to do anything and automatically becomes an Instructor in that specialty
- NR2: The Instructor does not need to take any specific Instructor course in that specialty, but must request from ACUC to be registered as that specialty Instructor and purchase the corresponding specialty Instructor kit.

The “Restricted” (R) specialties are those in which the Instructor must complete some type of course or specific training before being able to teach this specialty.

Therefore, for example, a code “SL2-R” means that it is a specialty that can be taken by any diver who is as a minimum an Advanced Diver and it can be taught by a Diving Instructor who should also have completed a course or special program to teach this specialty.

Below, please find the current ACUC specialties together with their current code.

### SL0-NR1 SPECIALTIES

- **Surface Controller** (SL0-NR1). The candidate is not required to be a diver. Any OW Instructor or higher level can teach it.

### SL0-NR2 SPECIALTIES

- **Equipment Maintenance** (SL0-NR2). The candidate is not required to be a diver. The Instructor must register with ACUC as an Equipment Maintenance Instructor

### SL0-R SPECIALTIES

- **First Aid Provider** (SL0-R). The candidate is not required to be a diver. The Instructor should be a First Aid Instructor
- **Oxygen Provider** (SL0-R). The candidate is not required to be a diver. The Instructor should be an Oxygen Instructor (Note ACUC does not actually provide this specialty directly, it does so through other recognised agencies such as DAN or USP)
- **Nitrox Mixer – also called Blender** (SL0-R). The candidate does not have to be a diver. The Instructor should be a Nitrox Instructor.

## SL1-NR1 SPECIALTIES

- **Rescue Specialist (SL1-NR1).** The candidate must be at least OWD. Any OW Instructor or higher level can teach it. **Note: Not to be confused with the Rescue Diver main course**

## SL1-NR2 SPECIALTIES

- **Altitude Diver (SL1-NR2).** The candidate must be at least an OWD. The Instructor must register with ACUC as an Altitude Diving Instructor
- **Deep Diving to 40 meters (130 feet) (SL1-NR2).** The candidate must be at least an OWD. The Instructor must register with ACUC as a Deep Diving Instructor
- **Wreck Diver (SL1-NR2).** The candidate must be at least an OWD. The Instructor must register with ACUC as a Wreck Diving Instructor
- **Night Diving (SL1-NR2).** The candidate must be at least an OWD. The Instructor must register with ACUC as a Night Diving Instructor
- **Underwater Orientation (SL1-NR2).** The candidate must be at least an OWD. The Instructor must register with ACUC as an Orientation Diving Instructor
- **Drift Diving (SL1-NR2).** The candidate must be at least an OWD. The Instructor must register with ACUC as a Drift Diving Instructor
- **Dry Suit Diver (SL1-NR2).** The candidate must be at least an OWD. The Instructor must be a Dry Suit Diver and register with ACUC as a Dry Suit Instructor

## SL1-R SPECIALTIES

- **Underwater Biology (SL1-R).** The candidate must be at least an OWD. The Instructor should be a Biology Instructor
- **Underwater Digital Photography (SL1-R).** The candidate must be at least an OWD. The Instructor should be a PhotoSub Instructor
- **Sidemount Diver (SL1-R).** The candidate must be at least an OWD. The Instructor should be a Sidemount Instructor
- **Full Nitrox Diver (SL1-R).** This specialty is available everywhere except in North America. The candidate must be at least an OWD. The Instructor should be a Nitrox Instructor.
- **Basic Nitrox Diver (SL1-R).** This specialty is only available in North America. The candidate must be at least an OWD. The Instructor should be a Nitrox Instructor.
- **Technical Nitrox Diver (SL1-R).** This specialty is only available in North America. The candidate must be at least a Nitrox Diver. The Instructor should be a Nitrox Instructor.
- **Rebreather Diver (SL1-R).** The candidate must be at least a Nitrox Diver. The Instructor should be a Rebreather Instructor.

## SL2-NR1 SPECIALTIES

- **Teaching Assistant (SL2-NR1).** The candidate must be at least an Advanced Diver. Any OW Instructor or higher level can teach it. The dry portion of the Teaching Techniques course can be given to any person, even non-divers. **Note: Not to be confused with the Assistant Instructor main course**

## SL2-R SPECIALTIES

- **Ice Diver (SL2-R).** The candidate must be at least an Advanced Diver. The Instructor should be and Ice Diving Instructor
- **Intro to Cave (SL2-R).** The candidate must be at least an Advanced Diver. The Instructor should be a Cavern Diving Instructor

## SL3-NR1 SPECIALTIES

- **Underwater Guide** (SL3-NR1). The candidate must be at least a Rescue Diver with the specialties of ACUC First Aid and Oxygen Provider. Any OW Instructor or higher level can teach it. **Note: Not to be confused with the Divemaster main course**

For any other specialty not listed here, please consult with the ACUC office.

Some specialties (PhotoSub; Biology, etc...) can be taught by divers (no necessarily instructors) who have completed the Teaching Techniques (Teaching Assistant) specialty. In these cases, the “diver-instructor”, if the course requires water practices, must be assisted by personnel with a minimum certification of Divemaster, who will look after the safety of the students while the “diver-instructor” is teaching. In **no** case can a “diver-instructor” provide water training if there is no support personnel with the certifications mentioned before. In the following charts this concept is explained in a more visual way.

ACUC Instructors may check the ACUC program specifics available at the ACUC Private web ([www.acuc.org](http://www.acuc.org)) for some of these specialties.

On occasions ACUC instructors may request from ACUC to do courses for specialties which are not listed here. This is possible as long as the Instructor presents a course program and standards to ACUC for its approval. If ACUC approves it, then ACUC will issue a specialty certification card for the Instructor and for the students who pass the course, however, that specialty will not be publicly advertise as an “ACUC specialty” until it complies with all of ACUC requirements to be considered an “ACUC Specialty”. These requirements are mainly:

- Standards for the course
- An Instructor Guide for the course
- An Instructor Exam for the course
- A manual for the course
- A diver’s exam for the course

The above documents must be made available to ACUC in at least one of the following languages: English; Spanish; French; Italian or German

# ACUC SPECIALTIES CHART

## THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS RELATE TO THE NUMBERS IN THE CHART BELOW

### INSTRUCTORS

1. Does the candidate to Specialty Instructor have to be an ACUC Instructor first?
2. Can the candidate to Specialty Instructor be an Instructor from another recognized agency, without having to become an ACUC Instructor first?
3. Can the candidate to Specialty Instructor be an ACUC Diver who has taken the Teaching Techniques specialty first?
4. Does the candidate to Specialty Instructor need to take a specific Specialty Instructor course first?
5. What is the minimum diver or Instructor level that the candidate to Specialty Instructor must be

### DIVERS

6. Does the candidate to Specialty Diver have to be an ACUC Diver first?
7. What minimum Diver level must s/he be?
8. Does the candidate to Specialty Diver need a minimum number of **bottom time hours**?

| Specialty                               | Instructors |     |                 |                 |     | Divers          |     |   |
|---|-------------|-----|-----------------|-----------------|-----|-----------------|-----|---|
|   | 1           | 2   | 3 <sup>1</sup>  | 4 <sup>2</sup>  | 5   | 6               | 7   | 8 |
| <b>Surface Controller (SL0-NR1)</b>     | Yes         | No  | No              | No <sup>3</sup> | DM  | No <sup>4</sup> | -   | - |
| <b>Equipment Maintenance (SL0-NR2)</b>  | No          | Yes | Yes             | Yes             | -   | No <sup>5</sup> | -   | - |
| <b>First Aid (SL0-R)</b>                | No          | Yes | No <sup>6</sup> | Yes             | DM  | No <sup>7</sup> | -   | - |
| <b>Oxygen Provider (SL0-R)</b>          | No          | Yes | No <sup>8</sup> | Yes             | DM  | No <sup>9</sup> | -   | - |
| <b>Nitrox Mixer (SL0-R)</b>             | No          | Yes | No              | Yes             | OWI | No              | -   | - |
| <b>Rescue Specialist (SL1-NR1)</b>      | Yes         | No  | No              | No              | OWI | No              | OWD | 5 |
| <b>Deep Diving (40m/130f) (SL1-NR2)</b> | Yes         | No  | No              | No              | OWI | No              | OWD | 5 |

<sup>1</sup> In all cases where divers are allowed to become Specialty Instructors, candidates must have previously taken the Teaching Assistant specialty

<sup>2</sup> In most cases, candidates to Specialty Instructor must obtain the specific ACUC Instructor Specialty Kit (if available) and pay for the specific ACUC Instructor specialty rating

<sup>3</sup> No need to obtain any Specialty Instructor Kit. Any ACUC DM can automatically give this specialty

<sup>4</sup> Does not have to be a Diver but must have the specialties of First Aid Provider and Oxygen Administration

<sup>5</sup> Does not have to be a diver

<sup>6</sup> Unless s/he is a Medical Professional (doctor, nurse, etc), in which case s/he can become an ACUC Instructor in this specialty.

<sup>7</sup> Does not have to be a diver

<sup>8</sup> Unless a Medical Professional and also a First Aid Instructor, in which case s/he can become an ACUC Instructor in this specialty

<sup>9</sup> Does not have to be a Diver but must be a First Aid Provider

| Specialty                           | Instructors |     |                  |                  |                   | Divers |                   |    |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|-----|------------------|------------------|-------------------|--------|-------------------|----|
|                                     | 1           | 2   | 3 <sup>10</sup>  | 4 <sup>11</sup>  | 5                 | 6      | 7                 | 8  |
| Altitude Diving (SL1-NR2)           | Yes         | No  | No               | No               | OWI               | No     | OWD               | 4  |
| Wreck Diving (SL1-NR2)              | Yes         | No  | No               | No               | OWI               | No     | OWD               | 4  |
| Night Diving (SL1-NR2)              | Yes         | No  | No               | No               | OWI               | No     | OWD               | 4  |
| U/W Orientation (SL1-NR2)           | Yes         | No  | No               | No               | OWI               | No     | OWD               | 2  |
| Drift Diving (SL1-NR2)              | Yes         | No  | No               | No               | OWI               | No     | OWD               | 2  |
| Dry Suit (SL1-NR2)                  | Yes         | No  | No               | No <sup>12</sup> | OWI               | No     | OWD               | 2  |
| U/W Biology (SL1-R)                 | No          | Yes | No <sup>13</sup> | Yes              | DM                | No     | OWD               | 2  |
| U/W Digital Photography (SL1-R)     | No          | Yes | Yes              | Yes              | OWD               | No     | OWD               | 2  |
| Sidemount (SL1-R)                   | Yes         | No  | No               | Yes              | OWI               | No     | OWD               | 10 |
| Full and Basic Nitrox Diver (SL1-R) | Yes         | No  | No               | Yes              | OWI               | No     | OWD               | 2  |
| Technical Nitrox Diver (SL1-R)      | Yes         | No  | No               | Yes              | OWI               | No     | Nitrox Diver      | 4  |
| Rebreather (SL1-R)                  | Yes         | No  | No               | Yes              | OWI <sup>14</sup> | No     | OWD <sup>15</sup> | 3  |
| Teaching Assistant (SL2-NR1)        | Yes         | No  | No               | No <sup>16</sup> | ELI               | Yes    | ADV               | 10 |
| Ice Diving (SL2-R)                  | Yes         | No  | No               | Yes              | ADI               | No     | ADV               | 10 |
| Intro to Cave (SL2-R)               | Yes         | No  | No               | Yes              | ADI               | No     | ADV               | 10 |
| U/W Guide (SL3-NR1)                 | Yes         | No  | No               | No <sup>17</sup> | ELI               | Yes    | RES <sup>18</sup> | 15 |

**Legend:**

OWD: Open Water Diver; ADV: Advanced Diver; RES: Rescue Diver; DM: Divemaster; ELI: Entry Level Instructor; OWI: Open Water Instructor; ADI: Advanced Instructor

<sup>10</sup> In all cases where divers are allowed to become Specialty Instructors, candidates must have previously taken the Teaching Assistant specialty

<sup>11</sup> In most cases, candidates to Specialty Instructor must obtain the specific ACUC Instructor Specialty Kit (if available) and pay for the specific ACUC Instructor specialty rating

<sup>12</sup> Must be a Dry Suit Diver

<sup>13</sup> Unless a Biologist and if so, Open Water Dives must be supervised by someone with the minimum level of Divemaster

<sup>14</sup> Must also be a Nitrox Instructor

<sup>15</sup> Must also be a Nitrox Diver

<sup>16</sup> No need to obtain any Specialty Instructor Kit. Any ACUC ELI can automatically give this specialty

<sup>17</sup> No need to obtain any Specialty Instructor Kit. Any ACUC ELI can automatically give this specialty

<sup>18</sup> Must have the specialties of First Aid Provider and Oxygen Provider

**SHORT FORM STANDARDS**

| <b>Specialty</b>                             | <b>Training Ratios</b>   | <b>Minimum age</b> | <b>MTBT<sup>19</sup></b>              |
|--|--|--------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Surface Controller                           | Unlimited. No water involved   | 16                 | None                                  |
| Equipment Maintenance                        | Unlimited. No water involved   | 16                 | None                                  |
| First Aid Provider                           | Unlimited. No water involved   | 12                 | None                                  |
| O2 Provider                                  | Unlimited. No water involved   | 12                 | None                                  |
| Nitrox Mixer                                 | Unlimited. No water involved   | 16                 | None                                  |
| Rescue Specialist                            | Classroom: Unlimited<br>Confined water: 10:1; 14:2; Max: 20<br>Open Water: 6:1; 8:2; Max: 12 | 16                 | 60' (40' in cold water)               |
| Deep diving to 40m                           | Classroom: Unlimited<br>Confined water: 8:1; 12:2; Max: 16<br>Open Water: 2:1; 4:2; Max: 4   | 16                 | 20'                                   |
| Altitude Diver                               | Classroom: Unlimited<br>Confined water: 8:1; 12:2; Max: 16<br>Open Water: 2:1; 4:2; Max: 8   | 12                 | 30' (20' in cold water)               |
| Wreck Diver (exit point always within sight) | Classroom: Unlimited<br>Confined water: 8:1; 12:2; Max: 16<br>Open Water: 4:1; 6:2; Max: 8   | 12                 | 60' (40' in cold water)               |
| Night Diver                                  | Classroom: Unlimited<br>Confined water: 8:1; 12:2; Max: 16<br>Open Water: 2:1; 4:2; Max: 8   | 12                 | 60' (40' in cold water)               |
| Underwater Orientation                       | Classroom: Unlimited<br>Confined water: 8:1; 12:2; Max: 16<br>Open Water: 4:1; 6:2; Max: 8   | 12                 | 60' (40' in cold water)               |
| Drift Diving                                 | Classroom: Unlimited<br>Confined water: 8:1; 12:2; Max: 16<br>Open Water: 4:1; 6:2; Max: 8   | 12                 | 60' (40' in cold water)               |
| Dry Suit Diver                               | Classroom: Unlimited<br>Confined water: 4:1; 6:2; Max: 8<br>Open Water: 2:1; 3:2; Max: 4     | 16                 | 40'                                   |
| U/W Biology                                  | Classroom: Unlimited<br>Confined water: 8:1; 12:2; Max: 16<br>Open Water: 6:1; 10:2; Max: 14 | 12                 | 60' (40' in cold water)               |
| U/W Digital Photography                      | Classroom: Unlimited<br>Confined water: 8:1; 12:2; Max: 16<br>Open Water: 6:1; 10:2; Max: 14 | 12                 | 30' (20' in cold water)               |
| Sidemount Diver                              | Classroom: Unlimited<br>Confined water: 8:1; 12:2; Max: 16<br>Open Water: 2:1; 4:2; Max: 4   | 16                 | 80'                                   |
| Basic and Full Nitrox Diver                  | Classroom: Unlimited<br>Confined water: 8:1; 12:2; Max: 16<br>Open Water: 4:1; 6:2; Max: 8   | 16                 | 60' (40' in cold water) <sup>20</sup> |
| Technical Nitrox Diver                       | Classroom: Unlimited<br>Confined water: 8:1; 12:2; Max: 16<br>Open Water: 4:1; 6:2; Max: 8   | 16                 | 60' (40' in cold water) <sup>21</sup> |
| Rebreather Diver                             | Classroom: Unlimited<br>Confined water: 8:1; 12:2; Max: 16<br>Open Water: 4:1; 6:2; Max: 8   | 16                 | 120' (80' in cold water)              |
| Teaching Assistant                           | Classroom: Unlimited<br>Confined water: 8:1; 12:2; Max: 16<br>Open Water: 4:1; 6:2; Max: 8   | 16                 | 60' (40' in cold water)               |

<sup>19</sup>Minimum **Training** Bottom Time in open water required

<sup>20</sup> Not mandatory, although highly recommended

<sup>21</sup> Not mandatory, although highly recommended

| <b>Specialty</b> | <b>Training Ratios</b>   | <b>Minimum age</b> | <b>MTBT</b>             |
|------------------|--|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Ice Diver        | Classroom: Unlimited<br>Confined water: 8:1; 12:2; Max: 16<br>Open Water: 1:1 per ice hole | 16                 | 30'                     |
| Intro to Cave    | Classroom: Unlimited<br>Confined water: 8:1; 12:2; Max: 16<br>Open Water: 2:1; 4:2; Max: 4 | 16                 | 80' (60' in cold water) |
| U/W Guide        | Classroom: Unlimited<br>Confined water: 8:1; 12:2; Max: 16<br>Open Water: 4:1; 6:2; Max: 8 | 16                 | 80' (60' in cold water) |

Note: For manuals and languages availability see the ACUC Instructor price list or check with your national ACUC office