British Sub-Aqua Club

FIRST CLASS DIVER

PRACTICAL EXAM GUIDANCE

Issue 2, Oct 2026

Kev Ford, FCD Chief Examiner

Contents

Introduction 3

Prerequisites… 3

Definition 3

The Role of the FCD within BSAC 4

Support for Candidates Preparing for the Examination… 4

The Examination 5

Examples of projects 6

- Expedition Day 6
- Project Day 6
- Briefing 7
- The first boat day 7
- The second boat day 7
- Assessment and marking 7
- Marks and grades 8

APPENDIX A: TYPICAL FCD PRACTICAL EXAM TIMETABLE 9

APPENDIX B: SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENT AREAS 10

APPENDIX C: FCD STUDENT PREPARATION PROCESS… 26

Introduction

This document describes the BSAC practical examination module and suggests ways in which you can prepare for it. Given it is a practical examination, preparation should involve going diving. A typical exam timetable is contained in Appendix: A. The Exam Criteria are contained in Appendix: B of this document.

Pre-requisites

Before entering for the Practical Exam, the candidate must comply with the following:

- Be over 18years of age and be a current full diving member of the British Sub Aqua Club
- Have completed 100 Dives in a range of conditions since qualifying as an Advanced Diver
- Have attended a BSAC Chartwork & Position Fixing course (or equivalent)
- Hold the BSAC Diver Rescue Specialist qualification awarded following completion of Lifesaver; Advanced Lifesaver; First Aid for Divers; Practical Rescue Management and Oxygen Administration
- Hold the BSAC Diver Cox'n qualification (or equivalent)

Definition

A First-Class Diver is the highest diver grade available within the BSAC and is defined as a diver who has:

- A level of practical diving skills and knowledge beyond advanced diver
- The ability to organise groups of divers and lead major diving expeditions to achieve specific aims or objectives
- The ability and knowledge to contribute to the BSAC at a branch, regional and national level.

The Objects of the BSAC set the framework for the standard in which a First-Class Diver operate.

That is “to promote underwater sport, exploration, science and related studies, to promote safety in these activities and by co-operation with other organisations with related objects to provide the widest exchange of knowledge and experience therein and by setting and maintaining the highest standards to sustain recognition as the governing body for all such amateur activity.

In addition, BSAC supports a policy of conservation for all water resources.”

The Role of the FCD within BSAC

In line with the definition above and the objects of the BSAC, this is what we would expect our First-Class Divers to be confident, competent and capable of:

- Being role models and ambassador divers striving for excellence, maintaining a high level of knowledge and practical diving skills and promulgation of this high standard by leadership and osmosis to less experienced divers.
- Providing the lead for higher level expeditions such as regional expeditions.
- Acting as a support diver or more for major Technical Expeditions.
- Supporting BSAC Marine Conservation and Environmental Policies. Capable of conducting marine life surveys and able to organise Marine Life Surveys in remote and challenging sites and report back in a professional manner.
- Supporting wreck heritage projects and able to organise a detailed wreck survey and report back in a professional manner.
- Organising and accomplishing a major underwater search and recovery task and report accurately.

Support for Candidates Preparing for the Examination

Several preparation events are run nationally for prospective First-Class Diver candidates and full details can be obtained from BSAC HQ, these are led by teams of candidates who will organise the time and dates they are available. The BSAC First-Class Diver Chief Examiner will then organise FCD Examiners to run the preparation events, a minimum of 3 months' notice is required to support these requests.

Candidates will normally be allocated a mentor upon formal registration of interest in working to the qualification. They also have access to the FCD 'WhatsApp' community for support.

However, at the level of First Class Diver it is expected that candidates are proactive in seeking out assistance to prepare themselves for the examination

There is a range of material for candidates to download from the BSAC website covering all aspects of the examination (theory, expedition plan and practical examination).

The Examination

The examination takes place over two days, during which a total of 12 different aspects is assessed. Both days of the examination are spent aboard boats. A flexible approach allows the boat to be either:

- A boat over which the candidates have complete control (i.e. can drive the boat, find sites etc. – non-skippered boat), or
- A boat which has an independent skipper (skippered boat), or
- A combination of the above (i.e. a skippered boat on one day and non-skippered boat on the other day).

The remaining elements of the exam are conducted in an area that provides shelter and opportunity for planning. A typical timetable is given in Appendix A.

The two-day examination will be generally be both expeditionary and project focused in nature, depending on the location that the exam takes place and the prevailing weather and sea conditions on the date

Typically, the first day will have a more Expedition focus with at least two dives. The candidates will be examined on at least one dive in the 30-40m range with up to 20 minutes decompression. Typically, the second day there will be a longer but shallower dive to deliver a more complex Project or Task.

The Senior Examiner of the examination will contact each candidate enrolled in the examination and give an outline of the plan. This plan will highlight potential opportunities and allow the dive team to work in the background, research of the chosen sites (primary & back-up). The plan should involve a minimum of two days of diving.

If a candidate cannot accommodate these requirements, it is their responsibility to make this clear to the Senior Examiner of the event and the FCD Chief Examiner giving the reason why (for example, a diving doctor's note restricting them to a certain maximum depth) If their personal requirements cannot be accommodated on the event it may be necessary for them to attend a different venue.

As part of the preparation the dive team should be prepared for all the logistical requirements to execute the chosen task.

Examples of projects

Expedition Day

The focus here is delivery of high-quality diving at the level of a First-Class Diver that would be expected of on the BSAC Expeditions Scheme. The underwater work will generally not be as intensive as for the diving project but provides a purpose for diving. The lower level of task loading compared to the Project Day will also permit sites of greater depth to be considered.

- Produce a site map for publication on BSAC website, magazine (Scuba) or dive guide (tides, position, accurate sketch). SCUBA magazine has a specification for the format of a wrecked article on which to base the report.
- Outline marine life survey (Possibly use Seasearch reporting format – seek Environmental Officer Guidance for projects).
- Outline wreck survey (Possible use NAS reporting format, Hydrographic Office format) including where appropriate the use of video and camera equipment to record site.
- Scientific Project (e.g. assessment of use of new equipment, assessment of water quality, measuring underwater visibility, collection of marine life samples for analysis).

Project Day

The focus here is delivery of high-quality diving at the level of a First Class Diver that would be expected if the divers were leading a team to accomplish a particular task in greater detail. The higher level of task loading compared to the Expedition Day will usually mean that sites of shallower depth will be considered.

- Set up and execute a large jackstay search, thoroughly searching the area and recording co-ordinates of search accurately using GPS.
- Carry out a detailed survey of an object (or part of an object) and produce an accurate drawing. This could be a wreck, shallow cave, building etc.
- Produce an accurate photo mosaic or photogrammetric model of an object or site ensuring scales of the object are accurately captured.
- Lift and shift and major underwater object.

The Senior Examiner of the event is not required to be specific as to the exact nature of the project prior to examination start. By withholding specific information, the examining team may be better placed to examine the candidates. However, should the Senior Examiner of the event decide to follow this principle they must provide the candidates with any information they require to carry out the project (i.e. marine life identification information, archaeological information etc.).

On the first evening of the examination (typically Friday) the candidate team will run a planning session and then present their outline plan to the examining team. The diving will take place as per the plan dictated by the candidate team. The examining team should encourage changes to the plan if it appears unchallenging or unsafe. Ultimately the examining team might have to change the plan, especially if it is unsafe or would not enable the candidates to be examined satisfactorily.

At the end of each examination day the candidates must give a brief presentation of the output of the day's events to the examiners. This should take the form of a presentation of the initial team findings and what conclusions they have drawn from the day's expedition or project activities.

After the examination the candidate team must submit a formal report and objectively review the diving activities conducted versus the set objectives. This should include the candidate's roles within the project.

The report must be submitted to the exam Senior Examiner and the First-Class Chief Examiner within a maximum of two weeks, after the examination. Please note the FCD Chief Examiner may publish the report on the BSAC website for everyone to take value from the examination efforts. There is an example report in the FCD Study Pack available on the BSAC website.

The above process will allow the First-Class Chief Examiner a simple quality analysis of the examination.

Conduct of the examination

Briefing

Each day of the examination should be briefed by the Senior Examiner (or delegated Examiner) who will set the scene by explaining the purpose of the assessment and precise instructions as to what is expected of the candidates. The Examining team should be prepared to answer reasonable questions at the end of the brief and ensure that everyone knows exactly what to expect and what the team is required to do.

The first boat day

Candidates have a maximum of eight hours to achieve their objectives. The timings can be reasonably flexible to allow for tides, as would happen in the real world, but to save an early start being turned into an extremely long day, a time limit should be set. Timings to be agreed with the Senior Examiner.

The second boat day

Candidates have a maximum of six hours to achieve their objectives (based on a weekend event, timings may require to be adjusted for an expedition examination). The timings can be reasonably flexible to allow for tides, as would happen in the real world, but there is a need to set a time limit to allow for an examiner meeting at the end of the second day. Timings to be agreed with the Senior Examiner.

Assessment and marking

Grades are awarded for each component of the exam using the standard assessment within the BSAC ITS:

Merit	Exceeds the required standard
Pass	Meets the required standard
Borderline	Some aspects below the required standard
Fail	Critical aspects below the required standard

The performance criteria to be used for each of the assessment areas are given in the following pages. The standards against which the performance criteria will be assessed are also given in the assessment area sections of this guide. Consultation with another examiner who has also seen the performance may be required before reaching a final mark.

Marks and grades

The overall target of the examination is to ensure candidates are assessed against the criteria. Clearly a candidate who has obtained pass or merit grades in each aspect will gain a pass overall. Any borderline marks must be balanced by merits with the exception that a borderline in Personal Diving Skills cannot be offset. All components of the exam are essential and as such a fail in any area could be regarded as an overall fail.

An overall pass grade will be a candidate that has achieved a pass or higher in all twelve components. However, up to three borderline passes are permitted if balanced by three merits or more in other components. Only one borderline is permitted for the dive leading components.

An overall merit grade will be a candidate that has achieved four or more merits after any borderline passes have been balanced.

An overall failure grade will be a candidate that has either:

- Failed in one or more components
- Has borderline marks in more than three components
- Failed to balance three borderline marks or less with merit marks
- Has borderline marks in both dive leading components
- Has a borderline grade in the Personal Diving Skills component

At the end of this meeting, the final results are reviewed and agreed by the examining team before dispersal.

APPENDIX A: TYPICAL FCD PRACTICAL EXAM TIMETABLE

Two weeks before the Event

Senior Examiner to brief the candidate (and examiner) dive team	N/A

Evening before Day One

Examiners brief	(0.5 hours)
Candidates' brief	(0.5 hours)
Planning session for first boat diving day	(1.5 hours)

Day One

Boat diving	(8 hours)
Candidate Feedback on Day 1 Performance	(0.5hours)
Planning session for second boat diving day	(1.5 hours)

Day Two

Boat diving	(6 hours)
Preparation for Presentation	(1 hour)
Candidate Presentation	(0.5 hours)
Exam Close and Next Steps	(0.5 hours)
Examiners' meeting	(0.5 hours)

Event plus two weeks

Candidates submit Report to both the Senior Examiner and the FCD Chief Examiner

Event plus 4 weeks

Exam results to be provided to HQ for dissemination.

Note: Timings are approximate and will depend upon the number of candidates and the examiner/candidate ratio. Exact timings depend on the venue.

© The British Sub-Aqua Club, Telford's Quay, South Pier Road, Ellesmere Port, Cheshire, CH65 4FL

APPENDIX B: SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENT AREAS

Item	Assessment Area	Page
1	Personal Diving Skills	11
2	Dive Leading Underwater Day 1	12
3	Dive Leading Underwater Day 2	13
4	Attitude	14
5	Safe Effective Dive Management	15
6	Contribution to Leadership	16
7	Contribution to Teamwork	18
8	Practical Position Fixing	19
9	Response to Surface Emergency	20
10	Achievement of Dive Operation Objectives	21
11	Seamanship Skills	23
12	Practical Diving Knowledge	24

Area 1: Personal Diving Skills

The BSAC expects First Class Diver candidates to present themselves for examination with a good level of personal diving skills. This element is examined throughout the course of the two days. A Borderline Grade constitutes an overall FAIL. There should be no doubt as to the personal diving skills of the candidate.

PASS	
	Role model diving skills
	Excellent buoyancy control and an understanding of the effect of trim to the level of workshop tested black buoyancy
	Appropriate finning Technique (awareness of others & silt)
	Competent and safe self-help & rescue skills
	Appropriate pace with buddy
	Appropriate equipment configuration
	Appropriate and clear communication
	Awareness
	Comfortable and at ease underwater
	Attention to the environment
	Ability to deal with complex tasks (manage task loading with ease)
	Time and gas management
	Competent decompression diving skills such as buoyancy control, task loading, run-time management, deco model understanding, planning
	Use of SMB/DSMB and Distance Line as appropriate to the dive
	Search/lifting skills
BORDERLINE	Some of the pass areas absent
	Poor communication
FAIL	Most of the pass areas absent
	Unsafe diving practices used/suggested
	No attention to buddy
MERIT	Scored well in most of the pass areas
Key skills:	
	SAFETY
	Task related items
	Dive Leading
	Dive Management

Area 2: Dive Leading Underwater Day One

As part of each day the candidate is expected to lead an assessed dive. The candidate is expected to dive accordingly and report back to the dive manager once on board the boat.

PASS	Role model dive leading with divers of a similar level
	Stated objectives given
	Brief full and concise
	Brief encompassing SEEDS
	Good dive leadership
	Attention to buddy
	Examiner involved
	Appropriate and clear communication
	Safe and controlled
	Appropriate equipment used and prepared
	Adapted to prevailing conditions
	Objectives achieved
	Diving made enjoyable
	at ease with conditions
	Pilotage
	Navigation
	Good debrief: • Assess dive • Honesty regarding adaptations (plan changes) • Progression – what next?
BORDERLINE	Failed to achieve in a small number of pass areas
	Poor techniques used, but not preventing diving
FAIL	Most of pass areas absent
	Unsafe procedures adopted or suggested
	No involvement of Examiner
	Indecisive
	Unable to navigate
MERIT	Scored well in most of the pass areas
	Consistent, repeatable demonstrated performance

Area 3: Dive Leading Underwater Day Two

This is the same as Area 2 but should be undertaken with a different examiner. The candidate is expected to dive accordingly and report back to the dive manager once on board the boat.

PASS	Role model dive leading with divers of a similar level
	Stated objectives given
	Brief full and concise
	Brief encompassing SEEDS
	Good dive leadership
	Attention to buddy
	Examiner involved
	Appropriate and clear communication
	Safe and controlled
	Appropriate equipment used and prepared
	Adapted to prevailing conditions
	Objectives achieved
	Diving made enjoyable
	At ease with conditions
	Pilotage
	Navigation
	Good debrief: • Assess dive • Honesty regarding adaptations (plan changes) • Progression – what next?
BORDERLINE	Failed to achieve in a small number of pass areas
	Poor techniques used, but not preventing diving
FAIL	Most of pass areas absent
	Unsafe procedures adopted or suggested
	No involvement of Examiner
	Indecisive
	Unable to navigate
MERIT	Scored well in most of the pass areas
	Consistent, repeatable demonstrated performance

© The British Sub-Aqua Club, Telford's Quay, South Pier Road, Ellesmere Port, Cheshire, CH65 4FL

Area 4: Attitude

The candidate's flexibility and adaptability throughout the two days of the exam is assessed by all the examiners. The standard required is what is expected of a First-Class Diver.

PASS	Standard – Positive attitude commensurate with the level of First-Class Diver
	Positive approach to people & tasks
	” Can do” approach
	Good level of interpersonal skills
	Shows awareness of own emotional state, that of others and how these impact on team working
	Is able to appropriately manage and deal with own and others' emotions as would be reasonable in the circumstances which arise.
	Shows awareness of the pressures on others and is supportive of them.
	Works well as a team member as well as team leader (and can switch between these roles as required by the task)
	Help the team to find solutions to the problems that arise Smiles,
	even in adversity
	Enthusiastic
	Co-operative
	Open minded
	Willing to learn and adapt
	Respect for equality & diversity
BORDERLINE	Occasional or minor lapses in a small number of the pass areas
FAIL	Numerous instances of poor behavior/attitude to other candidates and/or examiners
	Aggressive
	Bad tempered
	Obstruction of the team Intolerant of race, gender, disability, equality and diversity
MERIT	Scored well in all pass areas throughout the 2 days of the examination

Area 5: Safe Effective Dive Management

As part of the examination spent aboard the boats, the candidate will be assessed in the areas of dive management and the implementation of the diving plan. The candidate is expected to manage actual diving (i.e. be in sole charge of diving) at some point, which in practice given the number of candidates means managing 1 wave of divers. They will be team members throughout the rest of the examination.

PASS	Standard – Performance suitable to act as a demonstration on any diving event but especially those to unknown locations with a largely "unknown" group of divers Effective and confident contribution to safe and effective diving, acting as both • Leader • Team member Keeping operation running to programme • By management • Intervention as team leader • Contribution as team member Tactical dive management - Application of MAPP (Monitoring, Anticipation, Predicting and Planning) Concise, relevant brief and debrief Provides critical information Keeps everyone updated (including skipper and crew) Ensured that dive details were recorded accurately Aware of surroundings and developing situations Effective problem solving and decision-making under pressure Flexible Achieved the objectives
BORDERLINE	Candidate did not achieve some of the pass aspects Poor technique used, but not preventing diving
FAIL	Most of pass areas absent Unsafe procedures adopted or suggested Ineffective management Dogmatic or inflexible Indecisive

MERIT	Scored well in most of the pass areas
	Confident and competent in managing
	Excellent communication with all members of the group and coxswain/helm/skipper

Area 6: Contribution to Leadership

Throughout the examination the candidate will be assessed in their leadership abilities. The candidate is expected to be an active leader when taking the role as dive manager. The candidate is also expected to take a leadership role at other times as and when the occasion arises.

PASS	Role model contribution to leadership When leading: - Effective and confident contribution to safe and effective diving - Effective and confident contribution to safe and effective project Appropriate intervention when necessary Provides critical information Effective communication Clear delegation Aware of the “big picture” Effective problem solving and decision-making under pressure Is able to appropriately manage and deal with own and others’ emotions as would be reasonable in the circumstances which arise Flexible Achieved the objectives
BORDERLINE	Candidate did not achieve some of the pass aspects Low level of communication demonstrated
FAIL	Most of pass areas absent Unsafe procedures adopted or suggested Ineffective management Dogmatic or inflexible Indecisive
MERIT	Scored well in most of the pass areas Confident and competent in managing Excellent communication with all members of the group and coxswain

Area 7: Contribution to Teamwork

Throughout the examination the candidate will be assessed in their teamworking abilities. The candidate is expected to be an active member of their team, and by using their skills contributes to the effectiveness of the team

PASS

Standard – Performed at the level expected of a First-Class Diver Effective

and confident contribution to safe and effective diving, acting as

- Team member

Keeping operation running to programme

- By being amenable to being managed
- Completing delegated tasks
- Report back on completion or failure of designated task
- Intervention as team member
- Ensuring the safety of all group members

Providing critical information

Keeping project/dive manager updated

Shows awareness of the pressures on others and is supportive of them

Flexible

Enthusiastic

Co-operative

Assists in achieving the objectives

Communicates freely with other team members and examiners

BORDERLINE

Candidate did not achieve some of the pass aspects

Poor technique used, but not preventing diving

FAIL

Most of pass areas absent

Unsafe procedures adopted or suggested

Ineffective teamwork

Avoidance of “fair share”

Absent

Dogmatic or inflexible

Intolerant

MERIT

Scored well in most of the pass areas

Confident and competent in teamworking

Excellent communication with all members of the group and coxswain

Area 8: Practical Position Fixing

As part of the examination spent aboard the boats, the candidate will be assessed in the areas of practical position fixing. The candidate is expected to demonstrate their ability to find a given site using all available resources.

PASS

Role model position fixing as would be expected of a professional dive boat skipper

Effective use of resources available to fix positions

Demonstrate ability to find position by one or more of:

- GPS
- Transits
- Position fixes

Where insufficient natural opportunities have presented during the exam to assess each student the examiner team will arrange time for set piece exercises.

For example, this could involve one candidate group demonstrating their ability to produce accurate transits for a given GPS position and then the following group using those transits to determine the original GPS position. The groups will deploy shot lines on the target positions to enable examiners to determine accuracy of fixing which is expected to be within 10m.

Demonstrate chart work skills by

- Knowledge of charts
- Finding position
- Locating possible dive sites
- Locating launch sites
- Calculating passage plan
- Tidal streams
- Slack water calculation

Demonstrate tidal calculation

- Depth over given site
- Depth graduated to time

BORDERLINE

Candidate did not achieve some of the pass aspects

Poor technique used

FAIL

Most of pass areas absent

Unsafe procedures adopted or suggested

Inability to fix position

MERIT	Scored well in most of the pass areas
	Confident and competent in using all resources

Area 9: Response to Surface Emergency

During the two days of the examination each candidate will be required to respond to an emergency, either individually or as an effective member of the group. Each candidate will be required to demonstrate leadership, teamwork and effective casualty management

PASS

Standard – Performed to the level expected of a Rescue Specialist skilled in rescue techniques.

Use of effective, appropriate, up to date rescue techniques

- Correct technique
- Correct rates applied
- Oxygen administration, if required
- Casualty monitored
- Signs and symptoms recorded
- Coastguard contacted
- Reactive at first then proactive

Effective delegation

Effective rescue management

Effective communications

Appropriate level of urgency

Acting as a team member if appropriate

BORDERLINE

Failed to achieve in one or a small number of pass areas

FAIL

Failed to achieve in most of the pass areas

MERIT

Scored well in all pass areas

Area 10: Achievement of Dive Operation Objectives

As part of the examination the candidate team will be given a project/expedition to complete. This will either be a designated site or a set of adventurous dives. The purpose of the project/expedition will be to collect reliable, reproducible data for subsequent collation, analysis and presentation. The objectives of the dive are to plan and execute a successful project at First Class Diver level.

The candidate team will be observed during their planning phases (typically Friday and Saturday evening). These planning sessions will allow the examining team insight into the teamworking, leadership, roles, responsibilities and priorities dictated by the candidate team.

At the end of the examination the candidate team is given the opportunity to feedback their evaluation and report their project. This should be done as a team and be given one hour to prepare for this reporting session.

The candidate team is also expected to submit a written report to the examination Senior Examiner and the First-Class Chief Examiner within two weeks after the event. This report may be placed on the BSAC website as a record of the examination's achievements.

If the candidate team as a whole does not achieve the project/expedition to an appropriate standard, then the individual candidates' marks will be adjusted to reflect this.

PASS

Standard - Performed at the level expected of a First-Class Diver

Contribution to the planning of the allocated tasks

Project/expedition aims achieved:

- Reliable, useable data collected
- Efficient use of resources
- Working as part of a team

Dive safe and effective:

- Project executed in line with brief and dry run

Honest and accurate evaluation

- Analysis of the results/data collected
- Analysis of what went well and what could have been done better
- How the task could be improved

Reporting/presentation

- Relevant information
- Reasonable depth of knowledge
- Logical
- Complete coverage
- Accurate

Contribution to team effort Task

should be reproducible

BORDERLINE	Candidate did not achieve some of the pass areas
	Poor techniques used, but not preventing diving
FAIL	Failed to achieve in most of the pass areas
	Inappropriate and inaccurate evaluation
	No contribution to team effort
	Unsafe procedures adopted or suggested
MERIT	Scored well in all pass areas
	Consistent, repeatable demonstrated performance
	Informative and enjoyable

Area 11: Seamanship Skills

Throughout the examination, the candidates will be asked to demonstrate their abilities in a number of practical areas. The subject areas include:

- Coxing
- Crewing
- Weather
- General Seamanship
- Knots & ropework

PASS	Standard – Levels of practical ability commensurate with the standard of a First-Class Diver, in all areas of diving
	Ability to safely handle a boat (small inflatable up to hard boat)
	Demonstrate ability in retrieving other divers and/or
	Using others more skilled (e.g. hard boat skipper)
	Tidy up of boat
	Set up of shot line
	Set up of decompression station
	Demonstrable knowledge of buoyage, rules of the road' etc.
	Demonstrable knowledge of weather and sea state
	Ability to tie different knots and demonstrate their use
BORDERLINE	Failed to achieve the required level in a small number of the pass areas
FAIL	Failed to achieve the required level of knowledge in most of the pass areas
	Unsafe procedures adopted or suggested
MERIT	Scored well in all pass areas
	Displayed a high level of ability
	Ability backed up with high level of knowledge

© The British Sub-Aqua Club, Telford's Quay, South Pier Road, Ellesmere Port, Cheshire, CH65 4FL

Area 12: Diving Knowledge

Throughout the exam, the candidates will be quizzed on key areas of theoretical and practical knowledge. The subject areas include:

- Weather/seamanship/knots & ropework/chartwork & navigation
- Physics/mixed gases/technical diving/equipment/rebreathers
- Physiology/first aid/diving medicine/decompression

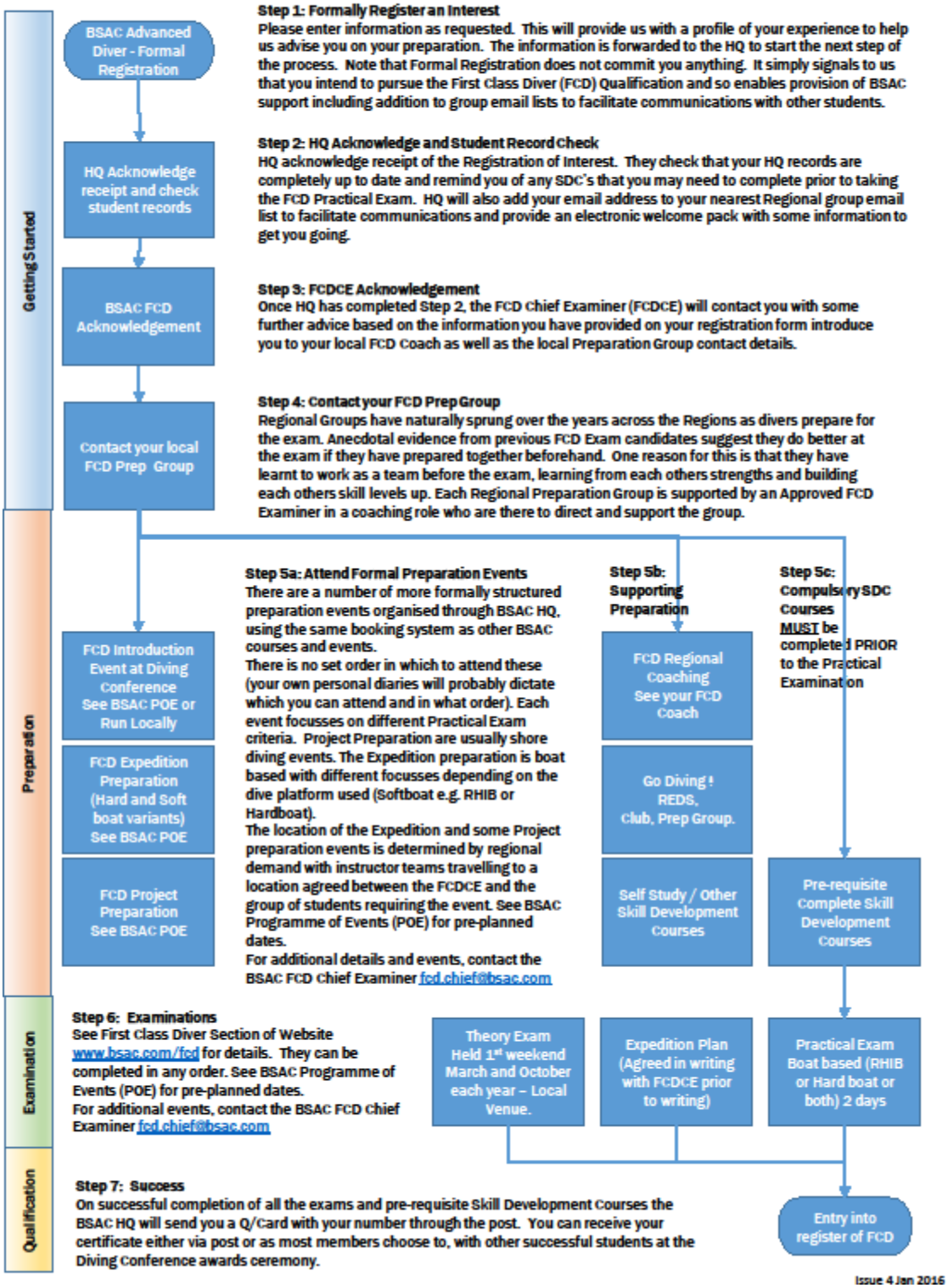
It is advisable prior to the examination event that agreed questions are formulated by the examination team. This allows continuity of questioning between candidates and different examiners.

PASS	Standard – Levels of knowledge commensurate with the knowledge standard of a First-Class Diver, in all areas of diving
	Relevant recall of accurate information
	Up to date
	Evidence of understanding of subject matter and relevance
	Answered logically
	No fabrication
	Honest
	Able to direct where information can be found and reporting back to examiners if unable to answer
BORDERLINE	Failed to achieve the required level of knowledge in a small number of the pass areas
FAIL	Failed to achieve the required level of knowledge in a most of the pass areas
	Incorrect information given
	Unsafe information given
MERIT	Scored well in all pass areas
	Displayed a high level of knowledge
	backed up with evidence

Appendix C: **FCD STUDENT PREPARATION PROCESS**

BRITISH SUB-AQUA CLUB

FIRST CLASS DIVER : STUDENT PREPARATION PROCESS



Step 1: Formally Register an Interest
Please enter information as requested. This will provide us with a profile of your experience to help us advise you on your preparation. The information is forwarded to the HQ to start the next step of the process. Note that Formal Registration does not commit you anything. It simply signals to us that you intend to pursue the First Class Diver (FCD) Qualification and so enables provision of BSAC support including addition to group email lists to facilitate communications with other students.

Step 2: HQ Acknowledge and Student Record Check
HQ acknowledge receipt of the Registration of Interest. They check that your HQ records are completely up to date and remind you of any SDC's that you may need to complete prior to taking the FCD Practical Exam. HQ will also add your email address to your nearest Regional group email list to facilitate communications and provide an electronic welcome pack with some information to get you going.

Step 3: FCDCE Acknowledgement
Once HQ has completed Step 2, the FCD Chief Examiner (FCDCE) will contact you with some further advice based on the information you have provided on your registration form introduce you to your local FCD Coach as well as the local Preparation Group contact details.

Step 4: Contact your FCD Prep Group
Regional Groups have naturally sprung over the years across the Regions as divers prepare for the exam. Anecdotal evidence from previous FCD Exam candidates suggest they do better at the exam if they have prepared together beforehand. One reason for this is that they have learnt to work as a team before the exam, learning from each others strengths and building each others skill levels up. Each Regional Preparation Group is supported by an Approved FCD Examiner in a coaching role who are there to direct and support the group.

Step 5a: Attend Formal Preparation Events
There are a number of more formally structured preparation events organised through BSAC HQ, using the same booking system as other BSAC courses and events.
There is no set order in which to attend these (your own personal diaries will probably dictate which you can attend and in what order). Each event focusses on different Practical Exam criteria. Project Preparation are usually shore diving events. The Expedition preparation is boat based with different focusses depending on the dive platform used (Softboat e.g. RHIB or Hardboat).
The location of the Expedition and some Project preparation events is determined by regional demand with instructor teams travelling to a location agreed between the FCDCE and the group of students requiring the event. See BSAC Programme of Events (POE) for pre-planned dates.
For additional details and events, contact the BSAC FCD Chief Examiner fcd.chief@bsac.com

Step 5b: Supporting Preparation

Step 5c: Compulsory SDC Courses MUST be complete d PRIOR to the Practical Examination

Step 6: Examinations
See First Class Diver Section of Website www.bsac.com/fcd for details. They can be completed in any order. See BSAC Programme of Events (POE) for pre-planned dates.
For additional events, contact the BSAC FCD Chief Examiner fcd.chief@bsac.com

Step 7: Success
On successful completion of all the exams and pre-requisite Skill Development Courses the BSAC HQ will send you a Q/Card with your number through the post. You can receive your certificate either via post or as most members choose to, with other successful students at the Diving Conference awards ceremony.

Issue 4 Jan 2016