

Frequently Asked Questions for PE&W SCUBA (through United Divers)

United Divers Website:

United Divers Inc

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<http://www.uniteddivers.com/>

Q: How often does MITPE/United Divers offer SCUBA courses?

A: MITPE SCUBA courses are offered during Quarter 1, IAP, Quarter 3 and Quarter 4. Pool sessions are at Zesiger Pool. See mitpe.mit.edu for registration dates and information. Note that undergraduates who complete SCUBA receive 4 physical education points (8 total are needed to complete the PE GIR).

Q: What are pre-requisites for SCUBA?

- The SCUBA Snorkel test – 300 yards
- 10 minutes treading water
- Satisfactory health (see Health History Form)

Q: Is there a health history form?

A: Yes, a health history form is required on Day 1.

Note: if you have had recent surgery or have a history of ear/sinus problems, you should consult with your doctor before registering for SCUBA. Anything that interferes in the ability to carry 40 lbs. of equipment on your back for 10 feet should also be considered.

Q: What equipment is required for class?

A: United Divers provides equipment during the course to allow students to practice skills. Students will need their own mask, fins, and snorkel for open water dives. United Divers offers these items for purchase.

Q: What is included in the course fee?

A: Fee includes text, use of mask, fins, and snorkel during class time. It also includes the use of wet suits during pool sessions as well as eLearning materials. A referral to complete open water dives (free through United Divers).

* **Fee of \$365** is paid through billing of student account or (For non-students) through PE & W Office. Open water dives are completed at no additional charge through United Divers Open water dive format: 7:30a Sat and Sun (consecutive weekend days) returning at 3 or 4 PM pending site. Typically, the open water dives start the last week of April through mid-November, weather permitting. Wetsuits are available during open water dives at no additional cost while diving with United Divers. **Transportation is NOT provided.**

Note: the referral can also be used to complete the open water dives at another location (i.e., a vacation or dive site).

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Q: Is it hard to learn to SCUBA dive?

A: No, in fact, it's probably easier than you imagine especially if you're already comfortable in and under the water. Entry-level diver course is split into knowledge development, confined (pool) skills training and four training dives. The Course is 'performance based', meaning that you progress as you learn and demonstrate knowledge and skills for the instructor.

Q: How long does it take to become a certified scuba diver?

United Diver courses are "performance based," which means that you earn your certification when you demonstrate that you've mastered the required skills and knowledge. Some people learn faster than others, so how long it takes you may vary. The United Divers' Open Water Diver course (Beginner Track) is typically 7 sessions.

Q: Is scuba diving dangerous?

A: Not really. Statistics show that recreational scuba diving is about as safe as swimming. Certainly, there are a potential hazard - which is why you need training and certification - but like driving a car, as long as you follow the rules and use common sense, it's safe.

Q: Do I have to be a great swimmer to be certified as an Open Water Diver?

A: You need to be a reasonably proficient swimmer who is comfortable and relaxed in the water, The swimming requirement for certification is an easy 300-yard non-stop snorkel swim (with no time or specific stroke requirement) and 10 minutes treading water.

Q: I have medical history. Can I still dive?

A: Depending on the diving course being taken, you may first be required to have a dive medical. Failing this medical, or having certain pre-existing medical conditions such as asthma, diabetes, heart disease and epilepsy may prevent you from diving. So will pregnancy. Please check with training@uniteddivers.com for further information.

Q: If my ears hurt when I dive to the bottom of a pool, won't they hurt when I SCUBA dive?

A: Your ears hurt because water pressure pushes in on your eardrum. In your SCUBA course, you'll learn a simple technique to equalize your ears to the surrounding pressure, much like you do when you land in an airplane, and they won't hurt at all.

Q: What type of wet suit do I need? What are the diving conditions?

A: On average the water temperature for open water dives is 55-65° F so a 7mm wetsuit supplied. United Divers provides 3mm wet suits for rental during the course in the pool.

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Q: How long does a tank of air last?

A: This is a common question that, unfortunately, doesn't have a single answer. People breathe at different rates, and you breathe faster when you're swimming than when you're resting. Also, the deeper you go, the faster you use your air, and you can get different size tanks. So, the answer is "it depends;" this is why divers have a gauge that tells them how much air they have at all times. As an approximation, though, a diver sightseeing in calm, warm water in the 15 - 30 ft. range can expect the average tank to last about an hour.