

SKILL DEVELOPMENT COURSES

Branch Run Skill Development Courses

All branches have the ability to run Skill Development Courses within their branch. There are many advantages in running courses within the branch:

- The scheduling of the course.
- The choice of venue for lectures.
- The choice of venue for open water activities.
- The cost of running the courses can be minimised – using branch instructors and equipment.
- Avoidance of duplication - Many of the skill development courses cover elements of the core diver training and Qualification Record Books can be signed up for those elements.

The help and advice of the Regional Coaching Teams is readily available to support the running of branch courses. They will, where required, supply suitably qualified instructors and assist branches to develop their own instructor base for courses that require an approved instructor to carry out the student tuition. Equipment for the course may also be available from the Regional Coaching Team. Course Instructional support materials are available from Head Quarters. The contact details of Regional Coaches and Regional Skill Development Course Organizers are available in the BSAC Programme of Events or on the BS-AC website, www.bsac.org.

There are a number of points to be considered when setting up a Branch course. These usually include:

- Identifying the course(s) required by the members.
- Establish demand for the course.
- The Course Syllabus.
 - Course duration.
 - Student entry grades.
 - The instructor requirements of the course.
 - Course instructor to student ratio.
 - The facilities and equipment that will be required.
 - Qualifications.
- Cost of running the course.
- Registering the course with Head Quarters.
- Run the course.
- Administration of the course.
- H Q course administration and Qualifications.

To assist you in the process of planning a branch run skill development course the following links will guide you through each point listed above.

Step 1

Identifying the course(s) required by the members

Step 2

Establish demand for the course

Step 3

The Course Syllabus

Step 4

Cost of running the course

Step 5

Registering the course with Head Quarters

Step 6

Run the course

Step 7

Administration of the course

Step 8

HQ course administration and issue of certifications

Step 1

Identifying the course(s) required by the members

There are many reasons to run a Skill Development Course:

- Request from club members
- It is part of a particular course/qualification, e.g. Oxygen Administration
- Safety
- Improved rescue skills
- Requirement from other body, e.g. lifesavers required in the pool

There may be a request for particular courses from branch members or courses that the branch committee considers are essential for the skills for the branch members to have.

Essential skills may include:

- First Aid for Divers
- Lifesaver Award
- Oxygen Administration
- Boat Handling, etc

There are also several 'Special Interest' courses that may have particular relevance to your branch:

- Marine Biology
- Underwater Photography
- Disability Awareness

A full list of Skill Development Courses is available on the BS-AC website, www.bsac.org
The BSAC Programme of Events lists the Skill Development Courses run regionally that are available again at www.bsac.org

Step 2

Establish demand for the course

There are many differing needs within branches for Skill Development Courses. The principles that are best adopted are:

- Establish the training requirements of the branch.
- Establish the training needs of individuals within the branch.
- Prioritise the training needs.
- Establish common availability of those instructing and needing the course.

Often a skill development course cannot be sustained with only the members of one branch. The skill development course could be offered also to other members within the BSAC:

- Advertise within the region.
- Establish links with local branches.

Some courses can be offered to the non-diver or divers from other agencies, e.g. boat handling:

- Advertise locally
- Establish links with other local diver agencies

Step 3

The Course Syllabus

The Course Syllabus is also available on the website and will outline the scope, content of the course and the necessary instructor to student ratios.

Course Duration

This will be dependent on the type of course. Where the course is for more than one day, or when there are theory lectures as well as practical sessions, as a branch you will have the opportunity to spread the lectures over a period suitable to members prior to any practical element.

NOTE All theory MUST be completed and students MUST receive the course notes supplied by HQ PRIOR to undertaking any practical open water elements.

Student Entry Grade

For each course there will be a minimum student qualification stated. As well as a diver qualification there may, for some courses, be a requirement for prior attendance on other skill development courses and/or a requirement of diving experience (a set number of open water dives at a particular Diver Grade). Student's qualifications and relevant experience MUST be checked prior to enrolling them onto the course.

Establish the number of students for the course.

Instructor Requirements

Chief Instructor

Each course requires a 'Chief Instructor' who will be in overall charge of the course and will be registered as such at HQ. The Chief Instructor will need to be present during the course and it will be their responsibility that the course is delivered to an acceptable and appropriate standard. There will be a minimum qualification for chief instructor required for the registration of the course. Photocopies of these qualifications may be required by HQ with the course registration. Some courses require that instructor have gained 'approved Instructor' status to be able to teach on the course. A database of 'approved instructors' is maintained by BS-AC. If your branch does not have suitably qualified instructors the Regional Coaching Team may be able to provide an instructor.

Appoint a Chief Instructor who will run the course.

Course Instructors

There will again be a minimum qualification for other instructors working on the course. On courses that require 'approved instructors' and your branch has suitable NQI's who need to gain 'approval' they will be able to assist on the course. Provided that their instruction is of a suitable

standard and with the endorsement of the chief instructor they can then apply for approval status. Details of applying for Approved Instructor status are available on the website in **Information Sheet 9**. This will be of immense value to the branch as it will allow future courses to be run 'in house'.

Identify Instructors who are able to work on the course.

Course Instructor to Student Ratio

According to the type of course being run, there will be a given ratio of instructors to students. These ratios will be set out in the course syllabus and **MUST** be adhered to. The course Chief Instructor will be counted as part of this ratio. When the student numbers have been established simple divide that number by the appropriate number. (e.g. 12 students with a course ratio of 3 : 1. Instructors required will be 12 students divided by 3 = 4 instructors).

Note some courses have a stipulated instructor to student ratio that may be more beneficial to adjust to a lower ratio. (e.g. Advanced Nitrox ratio is 1 instructor to 4 students – Practically the branch/chief instructor may decide that the ratio of 1 instructor to 2 students may be safer and of more benefit to the students).

Appoint the appropriate number of course instructors.

The facilities and equipment that will be required

In general these requirements will be set out in the syllabus. However, you do need to consider the specific equipment that will be required to teach both Dry Practical and Wet practical lessons. A full set of equipment will be required for each of the instructor/students group.

For example on the Oxygen Administration course 1 resuscitation manikin and 1 Oxygen kit will be required for every 2 students. For a Search and Recovery course each student/instructor group would require enough equipment to be able to learn how to tie knots, set up shotlines, perform a variety of search patterns, attach and use lift bags of various sizes.

It should be remembered that the dry practical sessions act as 'Dry Runs' for open water and should be carried out using that actual equipment that will be required in open water. Some equipment may be available from your Regional Coaching Team.

Also to be considered is the personal equipment that the students will require for any open water activities, and they will need to be informed of these requirements (for example - O2 clean cylinders and pony cylinders for Nitrox course) in the course instructions.

- 1. Identify the equipment required.***
- 2. Assemble a full set for each instructor on the course.***
- 3. Compile a list of student's personal equipment requirements.***

Qualifications

The syllabus will show the type of qualification that will be awarded on successful completion of the course. It will also show which sections of the students QRB can be signed up for core diver training.

Step 4

Cost of running the course

Every Skill Development Course needs to be registered at HQ. There is a course registration fee which is payable by the student. The fee covers the administration of the course at HQ, the supply of course Student Notes, and issuing student Qualifications. The amount of registration fee will be dependent on the course that is being run and will be shown on the course Syllabus. This fee is payable at the time of registration of the course with HQ.

Remember to check with HQ that the fee shown is up to date !!

Additional course costs will be incurred which will need to be taken into account when estimating the cost per student. These may include:

- Hire of lecture/dry practical venues
- Entrance fees to open water venues
- Expenses of instructors working on the course
- Hire of equipment for the course
- Cost of towing boats
- Boat fuel
- Launching fees
- Trailer parking
- Hard boat charter
- Instructional materials, etc.

Also the cost of course 'consumables' (paperwork - planning sheets, course instructions etc, refreshments, photo copying, printing, etc). The Guidelines for payment of expenses is available on the website, www.bsac.org

1. ***Establish the course Registration Fee.***
2. ***Establish the TOTAL additional course expenses.***
3. ***Estimate the cost of course Consumables.***

Step 5

Registering the course with Head Quarters

There is a specific form for the registration of branch run courses:

Branch Run SDC 1.pdf which is available on the BS-AC website, www.bsac.org

The form details need to be completed and forwarded **together with the payment of registration fees for all students.**

COURSE REGISTRATION MUST BE MADE AT LEAST 14 DAYS PRIOR TO THE EVENT in order to allow sufficient time for Head Quarters to issue:

- Course registration number
- Course returns form
- Course student packs which contain the student notes.

All students MUST be issued with the student packs during the course.

Step 6

Run the course

The Chief Instructor will have responsibility for ensuring that the skill development course standards are met. As such they require to:

- Use the course syllabus to decide which instructor does what.
- Be flexible: if an instructor wants to do an alternative task.
- Give instructor plenty of warning of what is required.
- Ensure that the instructor has the most up to date materials.
- Ensure that the instructor has prepared, preferably by practicing.
- Agree the agenda/timetable.
- Be prepared to step in to replace an instructor that does not turn up.
- Have a contingency, e.g. instructor shortage, spare bulb for the OHP etc.

Pre-Course

- Get all the packs together.
- Sort out any equipment and put it together
 - Foils
 - OHP's, PC projector.
 - Screen
 - Manikins
 - O2 sets
 - Extension leads
 - Any handouts
 - Pens
- Something to eat/drink.
- Check any hire equipment.
- Make sure everyone knows where they are going.
- Parking facilities
- Confirm the event and who will open up for you.
- Confirm instructors.
- Impress on the instructors and students the need to stick to times

On the day

- Arrive early.
- Set up the venue.
- Do not forget any of the items required
- Try to stick to the agenda. Minutes become hours if you do not watch them. Keep the breaks but shorten them if necessary.

After the course

Get the instructor team together to discuss how the course went. What went well, lessons learned, what could be improved, etc.

Step 7

Administration of the course

Prior to the Event

- The **qualification of students must be checked**. Their name, membership numbers, and addresses will be required for the completion of the course returns form. Students must attend all elements of the course and therefore a checklist should be compiled of students attending. This will be especially important when the course is run over 2 days or where the lectures are done over a period prior to any practical elements.
- The **Student Registration Fees** need collecting and the total **cost to the student** must be announced.
- The course **Timetable** must be issued.
- The course **Programme** must be issued.
- The course '**Joining Instructions**' must be issued.
- **Dive plans** for any open water activities must be drawn up and approved by the Branch DO.
- **Navigation and Boat slates** prepared and approved by the Branch DO.
- **Receipts** collected for any course costs.

During the Event

- A **register of students** attendance for all elements / days must be kept.
- **Student packs issued** prior to any 'in water' practical elements.
- **Marshalling Logs** to be kept for open water activities.
- Payment of any fees due (venues, launching, etc)
- Receipts collected for any course costs.

After the Event

- **Course Return Form** to be completed and sent to Head Quarters.
- Course **Accounts** completed.
- Course **Report** for Diving Officer / committee.
- Student's QRB's signed up (where appropriate) by the Chief Instructor.
- SDC Course Attendance stickers distributed to students.
- Where there have been 'assistant' instructor working to gain 'approved instructor' status the appropriate forms should be completed by the Chief Instructor. (details of applying for Approved Instructor status are available on the website in **Information Sheet 9**)

Step 8

HQ course administration and issue of certifications

When the course is registered HQ will issue the 'Course Returns Form'. Once the course has been completed and this form has been returned the 'Course Attendance' sticker will be issued by HQ. For branch events they will usually all be sent to the course Chief Instructor for distribution to the students. If this is impractical for your branch then you can request that the logbook stickers are sent to another suitable person within the branch. Have the logbook stickers awarded to the students.

Any instructors that have gained 'approved' status will be registered on the database at HQ.

Prepare for the next course.