



Signing off Advanced Diver experience dives

Introduction

As a club we have relatively few members who are sufficiently qualified to sign off experience dives towards the Advanced Diver (AD) qualification. We want to encourage and enable members to progress towards Advanced Diver, whilst at the same time ensuring that the standards of this high level qualification are maintained.

There has been some confusion recently about who can sign off experience dives towards Advanced Diver, and under what circumstances. This position statement seeks to clarify the requirements and provide a fair and transparent framework for signing off AD experience dives within the club.

The procedure

The following procedure should be followed when club instructors are asked to sign off experience dives towards the Advanced Diver qualification by club members:

- Experience dives towards Advanced Diver must be signed off by someone with a minimum instructor grade of Open Water Instructor (OWI) and a minimum diver grade of Advanced Diver
- The person signing does not have to be present, but must be satisfied, **following discussion**, that the dive took place and met the requirements
- The discussion **must** involve both
 - Someone who was present and is either an OWI, an Advanced Diver, or, rarely, a Dive Leader (or equivalent) with additional specialist training relevant to the skill / experience in question
 - The Diving Officer
- The discussion must take place, and the dive be signed off, within 60 days of it happening

The standards

Part of the role of the Diving Officer (DO) is to ensure that training within the branch meets the required standards. One reason that the DO takes part in discussions around signing off of AD experience dives is in order to ensure that fair and consistent standards are applied in those decisions. This section gives some information on the standards the DO expects to see.

Brief descriptions of each experience dive are given in the Qualification Record Book (QRB), but it is important that these descriptions are placed in the context of the more detailed descriptions of

requirements and standards for an Advanced Diver given in the Instructor Manual. To illustrate this, direct quotes from the instructor manual are included below and are highlighted in *blue and italics*.

Advanced Diver is a high level qualification that is intended to demonstrate that a diver is *comprehensively trained, experienced and responsible* and is able to *manage and supervise a wide range of adventurous and challenging diving activities*. This is a qualification that depends upon the *accumulation of extensive diving experience in a wide range of conditions*. Whilst each dive should be treated on its own merits, it is equally important to set the dive in the context of the experience gained through other dives. There is an expectation that

dive sites should include those encompassing a wide variety of topography and underwater life, and which have significant water movement due to waves or current. Water conditions should also include a range of underwater visibilities

In effect, this means that if a high proportion of dives are undertaken in similar conditions then as a whole they are unlikely to meet the requirements for Advanced Diver.

The AD course places a heavy emphasis on dive planning. The planning is every bit as important as the execution, and hence there should be clear evidence of appropriate and thoughtful planning for dives. There is an expectation that dives should be *adventurous*, and that thought has been given to equipment configuration and *whether it is appropriate to the type of diving being carried out*. The diver's planning should demonstrate attention to the *adequacy of main breathing gas supply*, the *adequacy of alternative breathing gas supply to cope with a main gas supply failure at the most critical point in the dive*, and weight being *properly adjusted for the configuration*, amongst other things.

Standards should generally be high. *At this level, divers are seen as role models by the less experienced, and hence the competence with which skills are performed should be such as to set an appropriate example.*

Fundamentally, becoming an Advanced Diver means gaining wide ranging experience of different diving conditions and different techniques. It is a process which will inevitably take time, but it is achievable.

Chris Hastie, Diving Officer

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