



ABOUT ACUC SPECIALTIES

V080720

ACUC classifies its specialties in two ways: the first according to the level of safety and the second as restricted or unrestricted. The level of safety refers to the risk or knowledge that the specialty entails. There are three grades: SL1; SL2 and SL3. "SL" means "Safety Level". The higher the SL, the higher the level of risk or special knowledge which that specialty entails.

SL1 specialties can be taken by people with a minimum Open Water Diver certification. SL2 from Advanced Diver and the SL3 from Rescue Diver. There are also some specialties with a classification of SL0. These specialties can be taken even by people who are not divers.

If the specialties are restricted or not, it refers to the requirements that the Instructor must meet before being able to teach those specialties. The "Non restricted" (NR) specialties are those in which the Instructor does not have to meet any specific requirement, except of course, to be a Diving Instructor. "Non restricted" specialties are divided into two types:

- NR1: The Instructor does not need to take any action and is automatically an Instructor of that specialty
- NR2: The Instructor does not need to take any specific Instructor course of said specialty, but must request ACUC to be an Instructor of said specialty and acquire the corresponding Instructor kit.

The "Restricted" (R) specialties are those in which the Instructor must take some type of specific course or training, before being able to teach said specialty.

Therefore, for example, a code "SL2-R" means that it is a specialty that can be made by any diver, who is at least an Advanced Diver and can be taught by a Diving Instructor, who has also had to complete a course or special program to teach said specialty. The ACUC specialties are presented below, along with their current code.

SPECIALTIES SL0-NR1

- **Surface Controller** (SL0-NR1). It can even be given to non-divers but they must have First Aid and Emergency Oxygenation specialties. Any Open Water Instructor or higher level can teach it.

SPECIALTIES SL0-NR2

- **Equipment Maintenance** (SL0-NR2). No need to be a diver. The Instructor must request ACUC to be an Equipment Maintenance Instructor
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SPECIALTIES SL0-R

- **First Aid Provider** (SL0-R). It can even be given to non divers. The Instructor must take a specific First Aid Instructor course. This course includes general First Aid.
- **Diving Emergency Responder** (SL0-R). It can even be given to non divers. The Instructor must take a specific Diving Emergency Instructor course. This course includes specific First Aid for diving, Basic Life Support and Semiautomatic External Defibrillator.
- **O² Emergency Responder** (SL0-R). It can even be given to non divers. The Instructor must take a specific Emergency Oxygenation Instructor course.
- **Nitrox Mixing** (SL0-R). It can even be given to non divers. The Instructor must take a specific Nitrox Instructor course

SPECIALTIES SL1-NR1

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

SPECIALTIES SL1-NR2

- **Altitude Diver (SL1-NR2).** The diver must be at least Open Water Diver. The Instructor must request ACUC to be an Altitude Diving Instructor
- **Deep Diving 40m/130f (SL1-NR2).** The diver must be at least Open Water Diver. The Instructor must request ACUC to be a Deep Diving Instructor.
- **Wreck Diving (SL1-NR2).** The diver must be at least Open Water Diver. The Instructor must request ACUC to be a Non Penetration Wreck Diving Instructor.
- **Night Diving (SL1-NR2).** The diver must be at least Open Water Diver. The Instructor must request ACUC to be a Night Diving Instructor.
- **Drift Diving (SL1-NR2).** The diver must be at least Open Water Diver. The Instructor must request ACUC to be a Drift Diving Instructor.
- **U/W Orientation (SL1-NR2).** The diver must be at least Open Water Diver. The Instructor must request ACUC to be an Underwater Orientation Instructor.
- **Dry Suit Diving (SL1-NR2).** The diver must be at least Open Water Diver. The Instructor must be a Dry Suit Diver and request ACUC to be a Dry Suit Diving Instructor.

SPECIALTIES SL1-R

- **U/W Biology (SL1-R).** The diver must be at least Open Water Diver. The Instructor must take a specific Biology Instructor course and have a previous related academic degree.
- **U/W Digital Photography (SL1-R).** The diver must be at least Open Water Diver. The Instructor must take a specific U/W Photo Instructor course.
- **Sidemount Diving (SL1-R):** The diver must be at least Open Water Diver. The Instructor must take a specific Sidemount Instructor course.
- **Nitrox 40 Diving (SL1-R).** The diver must be at least Open Water Diver. The Instructor must take a specific Nitrox Instructor course
- **Technical Nitrox Diver (SL1-R).** The diver must be at least Nitrox Diver. The Instructor must take a specific Nitrox Instructor course
- **Rebreather Diving (SL1-R).** The diver must be at least a Nitrox Diver. The Instructor must take a specific Rebreathers Instructor course
- **DPV Pilot Diver (SL1-R).** The diver must be at least Open Water Diver. The Instructor must take a specific DPV Pilot Instructor course

SPECIALTIES SL2-NR1

- **Teaching Assistant (SL2-NR1).** The diver must be at least an Advanced Diver. Any Open Water Instructor or higher level can teach it. The dry portion of this Teaching Techniques course can be offered to anyone even if they are not a diver. **Note: Not to be confused with the Assistant Instructor**

SPECIALTIES SL2-R

- **Intro to Cave (SL2-R).** The diver must be at least an Advanced Diver. The Instructor must take a specific Cave Diving Instructor course.
- **Ice Diving (SL2-R).** The diver must be at least Advanced Diver. The Instructor must take a specific course of Ice Diving Instructor

SPECIALTIES SL3-NR1

- **U/W Guide** (SL3-NR1). The diver must be at least a Rescue Diver, with the ACUC First Aid and Emergency Oxygenation specialties. Any Open Water Instructor or higher level can teach it.
Note: Not to be confused with the main Divemaster course

For any other specialty, consult with the ACUC Office.

Some specialties (photosub, biology, etc.) can be taught by divers (not necessarily instructors) who have completed the specialty of Teaching Techniques. In these cases, the “diver-instructor”, if the course requires practices in the water, must have assistance personnel with a Divemaster certification or similar or superior, who will be responsible for the underwater safety of the students while the “diver- instructor” is teaching. In no case can a “diver-instructor”, who is not a Diving Instructor, give practical classes in water without having such support personnel.

Occasionally, ACUC instructors may request ACUC to give specialty courses that are not listed here. This is possible as long as the Instructor submits a course program and standards to ACUC for approval. If ACUC approves it, then ACUC will issue a specialty certification card for the Instructor and for students who pass the course, however, that specialty will not be publicly announced as an "ACUC specialty" until it meets all the requirements of ACUC 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 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

On the following pages these specialties are explained in a more graphic way.

ACUC SPECIALTIES TABLE

THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ARE RELATED TO THE NUMBERS IN THE NEXT TABLE

INSTRUCTORS

1. Should the Instructor candidate to this ACUC specialty be an ACUC Instructor first?
2. Can the Instructor candidate of this specialty be an Instructor of another organization recognized by ACUC, without having to become an ACUC Instructor first?
3. Can the Instructor candidate of this specialty be a diver who has completed the ACUC Teaching Techniques specialty?
4. Does the Instructor candidate of this specialty have to do a specific Instructor course in this specialty before?
5. What is the minimum level that the Instructor candidate of this specialty must have?

DIVERS

1. Should the diver candidate to this specialty be an ACUC diver first?
2. What minimum diver level should he be?
3. Does the diver candidate to this specialty need to have a **minimum amount of bottom time**?

Short forms:

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

SEE TABLE IN THE FOLLOWING PAGES

| Specialty | Instructors | | | | | Divers | | |
|--|-------------|-----|------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|----|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 ¹ | 4 ² | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| Surface Controller (SL0-NR1) | Yes | No | No | No ³ | DM | No ⁴ | - | - |
| Equipment Maintenance (SL0-NR2) | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | - | No ⁵ | - | - |
| First Aid (SL0-R) | No | Yes | No ⁶ | Yes | DM | No ⁷ | - | - |
| Diving Emergency Responder (SL0-R) | No | Yes | No ⁸ | Yes | DM | No ⁹ | | |
| O2 Emergency Responder (SL0-R) | No | Yes | No ¹⁰ | Yes | DM | No ¹¹ | - | - |
| Nitrox Mixer (SL0-R) | No | Yes | No | Yes | OWI | No | - | - |
| Rescue Specialist (SL1-NR1) | Yes | No | No | No | OWI | No | OWD | 5 |
| Deep Diving (40m/130f) (SL1-NR2) | Yes | No | No | No | OWI | No | OWD | 5 |
| Altitude Diving (SL1-NR2) | Yes | No | No | No | OWI | No | OWD | 4 |
| Wreck Diving (exit always visible) (SL1-NR2) | Yes | No | No | No | OWI | No | OWD | 4 |
| Night Diving (SL1-NR2) | Yes | No | No | No | OWI | No | OWD | 4 |
| Drift Diving (SL1-NR2) | Yes | No | No | No | OWI | No | OWD | 2 |
| U/W Orientation (SL1-NR2) | Yes | No | No | No | OWI | No | OWD | 2 |
| Dry Suit Diving (SL1-NR2) | Yes | No | No | No ¹² | OWI | No | OWD | 2 |
| U/W Biology (SL1-R) | No | Yes | No ¹³ | 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 |
| Nitrox 40 (SL1-R) | Yes | No | No | Yes | OWI | No | OWD | 2 |
| Nitrox Ték (SL1-R) | Yes | No | No | Yes | OWI | No | OWD | 4 |
| Rebreather (SL1-R) | Yes | No | No | Yes | OWI ¹⁴ | No | OWD ¹⁵ | 3 |
| DPV Pilot (SL1-R) | Yes | No | No | Yes | OWI | No | OWD | 2 |
| Teaching Assistant (SL2-NR1) | Yes | No | No | No ¹⁶ | ELI | Yes | ADV | 10 |
| Intro to Caves (SL2-R) | Yes | No | No | Yes | ADI | No | ADV | 10 |
| Ice Diving (SL2-R) | Yes | No | No | Yes | ADI | No | ADV | 10 |
| U/W Guide (SL3-NR1) | Yes | No | No | No ¹⁷ | ELI | Yes | RES ¹⁸ | 15 |

¹ In all cases where divers are allowed to be Specialty Instructors, candidates must have completed the Teaching Techniques specialty first

² In most cases, Specialty Instructor candidates must first obtain the ACUC Specialty Instructor kit (if available) and pay the Specialty Instructor certification fee

³ It is not necessary to obtain a Specialty Instructor kit. Any ACUC DM or higher level can give this specialty

⁴ Does not have to be a diver but must have First Aid and Oxygenation

⁵ Does not have to be a diver

⁶ Unless the person is a medical professional (doctor, nurse, etc.), in which case that person can become an Instructor of this ACUC specialty.

⁷ Does not have to be a diver

⁸ Unless the person is a medical professional (doctor, nurse, etc.), in which case that person can become an Instructor of this ACUC specialty.

⁹ Does not have to be a diver

¹⁰ Unless the person is a medical professional (doctor, nurse, etc.), in which case that person can become an Instructor of this ACUC specialty

¹¹ Does not have to be a diver but must have First Aid

¹² Must be a Dry Suit Diver

¹³ Unless the person is a biologist. Open water dives, if any, should be supervised by someone with a minimum Divemaster certification.

¹⁴ Must be also a Nitrox Instructor

¹⁵ Must be also a Nitrox Diver

¹⁶ It is not necessary to obtain a Specialty Instructor kit. Any ACUC ELI or higher level can give this specialty

¹⁷ It is not necessary to obtain a Specialty Instructor kit. Any ACUC ELI or higher level can give this specialty

¹⁸ Must have First Aid and Oxygenation

| SHORT FORM STANDARDS | | | |
|--|---|--------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Specialty | Training Ratios | Minimum age | MTBT¹⁹ |
| Surface Controller | No limit. No water training | 16 | None |
| Equipment Maintenance | No limit. No water training | 16 | None |
| First Aid Provider | No limit. No water training | 12 | None |
| Diving Emergency Responder | No limit. No water training (training SAED mandatory) | 12 | None |
| O2 Emergency Responder | No limit. No water training | 12 | None |
| Nitrox Mixer | No limit. No water training | 16 | None |
| Rescue Specialist | Classroom: No limit Confined water: 10:1; 14:2; Max: 20 Open water: 6:1; 8:2; Max: 12 | 16 | 60' (40' in cold water) |
| Deep divin to 40m/130f | Classroom: No limit Confined water: 8:1; 12:2; Max: 16 Open water: 2:1; 4:2; Max: 4 | 16 | 20' |
| Altitude Diving | Classroom: No limit Confined water: 8:1; 12:2; Max: 16 Open water: 4:1; 6:2; Max: 8 | 12 | 30' (20' in cold water) |
| Wreck Diving (exit point always visible) | Classroom: No limit Confined water: 8:1; 12:2; Max: 16 Open water: 4:1; 6:2; Max: 8 | 12 | 60' (40' in cold water) |
| Night Diving | Classroom: No limit Confined water: 8:1; 12:2; Max: 16 Open water: 2:1; 4:2; Max: 8 | 12 | 60' (40' in cold water) |
| Drift Diving | Classroom: No limit Confined water: 8:1; 12:2; Max: 16 Open water: 4:1; 6:2; Max: 8 | 12 | 60' (40' in cold water) |
| U/W Orientation | Classroom: No limit Confined water: 8:1; 12:2; Max: 16 Open water: 4:1; 6:2; Max: 8 | 12 | 60' (40' in cold water) |
| Dry Suit Diving | Classroom: No limit Confined water: 4:1; 6:2; Max: 8 Open water: 2:1; 3:2; Max: 4 | 16 | 40' |
| U/W Biology | Classroom: No limit Confined water: 8:1; 12:2; Max: 16 Open water: 6:1; 10:2; Max: 14 | 12 | 60' (40' in cold water) |
| U/W Digital Photography | Classroom: No limit Confined water: 8:1; 12:2; Max: 16 Open water: 6:1; 10:2; Max: 14 | 12 | 30' (20' in cold water) |
| Sidemount | Classroom: No limit Confined water: 8:1; 12:2; Max: 16 Open water: 2:1; 4:2; Max: 4 | 16 | 80' |
| Nitrox 40 and Nitrox Tek | Classroom: No limit Confined water: 8:1; 12:2; Max: 16 Open water: 4:1; 6:2; Max: 8 | N40: 14 NT: 16 | 60' (40' in cold water) ²⁰ |
| Rebreathers | Classroom: No limit Confined water: 8:1; 12:2; Max: 16 Open water: 4:1; 6:2; Max: 8 | 16 | 120' (80' in cold water) |
| DPV Pilot | Classroom: No limit Confined water: 8:1; 12:2; Max: 16 Open water: 4:1; 6:2; Max: 8 | 12 | 60' (40' in cold water) |
| Teaching Assistant | Classroom: No limit Confined water: 8:1; 12:2; Max: 16 Open water: 4:1; 6:2; Max: 8 | 16 | 60' (40' in cold water) |
| Cave Diving | Classroom: No limit Confined water: 8:1; 12:2; Max: 16 Open water: 2:1; 4:2; Max: 4 | 16 | 80' (60' in cold water) |

¹⁹ Minimum **Training** Bottom Time, required in open water

²⁰ Not mandatory, although highly recommended

| Specialty | Training Ratios | Minimum age | MTBT²¹ |
|------------------|---|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Ice Diving | Classroom: No limit Confined water: 8:1; 12:2; Max: 16 Open water: 1:1 per ice hole | 16 | 30' |
| Underwater Guide | Classroom: No limit Confined water: 8:1; 12:2; Max: 16 Open water: 4:1; 6:2; Max: 8 | 16 | 80' (60' in cold water) |

²¹ Minimum **Training** Bottom Time, required in open water