British Sub-Aqua Club

FIRST CLASS DIVER EXAM

EXPEDITION PLAN MODULE

CANDIDATE GUIDELINES

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First Class Diver: Expedition Plan Module

For this module you need to submit a detailed expedition plan to the FCD Chief Examiner. You are to plan an expedition of adventurous diving. The aim is for you to think about all aspects you would usually consider for an expedition of this nature and then put together a plan, which includes all the relevant information.

The plan **MUST** comply with the following requirements:

LOCATION: The location and nature of the diving (wreck, reef, mixture) must be agreed with the FCD Chief Examiner before you begin to write your plan, they may require you to make changes to the plan. It should be a location where you have not dived before.

DIVE TEAM: The group will consist of a minimum of 10 experienced divers (typically BSAC Advanced Divers and First Class Divers). All divers wish to have access to Nitrox and some may wish to dive on rebreathers or trimix (within BSAC guidelines).

DIVE PLATFORM: The dive vessel can be a liveaboard, hardboat, RHIB or inflatable of your choice, or a combination of any of these.

DIVE SITES: You are expected to include all details required to be able to find all your proposed sites. Generally, a minimum of 12 different sites is required with divers being able to dive 2 sites per day. Fewer sites may be required for certain expeditions (e.g. technical diving in which case 1 dive per day should be acceptable) but this must be agreed in advance with the FCD Chief Examiner.

DURATION: A minimum of 4 days of diving.

OTHER INFORMATION: You are expected to provide all the information required for the expedition to run smoothly, with safe diving at the designated sites. You must ensure that all the dive team are involved in the expedition throughout. The report must include realistic budget costs and show a true 'per person' cost that is reasonable and acceptable based on the information you gather.

Check your plan against the marking scheme criteria shown in Table 1 to ensure you have provided sufficient information. There may well be other elements you consider should also be present in an expedition report, in which case, please include them.

SUBMISSION OF THE PLAN

There is no limit to the number of sides of A4 paper in your report, however it should only be long enough to contain the information you deem essential to make it a success whilst also meeting the marking criteria, you can include appendices as necessry. If you wish, it can be submitted in electronic form (Word or PDF) provided that all your illustrations and tables are suitably legible. Please ensure you take a copy of the plan for your own reference before sending it to the First Class Diver Chief Examiner (fcd.chief@bsac.com).

Please ensure that the following signed declaration appears at the start of your expedition plan:

"***I <insert your name> hereby confirm that this expedition plan, submitted as part fulfillment of the requirements for the British Sub Aqua Club First Class Diver Award, is entirely my own work and has not been copied, reproduced or plagiarized in part or whole from any source. Any information attributable to another author is clearly indicated as such***."

QUERIES

For further advice please contact the First Class Diver Chief Examiner (fcd.chief@bsac.com).

MARKING

Plans can be submitted at any time and will be marked and results issued within a 2 – 4 week period. This may be increased due to availability of FCD examiners/Nis or if your plan is more complex. Your plan may also be returned to you with feedback if it does not meet the criteria for you adjust. This will obviously extend the timelines for marking and issuing results.

Table 1: FCD Expedition Plan – Marking Criteria

Area	Mark	Description
Sensible/achievable programme	10%	Workable; fits into a normal day; sufficient time allowed for each item while remaining challenging; surface intervals maximised; detailed enough to assess the above, showing travel times, times to find site and dive times. Provision of suitable passage plan.
Suitable sites selected	10%	Diving with a purpose. Adventurous & challenging for FCDs; caters for the interests of the divers; not run of the mill sites.
Site location information	10%	Position; transits; practical hints on how to accurately locate the site; potential pitfalls to avoid. Clear diagrams and sketches as appropriate.
Navigational information	10%	Identify waypoints; give courses (magnetic); distances; estimated times of travel; due account taken of tides; practical visual cues to check en route
Dive Operations	15%	Decompression arrangements; use of shotlines/SMBs/DSMBs/deco station; procedure for getting divers into and out of the water; problems with diver pick-up; general safety considerations associated with the site - e.g. tides; use of nitrox; safety cover, if applicable. Clear diagrams and sketches as appropriate. Provision of an appropriate risk assessment.
Site information	10%	Sufficient information to allow the divers to plan their dives in advance; depths; tidal considerations; nature of bottom; topography; marine life present; the 'lie' of wrecks and which bits are still intact; wreck type, size & history; which are the best areas to visit on the dive; potential dangers. Clear diagrams and sketches as appropriate.
Task allocation	5%	Description of roles and associated responsibilities e.g. helm, navigator, dive manager, deck hand; task allocation throughout the weekend to allow fair shares of the work.
Safety information	10%	Contact numbers/channels for the emergency services in the area clearly displayed; safety/emergency procedures; safety equipment on board; navigational & shipping hazards; weather & tides
Domestic information	5%	Suitable arrangements made for accommodation, food & parking; maps or directions to accommodation and launch site; clear instructions as to where to be when throughout the weekend; appropriate advice on equipment requirements and gas fills; Enough detail to allow members to plan ahead and catch up if missed rendezvous; contact numbers
Budget	5%	Accurate information in sufficient detail so that members know what to expect over the weekend; cover accommodation, boat hire, breakfast, lunch, dinner, parking, gas fills
Foul weather plan	10%	Sites suitable for FCDs in severe weather conditions, while still remaining adventurous and interesting. A huge amount of detail is not required on the sites, but sufficient should be provided to permit planning at short notice if required

BENEFITS OF PUTTING YOUR EXPEDITION INTO PRACTICE

Given the amount of effort that goes into writing an FCD expedition plan you may well wish to conduct the expedition. Obviously, you should get to do some excellent diving. However, in addition it is likely to be beneficial for your preparation towards FCD as you can compare your written plan with what happens in practice.