

HSE Surface Supplied (Top Up)

To further enhance your career prospects and earning potential, our HSE Surface Supplied (Top Up) Course will provide you with the appropriate qualification required to work offshore. The offshore industry continues to be a major employer of commercial divers, and by achieving this certification you will be able to work all over the world.

The one week Top Up Course provides you with vital safety training and knowledge required to work offshore and dive from a wet bell. The focus of this course is to teach you safety procedures such as bell rescues, loss of gas, loss of communications and loss of power to the bell. You will undertake both surface and in-water rescues of a wet bell diver. Although used primarily as a means of transport to the dive site, the wet bell is also the place you will return to if in trouble or if you are required to return to the vessel at any time.

The qualification will allow you to dive to depths of 50m when offshore; outwith the UK you may dive to 75m on surface gas using a wet bell.

During our Top Up Course you will complete at least 7 dives from our barge Red Baron into Loch Linnhe, to depths of 21m. Red Baron is a moon pool barge and is fitted for surface supplied air diving and with a twin lock deck decompression chamber.

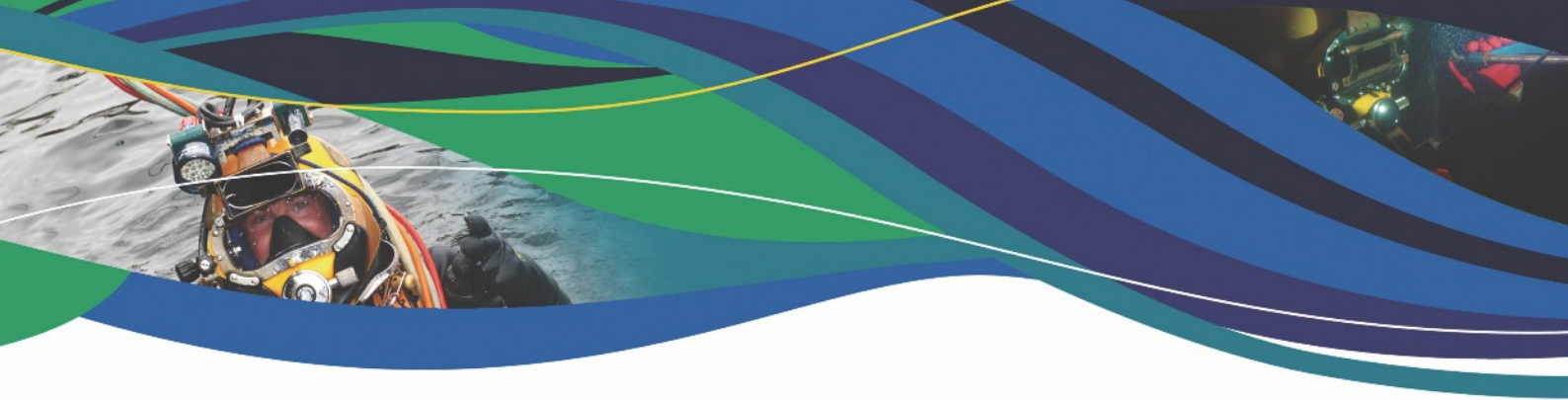
All the dives you undertake on this course will be completed in hot water suits, further preparing you for offshore work, as you will use these when in industry. The hot water suit pumps heated seawater down your umbilical to your suit to keep you warm – essential when working in waters at reduced temperatures, such as in the North Sea.

To attend this course you must have an HSE Surface Supplied or equivalent qualification. Most students choose to stay on at the Centre to complete the Top Up Course after having successfully completed the HSE Surface Supplied course. You must also have First Aid at Work certification and an HSE diving medical. See separate information sheets on these courses for more details.

Summary of course contents

During this one week course you will cover:

- Wet bell diving and its advantages
- Temperature control
- Dressing the diver
- Emergency procedures
- Dives using a 'Golden Gate'
- The design of the wet bell system
- Dynamically positioned vessels
- Diving from dynamically positioned vessels
- Offshore diving procedures



Unique Location

The training you receive at The Underwater Centre is truly unique; our unrivalled location on the shores of Loch Linnhe, a tidal sea loch at the foot of Ben Nevis, allows year-round training and easy access to a range of depths and subsea structures.

Our extensive facilities are designed to emulate the offshore working environment, giving you industry experience from the start. With us, you will gain first hand knowledge of learning how to dive to different depths in changeable tides and currents with varying visibility, including none at all. The subsea dive sites and pier-sited cabins have been created to replicate those which you will experience when you start your career. The training you receive here in Fort William will provide you with vital experience, not only in commercial diving, but also in the various safety procedures which you will need to know, such as loss of communications, learning how to rescue a stricken diver, and the use of a range of subsea tools in an industry specific environment.

Private Pier

The Underwater Centre's 500m long private pier is situated on the shores of Loch Linnhe – a sheltered, tidal sea loch on the west coast of Scotland. The loch is surrounded by high mountains, including Scotland's tallest mountain Ben Nevis, which provide shelter and therefore allows training – both commercial diver and ROV (remotely operated vehicle) – to take place all year round.

Our recently upgraded pier, which is only a few minutes walk from our classrooms, accommodation and restaurant, benefits from a range of dedicated cabins for both diving and ROV students. These include underwater inspection cabins, dive control cabins, drying rooms, and classrooms, along with ROV cabins for the mobilisation, launch and flight of our observation class ROVs.

The pier hosts a number of dive stations, including SCUBA, surface supplied and welding and burning, as well as underwater inspection techniques plus there's a pontoon for ease of access into the water.

Sea-based Training

Diver training takes place from our private pier and from our dedicated barges. On the loch bed, are a range of subsea structures on which to train including a mock-up of an oil platform leg, a concrete-clad pipeline, a subsea welding station, numerous wrecks, plus the only dedicated concrete inspection block in the UK.

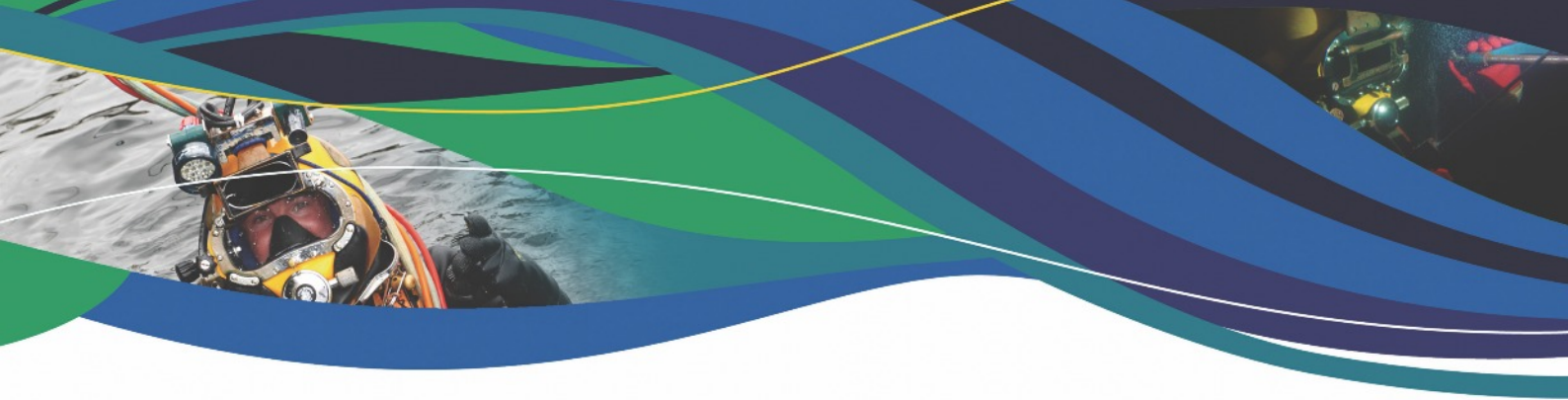
Our two purpose-built moon pool barges – Red Baron and Air Diver II – are fitted for surface supplied, wet bell and SCUBA diving operations. Again, each has been specifically developed to replicate the working environment, so you know the experience you gain while training with us will stand you in good stead for your new career. We also have a fully operational saturation dive barge, Talon, which is fitted for closed bell diving.

You will also benefit from learning to dive with ROVs which will be carrying out tasks in the water around you. We train ROV pilot technicians in diver observations so you could be working on a task on the sea bed with an ROV watching over your shoulder.

In addition to our pier, dive stations and barges, we also have three recompression chambers; two of which are used as part of your training on the Surface Supplied Course. Depending on the course you choose, you will learn to dive in a range of Kirby Morgan hats, with umbilicals, and train in the use of underwater tools, welding and burning equipment. You may also learn how to use and work with hot water suits.

Land-based Training

We also have a range of land-based facilities including a 1.5million litre, indoor, seawater tank which is used for some of your training. The tank has three large acrylic viewing panels so you can observe your fellow students in the water whilst training. The dive tank area also hosts a number of changing rooms plus additional classrooms.



Personnel

At The Underwater Centre we pride ourselves in the quality, experience and knowledge we are able to bring to each of our courses and to pass on to each of our students thanks to the instructors who teach here.

We believe training students can only come from experienced staff who themselves have been, or currently work, in industry and who have hands-on experience of commercial diving.

Read on to learn more about the experience our staff have – and these are just a few of them...

Alf Leadbitter, Diver Training Authority

Our Diver Training Authority, Alf, is one of the most experienced commercial diver trainers in the world. He has had an extremely successful career, not only as a commercial diver, but also as a Dive Superintendent, Instructor and Assessor and now heads up diver training here in Fort William. Alf has been involved in the mixed gas (saturation) diver training here in Fort William since its beginning, and was instrumental in the creation of the course at our sister school in Tasmania.

Alf's professional qualifications include HSE Closed Bell, Offshore Closed Bell Supervisor and Life Support Technician Certificates, along with assessor and internal verifier's qualifications.

Alf is responsible for planning the courses here in Fort William, and their structure, acting as an internal verifier and coordinating all the diving personnel to ensure each course is run safely and professionally for each student who attends courses here.

Steve Grindrod, NDT Manager

Steve's love of water started at a young age, with competition swimming and watching the TV series 'Sea Hunt', along with other Jacques Cousteau and Hans and Lotte Hass documentaries. This led him on to SCUBA diving and it was during his time at the SCUBA club that he learnt more about commercial diving. At the club he heard stories about commercial divers in the North Sea thanks to the rapid expansion of oil exploration in the area.

After studying underwater technology in London, Steve went on to gain a range of diving qualifications, including HSE SCUBA, Surface Supplied, Surface Supplied (Top Up) and Closed Bell certificates. Steve now has over 25 years experience in NDT and underwater inspection and is widely recognised as one of the leading NDT instructors in the subsea industry.

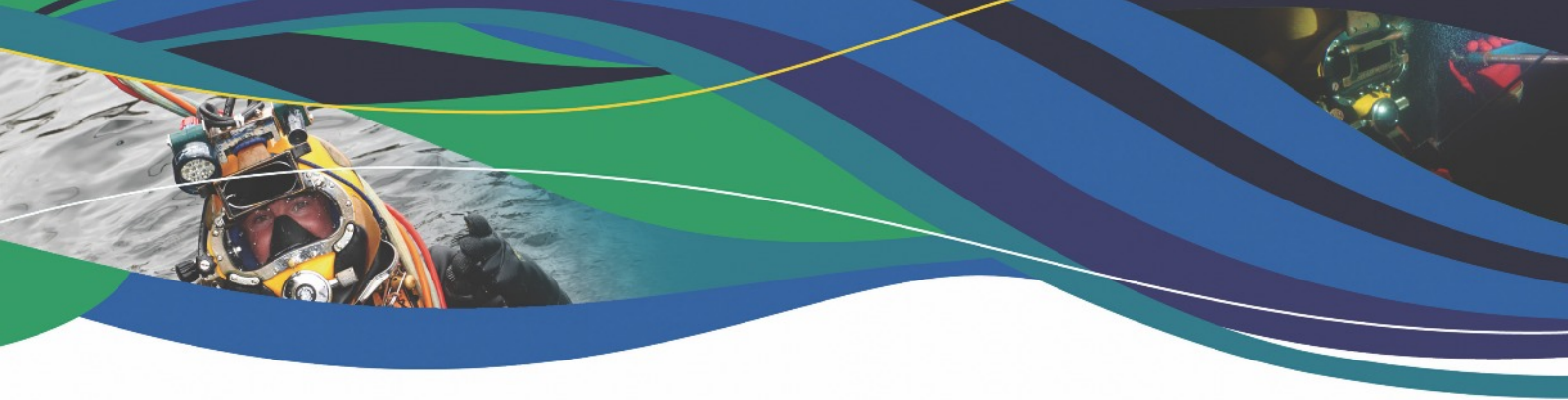
Steve's diving career has taken him around the world to West Africa, North Africa, Egypt, India, the Middle East and to the North Sea, and that is one of the things he loves about diving, the travel involved. He also relishes the variety of work and, like most, the money. The only thing that annoys him about being a commercial diver is the amount of time he spends away from home. Not only that but when he returns from working abroad and has got a tan, everyone thinks he has been taking it easy in the sun.

Support Team

Not only do we have a large dive team, who will support you throughout your training and into your new career, we also have a dedicated support team who are vital to the successful running of the Centre, and your course. Our support team includes qualified engineers and electricians, our vessel's crew and skilled maintenance staff for the vast range of equipment we have here, including diving helmets, dry suits, undersuits, hot water suits, etc.

ROV Team

One of the advantages of training at The Underwater Centre is that you will be working and training around ROVs, simulating the environment you will experience when you work offshore. Like our commercial diving trainers, our ROV instructors have a wealth of industry experience to pass onto students, so you can be confident that the ROVs in the water with you are performing consistently to industry standards.



An Introduction to Commercial Diving Careers Day

The Underwater Centre offers potential students the opportunity to come to Fort William, take a tour of our facilities and have a go at diving in full, commercial diving, surface supplied kit in our purpose-built 1.5million litre indoor tank.

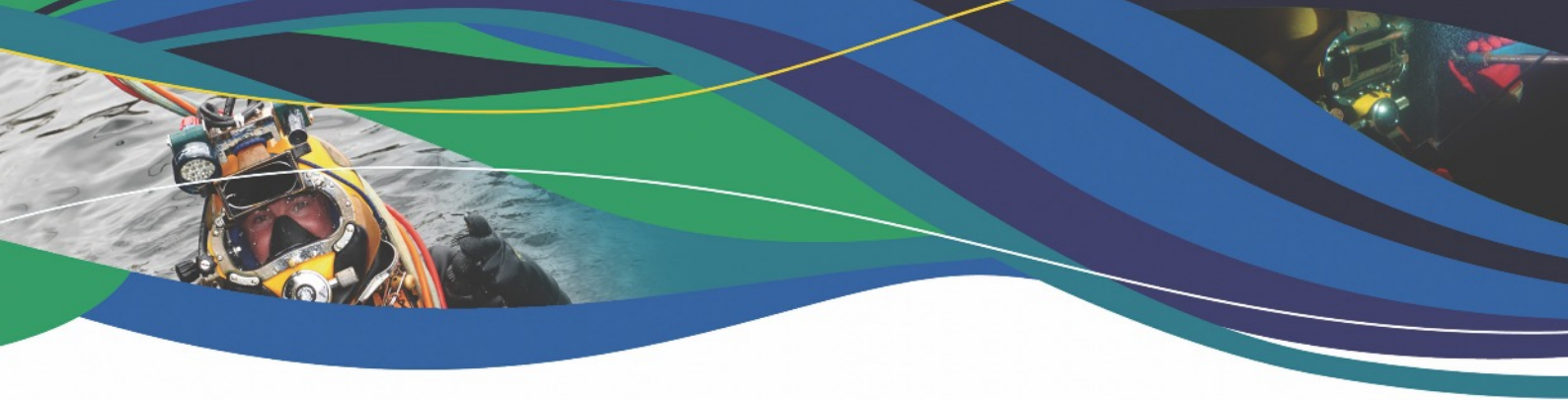
This is a great opportunity for you to get a better feel for commercial diving equipment, ask any questions still unanswered about your new career, have a look round the facilities and also to meet and have a chat with our instructors and staff. Visiting us will give you a close up view of what you can expect whilst you're training and working in your new career as a professional or commercial diver. The introductory days are scheduled regularly throughout the year – they are generally held once a month. All you need to bring with you is your swimming kit, a towel and change of socks. We will also take pictures of you while you are diving in the tank, and forward them on to you so you can show your friends and family what your new career is all about.

The day will begin with an introduction to the Centre, including a tour of our indoor dive tank complex, where you will dive later on in the afternoon. You will receive a formal presentation on the commercial diving industry and discuss career prospects, and also complete a short aptitude test. After a tour of The Underwater Centre pier and facilities, you will receive all the diving equipment required for your surface supplied dive. You are then ready to complete your dive in our indoor tank so you know what a career as a commercial diver is all about.

Tristan Rowantree previously attended one of our introductory days at The Underwater Centre, and had this to say about his day in Fort William:

'I had very high expectations when I arrived, as the Centre has a world renowned reputation. I can honestly say that all my expectations were surpassed in every way. I found the staff at the Centre to be very polite, helpful and of a happy nature which created an atmosphere I am very much looking forward to returning to in the future. The day certainly confirmed to me that commercial diving is the career I want to follow, with a passion, and The Underwater Centre is the place I wish to start that career.'

To find out more about our introductory days, give our student advisors a call on **+44 1397 703786** or email **fortwilliam@theunderwatercentre.com** and they'll be happy to talk you through what's involved. The cost of attending an introductory day is fully refundable when you book on a course.



Careers as a Commercial Diver

Newly qualified commercial divers from The Underwater Centre, tend to start their new careers working for a UK or European civil engineering diving company, in the first instance. Typical work includes working on dams, harbours, sewer outfalls, fish farms and marina installations, where your tools training will be of vital use.

With the UK government focused on renewable energy, there are additional career prospects for new divers in offshore wind farm developments and ongoing maintenance projects. The oil and gas industry will always require commercial divers as it continues to develop, whether through IRM (Inspection, Maintenance and Repair) and construction projects, E&P (Exploration and Production) projects or decommissioning.

Commercial divers skilled in underwater welding and burning can find work inshore in areas such as harbour defence and pier construction. Marinas and fish farms the world over employ divers to install anchors and fixings. Welding and burning training opens up a whole other sector of the subsea world, for example ship hull repair and underwater maintenance, or fitting of anodes to braces and hulls.

Following civils work over a period of about a year or two, once you've gained more experience, it is then possible to progress into offshore diving, such as in the North Sea in the Norwegian, British and Dutch Sectors, where you can put your wet bell diving and inspection techniques to work. There is demand for commercial divers in the continually developing Far Eastern market, offshore Abu Dhabi and Iran, for example.

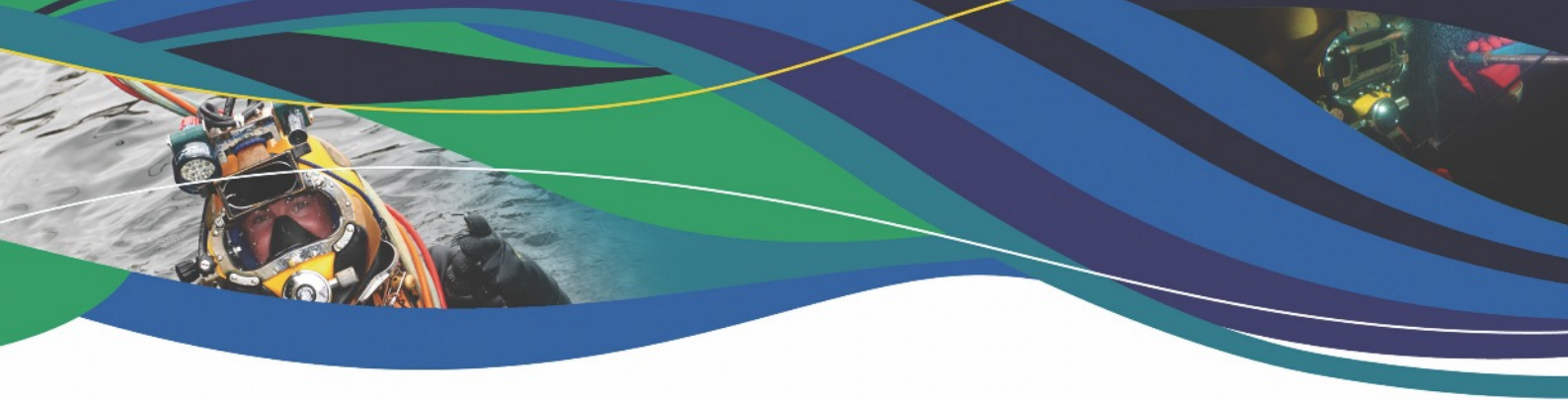
A large portion of work for divers is in the fabrication and construction industries. Typical employers are Haliburton, Oceaneering, Subsea 7, McDermotts and Technip; all of whom are multinational companies who own diving and remotely operated vehicle (ROV) support vessels which operate worldwide. The offshore renewables industry is adding to the demand for commercial divers with the construction and maintenance of offshore windfarms.

Most commercial divers tend to be self-employed; so it takes motivation and determination to get that first job once you've completed your training, and also persistence to maintain work and when looking for new roles. Typical earning potential for an offshore diver is £450 per day with an expectation of 120 to 150 days work per year. An inshore or civil engineering diver on the other hand will earn £120 to £250 per day and work perhaps 180 to 200 days per year. Your earning potential will depend on a number of factors, including where you're working, who you are working for, and the certificates and experience you have i.e. IMCA Diver Medic or CSWIP 3.1U Underwater Inspection tickets.

Once you have enough working hours as a commercial diver at certain depths, you can return to The Underwater Centre to complete our HSE Closed Bell (saturation/ mixed gas) diving course which could lead to earnings of over £1,000 per day in the North Sea or over \$850 US per day in the Far East. Salaries over a 12 month period can go over £75,000 per year dependent upon the number of days worked and at what level.

All divers are trained in First Aid and Oxygen Administration; however, at least one member of every offshore dive team has to be trained in advanced first aid, so having the IMCA Diver Medic certificate could enhance your job prospects.

As part of our service to you, we will provide you with a list of world wide, UK and European diving companies. We will also provide advice on writing your CV, how to apply for jobs and general guidance on looking for work. Companies also contact us when they are looking for divers, so we also communicate these opportunities to our graduates.



Funding

At The Underwater Centre we appreciate the financial commitment involved in retraining. We will therefore do what we can to provide advice and support to ensure you start your new career on the right foot. These are just some suggestions of options to consider for financing your studies:

Professional and Career Development Loans are bank loans that can be used to help pay for work related learning. You can borrow between £300 and £10,000 to help support the cost of up to two years of learning (or three years if it includes one year's relevant unpaid practical work). The Young People's Learning Agency will pay the interest on the loan while you are learning and for one month afterwards. The loan can be used to pay course fees or other costs such as travel and living expenses. You can also use the loan to supplement other forms of support such as grants or bursaries. Because the Professional and Career Development Loan is a commercial loan product, they should only be considered as an option once all other student funding options have been investigated. For further information on financial assistance to support your learning, please visit <https://www.gov.uk/career-development-loans> or contact National Careers Service on 0800 100 900. Our learning provider registration number is: 11798.

If you have been made redundant, some previous employees have been given financial assistance towards a retraining programme, for example, H.M. Armed Forces or some car manufacturers.

Standard Learning Credits, Enhanced Learning Credits and Individual Resettlement Training Costs are all schemes run to help servicemen and women obtain grants through their unit towards training to support their personal development. Our learning provider registration number is: 1593.

Self-employed You may choose to set yourself up as self-employed. For small business support, visit the corresponding site to where you live:

England – www.businesslink.gov.uk or call 0845 600 9 006

Ireland – www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk or call 0800 027 0639

Scotland – www.bgateway.com or call 0845 609 6611

Wales – <http://wales.gov.uk> or call 03000 6 03000

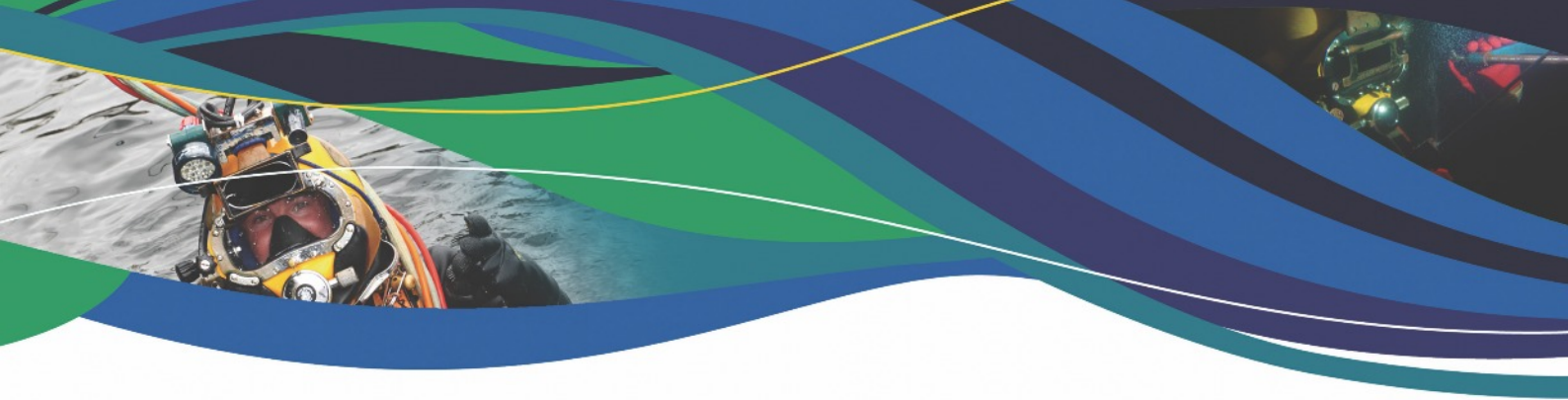
Reclaim VAT from HMRC You may be able to reclaim VAT from the Inland Revenue if you are registered for business purposes, for example if you are self-employed. This applies to both European Community and non-European Community residents. The Underwater Centre holds the relevant paperwork to complete for requesting VAT back, which you are required to pay on courses taken in the United Kingdom.

Learn Direct Scotland may be able to provide information on funding which is available to you. Call 0800 917 8000 or visit www.learnirectscotland.com.

Job Centre Plus If you have been unemployed for a certain amount of time, you may be eligible to receive funding towards training from the Department of Work and Pensions. Ask your local JobCentre Plus for more details.

In some circumstances, grant assistance may be available for training from your Local Enterprise Company, details of which can be provided by our student advisors or through your local council website.

If you have any queries regarding funding of your course, please contact one of our student advisors on **+44 1397 703786** or email fortwilliam@theunderwatercentre.com.



Student Support

Our instructors will provide help and support to you during your time at the Centre, and will also keep in touch once you've completed your training, letting you know of job opportunities which arise. They will provide support for those needing extra tuition and advice with course work. Our instructors will also provide support in the development of your CV with a specific Career Advice Session.

Career Advice Session

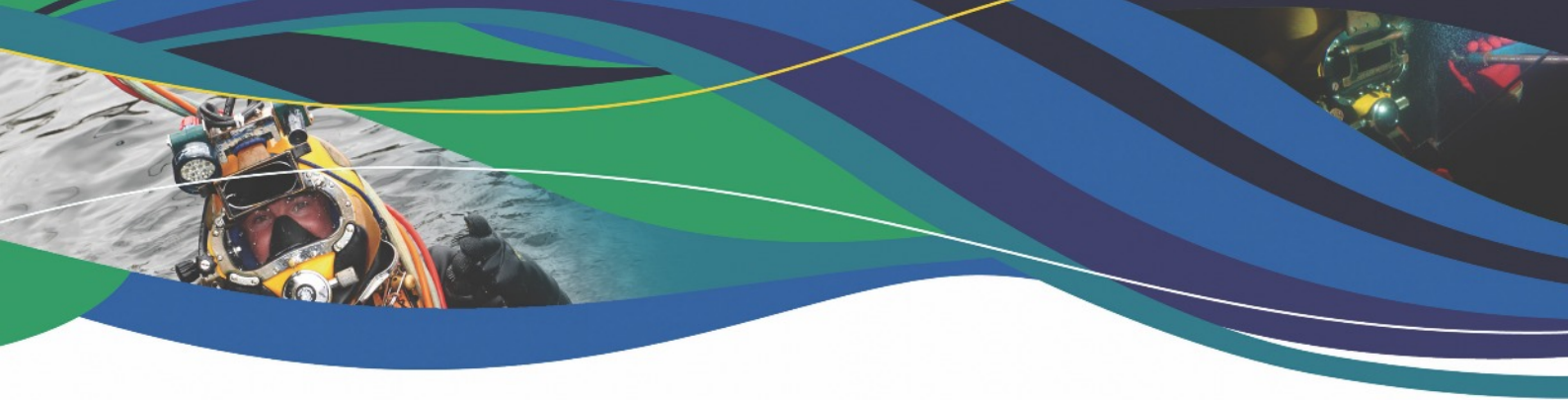
Our Career Advice Session is seen by most students as one of the most valuable aspects of their course, providing CV and careers advice. We appreciate that undertaking our course and gaining qualifications is not the main reason for coming to Fort William, the main reason is to get a job and enjoy a satisfying and rewarding career.

The session provides advice on getting your first job in the industry, whether it's oil and gas, civils, scientific, research, salvage work, etc and the ways in which to approach these different types of employers.

There is detailed information provided regarding your CV and its importance as the first point of contact with potential employers. CV content and the key information to be included – things that you may not think are relevant – are all covered. The covering letter and its content are also discussed in detail, again highlighting the importance of a succinct and well-structured letter.

You will be encouraged to create your own CV and covering letter. The session is followed by a one-to-one meeting with your instructor to go through your CV and covering letter in detail, discussing the finer details with you and glean any additional information which should be included, such as relevant hobbies or interests.

On completion of your course, you will be provided with full contact details for UK and international diving contractors, which will help when looking for work.



General Information

Classes run full time, five days a week; occasionally there may be some training required at weekends. Full-board accommodation is available at the Centre. You will find it a great benefit staying on-site as it provides the chance to work and study in the evening in our student restaurant area, with fellow students, some of whom will be at different stages in their careers. You will also be able to focus your attention on your training and studying, and not have to worry about cooking for yourself.

Based in the spectacular mountains of the west coast of Scotland, Fort William is subject to a wide range of weather conditions. We can enjoy 'four seasons in one day' so in 24 hours you can experience brilliant sunshine, followed quickly by cold winds and heavy rain. Therefore, please bring appropriate clothing with you – wet weather gear is needed all year round.

Assessments

Assessments will be carried out throughout your course – a combination of practical and written/ multiple choice exams. Advice and assistance will be provided to anyone not used to sitting formal exams, and you are allowed two attempts at each exam.

Fort William

The Underwater Centre is located in Fort William, a town on the west coast of Scotland, located about two hours drive north of Glasgow or an hour and a half south west of Inverness. There are a number of ways to travel to Fort William:

- There are daily trains into Fort William from Glasgow, with a sleeper service direct from London Euston;
- Scottish CityLink and National Express operate a bus service from either Glasgow or Inverness;
- A number of low cost airlines fly into Glasgow and Inverness airports.

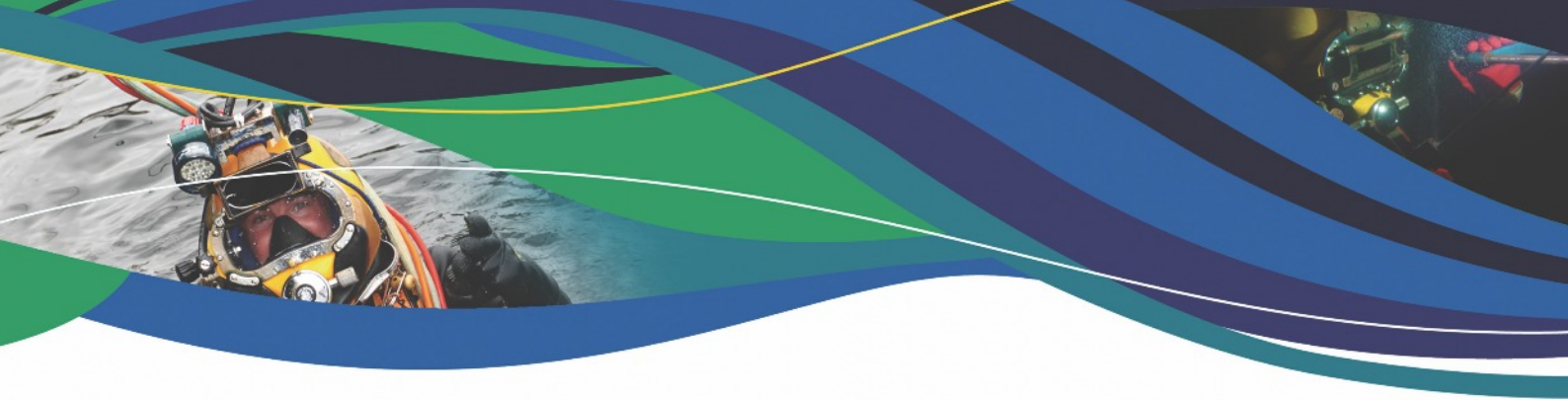
The Underwater Centre is situated only a few minutes walk from Fort William town centre, which has a number of bars and restaurants, a bowling alley and leisure centre (with a swimming pool, gym, squash courts and climbing wall).

Accommodation

The Underwater Centre benefits from all of its facilities being in one location; lecture rooms, private pier, dedicated training cabins, accommodation facilities and restaurant are all within a few minutes walk of each other. Accommodation is available onsite, subject to availability; we have a number of en-suite rooms available, with twin or triple occupancy, provided on a full board basis including cooked breakfast, packed lunch and a choice from a selection of evening meals, provided by our dedicated catering staff. All rooms are fitted out with flat screen televisions, with access to a wide-range of channels through satellite provision.

The Centre also provides free broadband access or a free wireless connection within the building, however we are not able to support streamed media. Wi-Fi access is provided primarily to help you find work, send CVs, research job opportunities, etc.

A specific 'Career Advice Session' is also provided as part of your training, which includes advice and support from our instructors regarding your CV and general careers advice. See separate information sheet regarding Student Support for details.



Working Offshore

Everyone looking to work as a commercial diver must have an in-date Diving Medical. In addition, everyone in all roles offshore must hold a valid Offshore Survival certificate.

HSE Diving Medical Certificate

Before attending any of our courses, you are required to have an in-date UK HSE Diving Medical. Commercial diving is a very physically demanding career, so you need to be fit in order to carry out your work properly and successfully.

The diving medical is a thorough examination to check your fitness and health before you become a commercial diver and annually throughout your career. The medical can only be carried out by an Approved Medical Examiner of Divers (AMED) who is trained in diving medicine.

We also accept Norwegian, Dutch or Irish HSA approved Diving Medical Certificates, but please contact us if you have a medical from these countries to ensure it is accepted. For full details of the HSE Diving Medical and what exactly it involves, visit the links page of our website. Contact details of your nearest medical examiner, approved to carry out your HSE Diving Medical, can also be found there.

Offshore Survival Course

The Offshore Survival Course for UK waters is officially known as Basic Offshore Safety Induction and Emergency Training (BOSIET) and includes a range of skills which may be required when working offshore including safety, first aid and hypothermia, fire prevention and fire fighting, helicopter safety and escape and survival at sea.

The course usually takes up to three days to complete and costs around £600. Accommodation or more advanced courses will incur additional costs. The certificate is valid for 4 years with a refresher required before the expiry of the old certificate. The refresher usually only takes about a day to complete.

Other countries operate different requirements and it is worth ensuring you attend and pay for the relevant course, depending on where you are going to be working. For example, the Norwegian sector of the North Sea requires you to complete a five day course. There is also a tropical version of BOSIET which covers the dangers of such waters.

Having the BOSIET certificate will certainly help in your job application and search, but it by no means guarantees you a job offshore. Some companies will also pay for you to complete it before starting work with them.

There is a downloadable list of the approved establishments which provide offshore survival courses available from the links page of our website.

If you need more information about these certificates, or any other aspects of the training you require to work as a commercial diver, contact our student advisors; fortwilliam@theunderwatercentre.com or +44 1397 703786.