

3.1.4 Advanced Open Water Diver

3.1.4.1 Course Outcomes

GUE's Advanced Open Water Diver course is a no-decompression course structured to prepare divers for deeper recreational diving while using sound equipment, efficient diving skills, and advanced breathing mixtures. Course outcomes include, but are not limited to: skill cultivation and refinement, familiarity with the theory and practice of decompression, safe use of nitrox (and, optionally, triox) for extended bottom times, correct ascent procedures, diver rescue (on land, at the surface, and underwater), emergency management, and the use of helium to minimize narcosis, CO₂, gas density, and post-dive "nitrogen stress".

3.1.4.2 Prerequisites

Applicants for an Advanced Open Water Diver course must abide by [Training Prerequisites \(2.1.4.1\)](#), plus:

- a. Be a minimum of 16 years of age. Documented parental or legal guardian consent must be submitted to GUE HQ when the participant is a minor.
- b. Hold a GUE Open Water Diver, GUE Performance Diver, or GUE Fundamentals certification.
- c. Have conducted at least 15 non-training dives following completion of either GUE Open Water Diver, GUE Performance Diver, or GUE Basic Fundamentals¹ certification.
- d. Have completed basic life support (BLS) training from a recognized training agency within the twenty-four months prior to the start of the class.
- e. If using doubles during the course, have conducted at least 15 non-training dives in the GUE double tank configuration or have conducted 10 dives utilizing doubles following completion of GUE Doubles Primer certification.
- f. If using a drysuit during the course, have conducted at least 15 non-training dives in a drysuit or have conducted 10 non-training dives utilizing a drysuit following completion of GUE Drysuit Primer certification.

3.1.4.3 Course Content

The Advanced Open Water Diver course is normally conducted over six days. It requires a minimum of eleven dives (including a dive in reduced ambient light conditions) and at least forty-eight hours of instruction, encompassing lectures, land drills, and in-water work.

The GUE Advanced Open Water Diver certification can also be obtained by successfully completing GUE Navigation Primer, GUE Rescue Primer, and GUE Deep Primer courses.

3.1.4.4 Advanced Open Water Diver Specific Training Standards

- a. Student-to-instructor ratio is not to exceed 6:1 during land drill or surface exercises; it cannot exceed 3:1 during any in-water training.
- b. Maximum depth of 100 ft/30 m.
- c. No overhead diving.
- d. All dives must be within minimum decompression limits (MDLs), i.e., no required stops.

¹ Including GUE Fundamentals with Recreational rating issued under past versions of Standards.

- e. Divers wishing to use triox as a breathing gas must successfully conduct at least two dives while using triox. If nitrox is used during all dives, no triox will be noted on the GUE Advanced Open Water Diver certification card.

3.1.4.5 Required Training Materials

GUE training materials and recommended study as determined by the course study packet available online or via download after GUE course registration.

3.1.4.6 Academic Topics

- a. Introduction: GUE organization and course overview (objectives, limits, expectations)
- b. Applied diving physics
- c. Applied diving physiology
- d. Situational awareness
- e. Breathing gas overview
- f. Dive planning, gas management, and logistics
- g. Introduction to triox
- h. Decompression overview and minimum decompression procedures
- i. Diving safety and accident prevention
- j. Rescue diving techniques, emergency management, and diving-related BLS skills

3.1.4.7 Land Drills and Topics

- a. GUE EDGE and pre-dive drill sequence, including gas analysis
- b. Rescue skills, including managing a rescue scenario, swimming and non-swimming assists, egression techniques, controlling a distressed diver, underwater search patterns, managing and surfacing an unconscious diver
- c. Navigation skills using a compass, guideline, and natural navigation
- d. Light and touch communication protocols
- e. Surface marker buoy (SMB) deployment utilizing a spool

3.1.4.8 Required Dive Skills and Drills

Students must demonstrate competence in the following skills to attain GUE Advanced Open Water certification:

- a. Must be able to swim at least 300 yds/275 m in less than 14 minutes without stopping. This test should be conducted in a swimsuit and, where necessary, appropriate thermal protection.
- b. Must be able to swim a distance of at least 50 ft/15 m on a breath hold while submerged.
- c. Demonstrate a safe and responsible demeanor throughout all training.
- d. Demonstrate basic equipment proficiency and an understanding of the GUE equipment configuration.
- e. Demonstrate proficiency in safe diving techniques, including pre-dive preparation, in-water activity, and post-dive assessment.
- f. Demonstrate awareness of team member location and a concern for safety, responding quickly to visual indications and dive partner needs.
- g. Demonstrate proficiency in underwater communication.
- h. Demonstrate proficiency in proper ascents and descents, including the implementation of variable ascent rates.

- i. Demonstrate good buoyancy and trim, i.e., approximate reference is a maximum of 30 degrees off horizontal while remaining within a range of 5 ft/1.5 m from target depth.
- j. Comfortably demonstrate at least three propulsion techniques that would be appropriate in a delicate and/or silty environment, including comprehension of the components necessary for a successful backward kick.
- k. Efficiently and comfortably demonstrate how to donate gas to an out-of-gas diver in multiple gas-sharing scenarios.
- l. Demonstrate proficiency in the ability to deploy a surface marker buoy (SMB) while using a spool.
- m. Demonstrate proficiency in managing gas-sharing scenarios, including a direct ascent while managing minimum decompression obligations.
- n. Demonstrate effective navigation using a compass and while managing a spool or reel as a guideline underwater.
- o. Demonstrate effective navigation using natural references.
- p. Demonstrate proficiency in fundamental diver rescue techniques, including assessing a rescue scene, supporting and recovering distressed, tired, and unconscious divers at the surface, recovering an unconscious diver to the surface, and a range of simulated diving incidents.
- q. Demonstrate proficiency in the use of the primary light, including passive and active communication.
- r. Demonstrate proficiency with a primary light by handling it during all skills.

3.1.4.9 Equipment Requirements

GUE base equipment configuration as outlined in Appendix A, plus:

- a. Drysuit inflation system independent from back gas cylinders (while breathing a helium mixture, if using a drysuit)
- b. One primary and one backup light
- c. One primary reel per team (optional)

Prior to the commencement of the class, students should consult with a GUE representative to verify equipment requirements and the appropriateness of any selected equipment.

Appendix A - GUE Equipment Configuration

The GUE base equipment configuration is comprised of:

- a. Tanks/cylinders: Students may use a single tank/cylinder with a single- or dual-outlet valve. Students may also use dual tanks/cylinders connected with a dual-outlet isolator manifold, which allows for the use of two first stages. Dual tanks/cylinders connected with a dual-outlet, non-isolator manifold can be used, but only in recreational (minimum decompression) diving, and are considered an alternative for a single tank/cylinder. Consult course-specific standards and your instructor to verify size requirements.
- b. Regulators:
 - i. Single tank: The first stage must supply a primary second stage via a 5 to 7 ft/1.5 to 2 m hose. A backup second stage must be necklaced and supplied via a short

- hose. The first stage must also supply an analog pressure gauge, inflation for the buoyancy compensator (BC), and (when applicable) inflation for a drysuit.
- ii. Double tank: One first stage must supply a primary second stage via a 5 to 7 ft/1.5 to 2 m hose (7 ft/2 m hose is required for all cave classes), and inflation for the buoyancy compensator (BC). The other first stage must supply a necklaced backup second stage via a short hose, an analog pressure gauge, and (when applicable) inflation for a drysuit.
- c. Backplate system:
 - i. Is held to the diver by one continuous piece of webbing. This webbing is adjustable and uses a buckle to secure the system at the waist.
 - ii. A crotch strap is attached and looped through the waistband to prevent the system from riding up a diver's back.
 - iii. The continuous webbing must support five D-rings;
 - 1. The first placed at the left hip
 - 2. The second placed in line with a diver's right collarbone
 - 3. The third placed in line with the diver's left collarbone
 - 4. The fourth and fifth are placed on the front and back of the crotch strap when divers plan to use advanced equipment such as DPVs.
 - iv. The harness below the diver's arms has small restrictive bands to allow for the placement of backup lights. The webbing and system retains a minimalist approach.
- d. Buoyancy compensation device (BC):
 - i. A diver's BC is back-mounted and minimalist in nature.
 - ii. It is free of extraneous strings, tabs, or other material.
 - iii. There are no restrictive bands or restrictive elastic affixed to the buoyancy cell.
 - iv. Wing size and shape is appropriate to the cylinder size(s) employed for training.
- e. At least one time/depth measuring device
- f. Wrist-mounted compass
- g. Mask and fins: Mask is low-volume; fins are rigid, non-split.
- h. Backup mask
- i. At least one cutting device
- j. Wetnotes with at least one pencil
- k. Exposure suit appropriate for the duration of exposure
- l. Surface marker buoy (SMB) with spool: Where required, the SMB should be appropriate for environmental conditions and deployed using a spool with at least 100 ft/30 m of line.

The GUE PSCR configuration is comprised of:

- a. GUE base equipment configuration (except Tanks/Cylinder)
- b. One primary and two backup lights
- c. A GUE-approved passive semi-closed circuit rebreather
- d. Modified tank configuration as appropriate for use with a GUE-approved passive semi-closed circuit rebreather
- e. Modified regulator configuration as appropriate for use with a GUE-approved passive semi-closed circuit rebreather

The GUE CCR configuration is comprised of:

- a. GUE base equipment configuration (except Tanks/Cylinder)
- b. One primary and two backup lights
- c. A GUE-approved closed-circuit rebreather
 - i. Where required, students must own a GUE-approved closed-circuit rebreather before attending the course; they can, however, use a rented or borrowed unit during the course.
 - ii. The closed-circuit rebreather used by the student, with all associated components, must be fully functional (pass all tests on the rebreather pre-dive checklist) and serviced according to manufacturer specifications.
 - iii. All oxygen sensors must be less than one year from manufacturing date.
 - iv. Both the rebreather controller and SOLO board must be updated with the latest software and firmware versions published by the manufacturer.
- d. Modified tank configuration as appropriate for use with a GUE-approved closed-circuit rebreather
- e. Modified regulator configuration as appropriate for use with a GUE-approved closed-circuit rebreather
- f. Spare parts and consumables, including one set of controller, HUD, and solenoid batteries; one oxygen sensor; and one DSV/BOV mouthpiece.
- g. If using a drysuit inflation cylinder attached to the backplate, extended inflation cylinder straps need to be used to ensure that it does not interfere with or restrict the counterlung's function.

The GUE Sidemount configuration is comprised of:

- a. GUE base equipment configuration (except Tank/cylinders, Regulators, Backplate, BC)
- b. One primary and two backup lights
- c. Tanks/cylinders: Students are required to use independent cylinders with single valves and without manifolds, which allow for the use of one first stage each. Stage cylinders with [proper cylinder marking \(2.2, e\)](#) will also be utilized.
- d. Regulators: One of the second stages must be on a 7 ft/2 m hose. Both first stages must supply a pressure gauge and provide inflation for a drysuit (where applicable) and a wing.
- e. Sidemount harness: A diver's sidemount setup should be back-mounted and minimalist in nature. Wing size and shape should be appropriate to the cylinder size(s) employed for training.

Additional Course-Specific Equipment

- a. Where required, back gas and stage cylinders with [proper cylinder marking \(2.2, e\)](#) will also be utilized in accordance with the GUE General Training Standards, Policies, and Procedures document and configured in line with GUE protocols.
- b. When drysuit inflation systems are applicable, they should be sized appropriately for the environment; small tanks are placed on the left side of the backplate with larger supplies affixed to the diver's left back gas tank.
- c. Underwater lights:

- i. When required, backup lights should be powered by alkaline batteries (not rechargeable) and stowed on the D-rings at a diver's chest (except when diving sidemount).
 - ii. Backup lights should have a minimal amount of protrusions and a single attachment at the rear.
 - iii. Backup lights should feature a twist-on/off switch for operation
 - iv. The primary light should consist of a rechargeable battery pack and be fitted with a Goodman-style light handle.
 - v. When burn time requirements create the need for an external battery pack, it should reside in a canister mounted on the diver's right hip.
- d. Guideline devices, as required during cave diving activities:
 - i. A primary reel is required for all cave diving and provides a minimalist form factor with a handle designed to support a Goodman or "hands free" handle operation. The primary reel must contain at least 150 ft/45 m of line.
 - ii. A safety spool is required for each diver while cave diving and must contain at least 150 ft/45 m of line.
 - iii. A jump or gap spool is required during Cave 2 diving and must contain at least 75 ft/23 m of line.
- e. Where required, GUE-approved DPV must:
 - i. Be a tow-behind style with adjustable speed and clutch mechanism.
 - ii. Include an attached cord at the back with bolt snap to be clipped on the front crotch strap D-ring.
 - i. Include a leash attached to the front to be used for towing.