Guidelines for student scientific diving conducted under Heriot-Watt University supervision as a component of a field course

PLEASE NOTE – this applies to students conducting a limited number of closely supervised scientific dives under benign conditions as part of a marine field course under Heriot-Watt University supervision. Slightly different procedures apply where students are conducting diving in support of a research project.

‘A limited number’ = no more than 3 consecutive days of diving with students conducting no more than 2 dives each per day and no more than 10 dives each in total.

‘Closely supervised’ = students are accompanied on their dives by a member of the Heriot-Watt University dive team who will concentrate their attention on ensuring the well-being of the students as opposed to conducting work tasks. No more than 2 students in each supervised group. An additional member of the dive team will act as standby diver remaining on the surface in a state of readiness to provide assistance if required.

‘Benign conditions’ = depth <15 m, sheltered site with no appreciable wave action, no appreciable tidal currents, visibility >5 m, no significant boat traffic, straightforward access between surface & water.

Dive Qualification

Minimum of CMAS 2** (e.g. BSAC Sports Diver or PADI Rescue Diver)

NOTE – CMAS 2** Divers may only dive in an ‘observer’ capacity and must be accompanied underwater by a fully qualified team member. They must not fill the role of ‘standby diver’. Their diving will be limited to more benign diving environments appropriate to their experience. Such limitations will be at the discretion of the Diving Supervisor.

Dry suit familiarity – if the diver lacks experience in the use of dry suits (e.g. previous diving all done in warm water environments) they should enrol on an appropriate dry suit familiarisation course before participating in Heriot-Watt University diving operations.

Action – Diver to email a scan of their relevant diving certificates to: Heriot-Watt University Diving Officer d.b.harries@hw.ac.uk

Diving Medical

Divers to complete the medical questionnaire, see Appendix 7, ensuring it is signed by their own doctor for verification. Completed questionnaires to be supplied to Heriot-Watt University and scrutinised by the HSE registered HWU diving doctor. If indicated by the questionnaire, the student diver may be required to attend an appointment with the diving doctor at the HWU Medical Centre. Students holding an in-date HSE Diving Medical certificate are exempt from this process.

Action – Diver to email a scan of the completed medical questionnaire (signed by their doctor) to: Heriot-Watt University Diving Officer d.b.harries@hw.ac.uk

Personal Diving Equipment

Students intending to dive on field courses should seek advice on equipment requirements from the course leader. Students are permitted to use their own diving equipment provided it is inspected by a Heriot-Watt University Diving Supervisor and confirmed to be in good condition and regulators have been subject to a full service within the last 12 months.

Action – Before diving commences the Diving Supervisor must confirm any student personal equipment to be used is inspected and confirmed as ‘fit-for-use’. This inspection should encompass dive computers, BCDs, dry suits, regulators & cylinders. A written record must be made noting ownership and type of equipment with identifying details (e.g. serial numbers or make & model) as appropriate. Additionally, in date service certificates should be verified for regulators. The written record of this process should be retained and a copy provided to the Heriot-Watt University Diving Officer.
**Logbook**
To ensure safety we need to assess your prior diving experience as well as your dive qualifications.

**Action** – Diver to email a scan of the most recent 3 diving days in their dive logbook to Heriot-Watt University Diving Officer d.b.harrises@hw.ac.uk. Also, provide a brief (a paragraph) overview of your total diving experience (total number of dives, what proportion in cold water, types of environment / locations, how recent etc.).

**Assessment Dive**

During the first dive conducted by the student the accompanying Diving Supervisor will assess their diving competence. The Diving Supervisor is responsible for forming a judgement on the competence of the student diver and for communicating this judgement to other members of the supervisory team (i.e. recommending additional restrictions on diving if appropriate).

**Action** – Diving Supervisor conduct assessment dive and reach a judgement if the diver is competent to participate in the planned diving operations or if further limitations should be applied to the type of dives they can undertake. This process should be noted on the diving log sheet.