

British Sub-Aqua Club

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FIRST CLASS DIVER EXAM

EXPEDITION PLAN MODULE

Issue 4: December 2009

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) has to be agreed with the FCD Chief Examiner before you begin to write your plan who 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 are 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 be also present in an expedition report, in which case, please include them.

SUBMISSION OF THE PLAN

The plan should be no longer than 20 sides of A4 paper. including any appendices. If you wish, it can be submitted in electronic form (Word or PDF) provided that all your illustrations and tables as 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 within the 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 clearly indicated as such."

QUERIES

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

MARKING

There are 2 submission dates for the Expedition Plan. Plans can be submitted at anytime but will be marked and results issued to the following schedule:

Submitted before	Marked during	Results issued on
1 st January	January and February	1 st March
1 st July	July, August and September	1 st October

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 a FCD expedition plan you may well wish to actually 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 actually happens in practice.

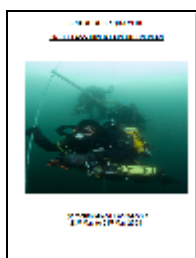
APPLYING FOR BEGS FUNDING USING YOUR FCD EXPEDITION PLAN

Given the level of diver at which your expedition plan is aimed, it may also be eligible for a BSAC Expeditionary Grants Scheme award.

However, please note that BEGS is not part of the FCD exam so if your expedition plan is acceptable for a BEGS award it does **not** necessarily mean that it meets the exam criteria and vice versa. However, you could stand to gain upto £1000 towards the costs of running the expedition. Additional criteria may apply. See www.bsac.com/expeditions for details on BEGS funding.

EXAMPLE EXPEDITION PLANS

A couple [example Expedition Plans](#) are provided below for guidance as to the standard expected and for inspiration. Clicking on the image of the plan should open up the full document some of which are on the members only part of the BSAC website for which you must logon.



[Example FCD Expedition Plan](#)

This plan set out 4 days of mixed gas diving using a hard boat out of Eyemouth. A considerable amount of thought and planning behind the diving is evident as you read the plan, grounded in real diving experience. It achieved a MERIT grade.

The author has put this plan or variations of it into practice on a number of occasions.



[Example Expedition Plan for BEGS Application](#)

This expedition plan was written mainly to meet the requirements of BEGS funding application but was also written to meet most of the FCD criteria. The week long expedition sought to look to find the wreck of the SS Cathcartpark and conduct Seasearch surveys in the area. The expedition was carried out during a period of particularly inclement weather which limited the diving mainly to back up sites. The report can be found on the members only section in the Expedition Part of the BSAC website.



[Example Expedition Website for inspiration](#)

Exercise Jurassic Shark and Jurassic Shark II were expeditions organised by Major Andy Reid, a BSAC First Class Diver and Fellow of Royal Geographical Society. He has won the BSAC expedition trophy twice and for the second of the Jurassic Shark expeditions received the Duke of Edinburgh's Prize for the British Sub-Aqua Club. These expeditions are fantastic examples of a major scientific project. The production of a website like this is **not** a requirement for FCD. However, it is hoped that potential FCDs will get some good ideas from the content of this site.