

UCSB Marine Science Institute DIVERsity in Diving Program (DDP) - 2023

Goals and Basic Requirements

The fundamental goal of DIVERsity in Diving Program is to lower the financial, cultural and other barriers to scientific diving for UCSB students, particularly but not exclusively for students from groups underrepresented in the marine sciences (e.g., Hispanic-Latinx, African American, Native American/Native Alaskan and Pacific Islanders; US Veterans; individuals with disabilities that do not disqualify them from obtaining medical clearance to dive).

Students with any degree of swimming proficiency are encouraged to apply, even those who cannot yet swim. The DDP will guide and support training of students who need or wish to build their swimming proficiency and water comfort so they can acquire the scuba diving skills and certifications needed to perform as a scientific diver. Scuba diving requires a certain set of swimming skills and level of comfort in the water, and if needed, the DPP will work with students to develop those skills before they embark on scuba training.

The training steps that lead to the Scientific Diving certification start with an initial 'Open Water Scuba' certification class (taught at UCSB through the Department of Recreation), followed by a number of additional ocean dives to gain experience, ending with the UCSB Scientific Diving class ('100-hour Dive Safety Course' taught through Environmental Health & Safety). At each step, the DDP and host research labs will provide the guidance, resources, gear and other support students need to complete each phase of the process. Students may discover that, for whatever reason, scuba diving is simply not for them. For that reason, there is no obligation for a DDP student to complete any phase of training or to continue to the next step.

PLEASE NOTE that this is not a fast process, it can take a year or more to complete all the steps to becoming a research diver. DDP is here to support students through the process. For that reason, it is very rare for a 4th year student to be accepted into the program.

Given the amount of time and extra-curricular effort needed to complete all 3 phases of scuba training, preference is given to students who are beginning their 2nd year, followed by those beginning their 3rd year. 1st year and 4th year students will only be considered under special circumstances. Special consideration for swim training during Freshman year will be given to students who may need to increase their swimming proficiency. This preference ranking reflects the goal of providing DDP students with the potential to participate as undergraduate Research Divers on UCSB field research projects, which requires a Scientific Diving certification.

Scientific diving is a highly regulated enterprise in the United States, and one requirement is that all individuals who participate in the UCSB Scientific Diving training course must first obtain medical clearance from a qualified physician. The DDP will

provide guidance and resources for program participants to obtain the required medical evaluation.

in addition to providing funding for dive trainings and gear, we will offer paid internships in research laboratories. DDP fellows will select a research lab that conducts marine or aquatic research and receive mentorship on marine science and research SCUBA diving.

Eligibility

Candidates selected must:

- Be aged 18 or older
- Be an enrolled student in good standing at UCSB in a science, engineering or other discipline where scientific diving may be relevant

Preference will be given to those who:

- Have interest in or aspiration for a career in marine sciences that may involve scientific diving
- Have financial, cultural or other barriers that limit becoming scientific dive certified
- Participation will broaden diversity in the scientific diving community

Before learning to dive you will be required to:

- Be able to pass a UCSB-administered swimming proficiency exam prior to embarking on scuba training courses (the program can help with swimming lessons)
- Be evaluated as medically fit to undertake SCUBA dive training (at no cost to the student)

For more information please contact Dr. Jenn Caselle at caselle@ucsb.edu