

# Professional Association of Diving Instructors

## Professional Association of Diving Instructors



**Abbreviation** PADI

**Motto** *The Way the World Learns to Dive*

**Formation** 1966

**Headquarters** [Rancho Santa Margarita, California, United States](#)

**Membership** over 130,000 dive professional, 6000 Dive Centers and Resorts

**Leader** Drew Richardson

**Affiliations** [DSAT](#), [Project AWARE](#), [Emergency First Response](#), [Current Publishing](#)

**Website** <http://www.padi.com>

The **Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI)** is the world's largest [recreational diving](#) membership and [diver training organization](#) founded in 1966 by John Cronin and Ralph Erickson. Cronin was originally a [NAUI](#) instructor who decided to form his own organization with Erickson, and to break [diver training](#) down into different courses instead of the single universal course then prevalent.

PADI courses range from entry levels (such as "[Scuba Diver](#)" and "[Open Water Diver](#)") to "[Master Scuba Diver](#)" and a range of instructor certifications. Via their affiliate, [Diving Science and Technology](#) (DSAT), they also offer various [technical diving](#) courses, including [decompression diving](#), [trimix diving](#) and [gas blending](#).

The PADI system is composed of modules with standardized learning objectives divided into theory and practical skills development. Theory is mainly conveyed by way of self-study using books, computer based training using CD-ROM or online learning. All study options are supplemented with video to help the student diver visualize what they have read. Confirmation of the student diver's level of mastery in standardized knowledge review sessions is carried out by a scuba instructor. Practical skills mastery is obtained through confined water training (pools or relatively shallow water) and performance evaluations in [open water](#). Upon completion of each course, a certification is issued to the student.

PADI courses are performance based dive programs, and at the introductory level emphasize practical knowledge, safety and motor skills. The foundations of diving physics, physiology and chemistry are built during entry level programs. The more esoteric details of these concepts are left for later courses when the diver has gained practical knowledge and experience beyond the entry level. These practices fall within current modern learning philosophies and receive regular updates via peer review. PADI is a member of the [World Recreational Scuba Training Council](#).

## Programs

### Non certification

- Discover [Scuba Diving](#)
- Discover [Snorkeling](#)

### Certification

#### For kids

- [PADI Seal Team \(Age 8 and Above\)](#)
- [PADI Bubble Maker \(Age 8 and Above\)](#)

## Recreational diving



The PADI training system.

- Skin Diver (Snorkeling)
- Junior Scuba Diver
- Scuba Diver
- Junior Open Water Diver
- [Open Water Diver](#)
- National Geographic Diver
- Adventure Diver
- [Advanced Open Water Diver](#)
- [Rescue Diver](#) <sup>[5]</sup>
- Speciality Courses
- [Master Scuba Diver](#)

## Specialty courses

Examples of PADI specialty courses include:

- [Altitude Diver](#) Specialty Course
- Boat Diver Specialty Course
- [Cavern Diver](#) Specialty Course
- [Deep Diver](#) Specialty Courses
- Digital Underwater Photographer Specialty Course
- [Diver Propulsion Vehicle](#) Specialty Course
- [Drift Diver](#) Specialty Course
- [Dry Suit](#) Diver Specialty Course
- Emergency Oxygen Provider Course
- [Enriched Air](#) Diver Specialty Course <sup>[4]</sup>
- Equipment Specialist Specialty Course
- [Ice Diver](#) Specialty Course
- [Multilevel Diver](#) Specialty Course

- [Night Diver](#) Specialty Course
- Peak Performance Buoyancy Specialty Course
- [Project AWARE](#) Coral Reef Conservation Specialty Course
- Project AWARE Fish Identification Specialty Course
- Project AWARE Specialty Course
- [Search and Recovery](#) Specialty Course
- Semiclosed [Rebreather](#) Course Specialty Course <sup>[7]</sup>
- Underwater Naturalist Specialty Course
- [Underwater Navigator](#) Specialty Course
- [Underwater Photographer](#) Specialty Course
- [Underwater Videographer](#) Specialty Course
- [Wreck Diver](#) Specialty Course

#### "Distinctive" specialties

In addition to the mainstream specialty courses above, individual PADI instructors can prepare and teach (with PADI's approval) their own distinctive specialty courses, and dozens of such courses abound. Some of the courses represent less frequently used mainstream skills (such as "Twin-set diver", "Full face-mask diver", "Surface Marker Buoy" and "Advanced wreck diver" specialties). Others are abstract either with reference to skills or locale (it is possible to take specialties in "Golf ball diver", "Zen/Yoga diver", "Underwater wedding" or site-specific specialties such as "[Wreck of the Rhone](#) diver" and "[Spiegel Grove](#) Diver"<sup>[8]</sup>).

#### Professional certifications

- [Divemaster](#)
- Assistant Instructor
- Open Water Scuba Instructor (OWSI)
- Specialty Instructor
- Master Scuba Diver Trainer (MSDT)
- IDC Staff Instructor
- [Master Instructor](#)
- [PADI Course Director](#)

## Criticism

PADI is oftentimes subject to criticism. In particular, two accusations are sometimes made against the organization: that it "dumbs down" scuba diving training courses, making them too short and easy; and that it "profiteers" from demand for diver training. In 2006 PADI was severely criticized by a [Coroner's court](#) in the United Kingdom for providing what experts regarded as short and insufficient training. No representative of PADI gave evidence at the inquest, but PADI subsequently issued a rejoinder that in the decade since PADI had come to play a dominant role in diver training, the numbers of diving accidents had declined. Although PADI training standards differ from those formerly prevalent in the United Kingdom under the

[BSAC](#) system, PADI training standards are consistent with [World Recreational Scuba Training Council](#) standards.

It should be noted that critics of the [WRSTC](#) maintain that these standards are not, in fact, a set of standards that all member organizations must live up to, but are, in reality, just a "worst common denominator" of the standards that had been already independently adopted by the member organizations. In other words, the WRSTC standards were "reverse engineered" to conform to what already existed, and in that respect, they are so low that they serve no useful purpose.

Although PADI is often referred to facetiously as a mnemonic for 'Put Another Dollar In', PADI is a for-profit organization dedicated to generating commercial returns from diver training. Some say that the large number of competitor [diver training organizations](#), prevent PADI from realistically being accused of market abuse, while others maintain that PADI's dominant position in the industry makes such profiteering inevitable.

A third criticism that is sometimes made is that PADI over-elaborates the training process, leading to the award of large numbers of different certificates, certification cards and embroidered patches for any diver who continues their diving education up to advanced levels. For instance, divers can earn a "boat diver" specialty certification. For many divers, boat diving is a common occurrence that does not require the special, costly course that PADI may appear to convince novice divers they do need. This criticism is further supported by PADI's elimination from their entry level course of what some authority's feel are critical skills such as buoyancy control, gas management and diver rescue, and the movement of such topics and skills into separately priced products such as the [PADI Peak Performance Buoyancy Course](#).

## Project AWARE

In 1995, PADI founded [Project AWARE](#) to help conserve underwater environments. Project AWARE information has been integrated in most courses and divers are offered the chance to exchange their normal certificate for an AWARE-certificate by making a donation to the program when sending in their application for a new certificate.

## Affiliate companies

- Emergency First Response provides [CPR](#) and First Aid training both for the lay person and in the work place.
- Current Publishing Corporation develops [marine science](#) programs for high school and upper level educational facilities.
- Diving Science and Technology Corporation (DSAT) is the development arm for the [Recreational Dive Planner](#) and PADI's Tec-Rec program.

## Diver training, certification and accreditation organisations

### Commercial certification

- [Australian Diver Accreditation Scheme](#) (ADAS)
- [Divers Institute of Technology](#)

### Recreational certification agencies

- [American Canadian Underwater Certifications](#) (ACUC)
- [American Nitrox Divers International](#) (ANDI)
- [British Sub-Aqua Club](#) (BSAC)
- [Confédération Mondiale des Activités Subaquatiques](#) (CMAS)
- [Fédération Française d'Études et de Sports Sous-Marins](#) (FFESSM)
- [Federazione Italiana Attività Subacquee](#) (FIAS)
- [Global Underwater Explorers](#) (GUE)
- [International Association for Handicapped Divers](#) (IAHD)
- [International Association of Nitrox and Technical Divers](#) (IANTD)
- [International Diving Educators Association](#) (IDEA)
- [Israeli Diving Federation](#)
- [National Association for Cave Diving](#) (NACD)
- [National Academy of Scuba Educators](#) (NASE)
- [National Association of Underwater Instructors](#) (NAUI)
- [Nederlandse Onderwatersport Bond](#) (NOB)
- [Professional Association of Diving Instructors](#) (PADI)
- [Professional Diving Instructors Corporation International](#) (PDIC)
- [The Sub-Aqua Association](#) (SAA)
- [Scuba Diving International](#) (SDI)
- [Scottish Sub Aqua Club](#) (SSAC)
- [Scuba Schools International](#) (SSI)
- [United Diving Instructors](#) (UDI)
- [Unified Team Diving](#) (UTD)



### Scientific diver certification

- [American Academy of Underwater Sciences](#) (AAUS)
- [CMAS](#) Scientific Committee

<p><b>Technical certification agencies</b></p>	<p><b>Cave diving</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Cave Divers Association of Australia</a> (CDAA)</li> <li>• <a href="#">Cave Diving Group</a> (CDG)</li> <li>• <a href="#">Global Underwater Explorers</a> (GUE}</li> <li>• <a href="#">National Association for Cave Diving</a> (NACD)</li> <li>• <a href="#">Unified Team Diving</a> (UTD)</li> <li>• <a href="#">Technical Diving International</a> (TDI)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Related</b></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">American Nitrox Divers International</a> (ANDI)</li> <li>• <a href="#">British Sub Aqua Club</a> (BSAC)</li> <li>• <a href="#">Diving Science and Technology</a> (DSAT)</li> <li>• <a href="#">Federazione Italiana Attività Subacquee</a> (FIAS)</li> <li>• <a href="#">Global Underwater Explorers</a> (GUE)</li> <li>• <a href="#">International Association of Nitrox and Technical Divers</a> (IANTD)</li> <li>• <b>Professional Association of Diving Instructors</b> (PADI)</li> <li>• <a href="#">Professional Diving Instructors Corporation</a> (PDIC)</li> <li>• <a href="#">Technical Diving International</a> (TDI)</li> <li>• <a href="#">Trimix Scuba Association</a> (TSA)</li> <li>• <a href="#">Technical Extended Range</a> (TXR)</li> <li>• <a href="#">Unified Team Diving</a> (UTD)</li> </ul>

# Organizations That Establish Recreational Scuba Diving Training Agency Standards

## **WRSTC (World Recreational Scuba Training Council)**

The World Recreational Scuba Training Council is an organization of scuba certification agencies that establishes international minimum training standards for recreational scuba diving agencies. The WRSTC is composed of smaller RSTCs (Recreational Scuba Training Councils), each of which deals with one region of the world.

## **ISO (International Organization for Standardization)**

The International Organization for Standardization sets standards for products and services around the world, including scuba diving. The ISO website currently sells PDF files of standards such as minimum requirements for the training of recreational scuba instructors, recreational divers, and nitrox divers. Like the WRSTC, ISO standards focus on recreational diving only.

## **Alphabetical List of Scuba Diving Training Organizations**

*If you would like to see your scuba agency included on this list, email [scuba.guide@about.com](mailto:scuba.guide@about.com) for further information.*

### **1. IANTD - International Association of Nitrox and Technical Divers**



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- **Rec or Tec?** IANTD offers both recreational and technical dive training.
- **Entry Level Courses?** Yes - IANTD Open Water Diver
- **Recognized Worldwide?** Yes.
- **WRSTC Member?** No.
- **ISO Certified?** Yes.



## 2. [NASE - National Academy of Scuba Educators](#)



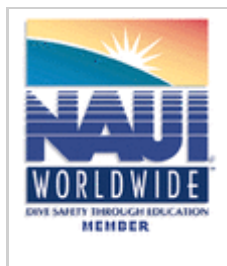
*Logo reproduced with the permission of NASE.*

- **Rec or Tec?** NASE offers both recreational and technical dive training.
- **Entry Level Courses?** Yes - Open Water Diver
- **Recognized Worldwide?** Yes.
- **WRSTC Member?** No - because snorkels are not mandatory.
- **ISO Certified?** ISO application is currently being processed.

**Why should you train with NASE? NASE writes,**

*The National Academy of Scuba Educators (NASE Worldwide) is the only training organization to draw its **extensive experience from the fields of commercial, recreational, technical and cave diver training.** Our scuba certification programs are fun, easy and focus on the fundamentals of safe diving practices. Our approach includes multiple delivery methods of academic content and convenience of scuba training through our network of diving educators.*

## 3. [NAUI - National Association of Underwater Instructors](#)



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- **Rec or Tec?** NAUI offers both recreational and technical dive training.
- **Entry Level Courses?** Yes - NAUI Scuba Diver
- **Recognized Worldwide?** Yes.
- **WRSTC Member?** No.
- **ISO Certified?** Yes.

**What sets NAUI apart? NAUI says,**

*"NAUI is the world's most respected, largest **non-profit** diver training organization in the world. NAUI was established in 1959 as a membership association and organized solely to support and promote dive safety through education."*

#### 4. PADI - Professional Association of Underwater Instructors



- **Rec or Tec?** PADI offers both recreational training and a few forms of technical training.
- **Entry Level Courses?** Yes - PADI Open Water Diver
- **Recognized Worldwide?** Yes.
- **WRSTC Member?** Yes.
- **ISO Certified?** Yes.

#### 5. [PSAI - Professional Scuba Association International](#)



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- **Rec or Tec?** PSAI offers both recreational and technical dive training.
- **Entry Level Courses?** Yes - PSAI Sport Diver
- **Recognized Worldwide?** Yes.
- **WRSTC Member?** No.
- **ISO Certified?** Unverified

#### **PSAI wants you to know,**

*"The Professional Scuba Association International (PSAI) has certification programs which cover a full range of Sport and Technical Diving Programs. **PSAI is the first Technical Diving certification agency**, teaching technical dive courses since 1962. Our educational philosophy is built on the principles of: Knowledge, Safety, & Integrity."*

## 6. [SSI - Scuba Schools International](#)



*Logo reproduced with the permission of SSI*

- **Rec or Tec?** SSI offers both recreational and technical dive training.
- **Entry Level Courses?** Yes - SSI Open Water Diver
- **Recognized Worldwide?** Yes.
- **WRSTC Member?** Yes
- **ISO Certified?** Yes.

### **SSI comments on their training philosophy:**

*"Each of our Training Programs is based on our Diver Diamond Methodology, which focuses on the knowledge, skills, equipment, and experience required to become a highly qualified diver. Your learning experience will come alive with personalized instruction that puts your skills to use in reality-based training scenarios. Our unique approach to dive training is known as **"Comfort through Repetition"**. By practicing each skill you've learned throughout each level of your training, your actions become conditioned responses - second nature! SSI training ensures you retain what you've already learned while continuing to learn more. As a result, diving remains fun, not an exercise in memory recall or mental gymnastics."*

## 7. [UTD - Unified Team Diving](#)



*Logo reproduced with the permission of UTD.*

- **Rec or Tec?** UTD offers recreational training (with a technical flavor) and technical training.
- **Entry Level Courses?** Yes - UTD Open Water
- **Recognized Worldwide?** Yes.
- **WRSTC Member?** No.
- **ISO Certified?** Unverified.