

Frequently Asked Questions for MITPE SCUBA (through United Divers)

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 Alumni 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 Swim test – 200 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, fin 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, dive tables, use of mask, fin, and snorkel during class time. A referral to complete open water dives (free through United Divers).

* Fee of \$350 is paid through billing of student account or (For non-students) through PE 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) departure from MIT, returning at 3 or 4p pending site. Transportation provided. Note: the referral can also be used to complete the open water dives at another location (ie a vacation or dive site).

* Wet suits are available during pool sessions for a \$35 rental fee- paid directly to United Divers. They are available during open water dives at no additional cost.

Frequently Asked Questions - United Divers Website:

United Divers Inc
59 Washington Street, Somerville, MA 02143
617-666-1300
<http://www.uniteddivers.com/>

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 the water. Entry-level diver course is split into knowledge development, confined water (pool) skill training and four scuba training dives. The course is "performance based," which means that you progress as you learn and demonstrate knowledge and skill,

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 **200 yard** non-stop 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.

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.

Open Water Dive Information for SCUBA Certification

After the class and pool have been complete, students must complete four open water dives to receive certification. These dives are included in the course fee.

The dives are conducted on a consecutive Saturday/Sunday on one weekend – the dives cannot be split over 2 weekends.

Dives with pickup at MIT typically occur on the following weekends:

- 3rd and 4th weekends of April
- 1st, 2nd and 3rd week of May
- every weekend in October
- 1st and 2nd weekends in November

Dive locations are local, and exact locations are determined a few days in advance based on weather.

Open water certification dives also occur over the summer, however, pickup from MIT is not offered during the summer dives – instead, the diver will need to get to United Divers in Somerville. From there they will be able to get a ride to the dive site.

All equipment is included for the open water certification dives, with the exception of mask, fins, snorkel and boots. Students can either buy their own – at a discount from United Divers – or rent a mask, fins, snorkel and boots for \$100 for the weekend.

Additionally, students can get a referral for the open water certification dives. This allows them to do their dives at any shop. This is a great option for students who are traveling and want to do their dives in warm water. The certifying shop will likely charge a fee for these dives.