

Dundalk Sub Aqua Club – FAQ's

1. **Do I need to be able to swim?** A fairly basic ability to swim is required rather than being an excellent swimmer. We do require the ability to swim 10 lengths of the pool, however there is no requirement for speed or that the distance has to be completed without stopping. We simply wish to determine the current level of fitness and comfort in the water. We will train you to be water fit and comfortable.

2. **Do I have to be fit?** Again, a basic level of fitness is required. You will find that as a result of the training programme you will become fitter and more conscious of your health. Taking up diving will hopefully push you to change your lifestyle for the better. A medical is required to determine that there are no conditions which will prevent diving.

3. **Are there age requirements?** In our club we have an over 18 requirement if the person joining does not have a parent or guardian in the club, in this case the age requirement is 16 within the year of the first years training. There is no upper age limit once a person has been passed medically fit to dive.

4. **How long does the training take?** Our training programme consists of various sections. We firstly teach you to snorkel and in the process you become both more comfortable and water fit. We then move onto SCUBA training to teach you to the basics of diving skills and gear. Both these are done in the pool and will last from Oct /Nov to early March. In conjunction with the practical sessions in the pool you will do a programme of lectures to teach you the information required to make you a safe diver.

5. **When will I do my first open water Dive?** We normally arrange for a weekend trip away to Donegal for the trainees first dive. This is normally the first weekend after St Patricks weekend.

6. **When do I qualify?** At the end of the pool sessions in early March we run a 1 star diving test. This is done internally by the club and is a simple test to run through the diving skills learned. After the first dive in Donegal the main diving season for the year has started. In order to qualify you will need to complete a certain number of dives (20/25) between March and September. In September we will run a 2 star diving test. This is conducted by outside instructors and is basically a run through of the diving ability, skills and knowledge you have developed over the previous 6 months.

7. **Is my qualification international?** Yes. Your qualification is provided by CFT (the Irish underwater council) which is affiliated to CMAS an international organisation for diving. In practical terms your ability to dive will always be judged by your actual ability rather than by your paper qualifications. Irish CFT trained divers are generally good divers and are considered to be such when they dive abroad.

8. **What if I have qualifications from another organisation?** CFT has a defined crossover policy for those divers coming with existing qualifications. These are published on the CFT website. Internally within the club we prefer to see a diver go through our programme, even if they have had other training. It helps us to properly gauge the actual ability of the person and it also integrates the new trainee class into the overall club.

9. **How much does joining the club cost?** The Club fees for trainees in the first year of joining the club are currently €450. This is made up of 3 items (1) your diving insurance €100 (2) the training pack that the club must purchase for you is €50. This consists of your log book/dive tables/trainee manual etc. (3) your first year club fees of €300.

10. **Does this stay the same after the first year?** Unless the overall club fee structure changes at AGM then your fee cost to the club will come down once your first training year is over. Your insurance fee of €100 remains (assuming that the cost of the cover does not change), there is no training pack charge and your club fee reduces to €200. So overall your club fee cost becomes €300

11. **What does this include?** The club provides the general equipment needed by a diving club – compressors / boats / trailers / medical equipment / premises. The club also provides free air fills.

12. **Do I pay for diving:** The club charges €10 per dive (€5 for students). This is purely to contribute towards the cost of running the dives and the club. On an away trip it is normal for the club to charge enough to the members to cover the costs of the fuel used to tow the boats and drive the boats. Normally for a full days diving 2/3 dives it can work out at €20.

13. **How much does the dive gear cost?** The first expense for gear will be to get a mask / snorkel / fins & boots – Some dive shops provide starter kits that include all these items for approx €100. This gear will need to be purchased fairly quickly after starting – for a short period of time it will be possible to get a loan of this gear from other club members for training nights. This is all that will be required to be purchased during your training in the pool as the other club members will provide their SCUBA gear to be used for training. Before your first dive weekend in March you will need to have the basic diving equipment – suit / BCD / Weight Belt / Regulators / Cylinder. This equipment can cost approx €1000 but can probably be purchased for less as good second hand gear. It may be possible to continue with some items of borrowed gear for an additional length of time but it is more normal for each person to have their own set of gear once they start open sea diving.

14. **What does the club Do?** We generally run a dive every weekend, weather permitting. During the summer there are normally 2 dives run per week – at weekends and on a Wednesday evening. There are regular weekend and day away trips to Donegal & Antrim with a foreign club holiday also generally organised. Various social nights / training nights and other club activities also take place regularly.

15. **Do I have to join the Diving Search Unit?** Not unless you wish to. The diving search unit exists within the general club. We have trained search divers and other members of the club which act as crew and shoreline support to the divers. Each person decides for themselves if they wish to be involved and to what extent. If you wish to be involved training will be given.

If you have any further questions which have not been answered here please submit your query by email to info@dundalksubaqua.ie