



Commercial Diving

ROV Pilot Technician Training

ALST Training

Sea Trials

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Centre Wins Top Quality Accreditation - BAC



Divers and ROV pilots train together at The Underwater Centre
It is also a boost to the Centre's thriving international recruitment market as visas are now only issued to overseas students at accredited institutions. In 2009, the Centre attracted more than 250 overseas students from countries including Egypt, India, South Africa and Russia.

Steve Ham, General Manager of The Underwater Centre, said gaining accreditation is an important step forward for the Centre.

'This announcement is great news for our students and the industry in general. Our achievement is recognition of the close work we continually undertake with industry, diving contractors, representatives from the oil and gas sector and renewables industry, ensuring that the subsea workers we train have the appropriate qualifications and experience.'

The internationally renowned Underwater Centre in Fort William has become the first provider of subsea training to be given a prestigious seal of approval from a national quality assurance organisation.

The Centre has been accredited by the British Accreditation

Council (BAC), which oversees the quality of independent further and higher education in the UK.

This approval is a significant achievement for the Centre as the Council's accreditation is recognised globally as the highest mark of educational quality in the private sector.

Subsea Twittering

Keep up with all things subsea and follow us, TUCFortWilliam, on Twitter

<http://twitter.com/TUCFortWilliam>

Meeting Energy Sector Demands

Since offshore oil and gas (O&G) exploration began, the need for highly skilled subsea specialists has been high.

As companies extract hydrocarbons from ever greater depths, the requirement to have highly skilled subsea professionals has never been more crucial to underwater oil and gas field operations.

As well as the continued activity in the O&G sector, the emerging offshore renewables industry looks certain to grow rapidly over the next decade, with plans to create offshore wind farms comprising thousands of turbines and services platforms. Whilst this could lead to a boom time for commercial divers and ROV pilots, it poses a potential headache for contractors, as

they desperately try to find skilled subsea workers.

The Crown Estate has announced the 9 successful bidders for each of the offshore wind zones who aim to deliver a quarter of the UK's total electricity needs by 2020. These developments will lead to the creation of new jobs in the sector, including 800 divers to install some 7500 turbines.

A recent report by professional services company, Ernst & Young, has also revealed that the total value of O&G transactions in the second half of 2009 was £67B, compared with £55B in the first half of the year, up 22%.

These developments have underlined the need for qualified and skilled personnel and, in



A diver training with a section of simulated well jacket on the Centre's dive site

turn, the organisations to provide this specialist training. The Underwater Centre is based on the shores of Loch Linnhe, an inland sea loch which plunges to depths of 150m. The Centre has numerous subsea work stations, such as a simulated well jacket, a section of pipeline and a subsea welding station, which allow students to learn how to work underwater, rather than just how to dive or fly ROVs.

Rolls Royce Trains Personnel on Submarine Rescue

One of the world's most advanced rescue subs has undergone a series of training exercises and simulated rescues at The Underwater Centre in Fort William.

The NATO Submarine Rescue System (NSRS) – designed and built by a consortium led by Rolls Royce – was tested at The Underwater Centre as part of a seven day training schedule. Built to replace the ageing LR5, the NSRS is a joint British, Norwegian and French project.

Simulating real life rescues, a 'target' representing a sunken submersible was positioned on the loch bed at 50m. The NSRS was then launched to test the 'mating process' – ensuring that the soft seal of the rescue

vehicle properly sticks to the hatch of a stricken submarine.

The NSRS was previously tested at The Underwater Centre as part of acceptance and proving trials. The facility has also hosted trials for the LR7 rescue submarine, commissioned by the Chinese Navy, underlining the Centre's first class testing conditions.

Douglas Ormiston, Marketing Manager for the Centre said, 'This is the second time Rolls Royce has chosen to trial new technologies here at the Centre. We have the full package for trials and testing – as well as the unique, natural facilities of our Loch Linnhe site, we have a fully equipped pier complex which provides an excellent range of facilities.'

Spotlight on... Dive Supervisor Cameron McCreadie



Dive Supervisor Cameron down the pier

then invited to join the Fort William instructional team, and was happy to be based in one location for a change! He thoroughly enjoys teaching students who are keen and eager to learn: 'Their enthusiasm makes the job a lot easier.'

His advice to anyone considering a career as a commercial diver is that those who don't mind getting their hands dirty make ideal commercial divers. Gaining a qualification in NDT will also stand students in good stead and it's helpful for getting offshore: 'But almost as importantly', says Cameron, 'you need lots of motivation. If you're prepared to work hard and travel there's no shortage of work – I've never been out of work for more than a day.'

The Centre actively supports Cameron as a member of an international earthquake rescue team. Being a member of the rescue team has also taken him all over the world, to humanitarian disasters such as Indonesia. He has also been to China, Pakistan and Columbia to help in the relief efforts there: 'As physically and emotionally draining as it is, it is also very rewarding knowing you are able to help people at such dreadful times in their lives.'

After leaving the Royal Marines 12 years ago, dive supervisor Cameron knew he needed to find a good, steady career path that would suit him well after being regimented for many years.

After diving with the Marines, he came to The Underwater Centre to do an Experienced Candidate Assessment Course to transfer his forces diving skills to recognised HSE qualifications. Not only does he now have his HSE commercial diver tickets but he is also a qualified First Aid instructor and diver medic.

Once qualified, he travelled the world to get work and gain experience as an offshore and inshore diver. A lot of the work he did was in power stations, hydro-electric and nuclear power plants fixing or maintaining pipelines. He was



The NSRS being lowered into Loch Linnhe from the Centre's pier

Centre Wins Approval from National Careers Organisation

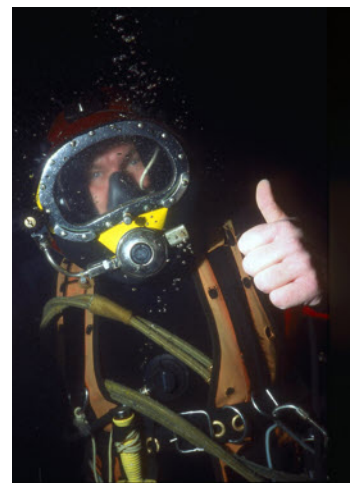
The world's leading provider of subsea training, The Underwater Centre, has become a preferred supplier for a national body which provides specialist careers and resettlement advice to ex-Forces personnel.

The Career Transition Partnership (CTP), which has a database of thousands of Service leavers, has approved the Fort William based facility for its range of specialist subsea training courses.

Steve Ham, The Underwater Centre's General Manager, says becoming a preferred supplier will allow the Centre to focus on a very important market of experienced ex-Service employees.

'Former armed forces personnel are ideal candidates for our courses as they have an excellent range of technical knowledge and skills which can be easily transferred to our ROV and diving courses,' he said.

'Working in the armed forces will often involve being away from home and this can also be the case with working in the subsea sector, so ex-Service personnel tend to have the work ethic and experience which suits being either a diver or an ROV pilot.'



The Underwater Centre gets the thumbs up from the CTP for its range of subsea training courses



A preferred supplier to the
career transition partnership
 The Ministry of Defence working with Right Management



Unique ROV Training and Subsea Support Course Launched

The Underwater Centre has joined forces with a local college to launch a unique ROV and subsea support course.

The Centre, along with Lochaber College, is delivering a brand new qualification specifically to target those living locally. It has been designed so that previous subsea experience is not necessary and it's fully accredited by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA).

Eight students have been selected for the course, which is being funded by the European Social Fund.

The eighteen week course covers a range of subjects including electronics, ROV systems, and lifting equipment.

Central to the course is the hands on experience of flying an ROV and training in lifelike conditions.

Students who complete the course will then be able to work in the ROV sector which is set to see a significant growth in the next four years, according to a report from top industry analysts, Douglas Westwood, who have revealed that, following a slow down in 2009, the ROV industry will be worth \$3.2B by 2014.

The ROV Subsea Skills Course is a customised award – a bespoke course which has been specifically designed to meet the needs of The Underwater Centre – and is the first subsea course offered at Lochaber College.



Students from the ROV Subsea Support Skills Course on the Centre's pier with two Seeye Falcon ROVs, used for training

New Sonar Equipment for Training Provider

The Underwater Centre has underlined its reputation as a world renowned provider of realistic subsea training after receiving market leading sonar equipment from Trittech International Limited, an innovative underwater technology company.

Trittech, specialists in the design and manufacture of a range of acoustic and sonar technology, has provided the equipment to the Centre as this will allow ROV students to train and become familiar with industry standard equipment. Trittech presented the Centre with a Super SeaPrince DST sonar, which will be fitted to one of the Centre's Seeye Falcon ROVs, and a Seanet SCU Processor.

ROV students at the Centre will use the equipment to develop

their flying skills in the open water conditions of Loch Linnhe. Paul Bury, Head of ROV Training and Operations at the Centre, said the generous donation from Trittech will be a great resource and learning tool for students, 'This donation from Trittech is a fantastic addition to the Centre and will allow us to continue to train the very best ROV pilots and technicians.'

Malcolm Johnston, Sales and Marketing Manager, Trittech, commented: 'Providing The Underwater Centre with this equipment has ensured that students new to the industry have experience using industry standard sonar and subsea equipment. We recognise the importance of supporting the Centre as they train the next generation of ROV pilots.'



Product Line Managers from Trittech put the equipment through it's paces at the Centre's 1.5M litre indoor tank

Underwater Centre Emerges with Marine Award

The Fort William-based Underwater Centre has cemented its reputation as an international leader in the marine energy sector after being rewarded with a prestigious prize at the regional business awards of the Scottish Council for Development and Industry.

The Crown Estate Award for Excellence in a Marine Business was presented to The Underwater Centre, which attracts students from around the world and leads the way in teaching industry relevant skills. Since it was bought by Fort William company, The Crannog Concept, in 2004, a substantial investment programme combined with a focus on its core capabilities has led to income growth of 350%. Forthcoming investment will meet the needs of the growing offshore renewables market as well as the world wide subsea oil and gas industry with the aim of consolidating The Underwater Centre's universally recognised reputation as the global leader in subsea training.

Steve Ham, the Centre's General Manager, said, 'We are delighted to have won this prestigious award as it really underlines the success that we have achieved since buying The Underwater Centre. Our reputation as the leading global provider of subsea training is now firmly cemented.'



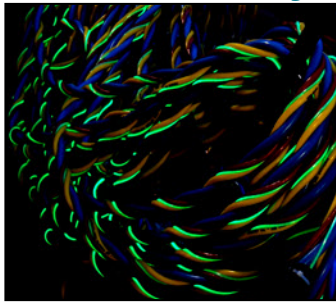
HSBC's John Rendall presents the award to the Centre's General Manager, Steve Ham

'Companies are having to extract hydrocarbons at increasingly greater depths, meaning not only is there an increased need for ROVs and commercial divers, but new subsea technology needs to be tested and we are the location of choice because of the unique, industry relevant conditions that we can provide.'

Alasdair Rankin, head of Marine Business Development Scotland for The Crown Estate, said,

'The Underwater Centre stood out from a very distinguished field of entrants in this category in the degree of investment they embarked upon and the remarkable performance and recognition their business has enjoyed as a result. This places it in a pre-eminent position to provide for the subsea training requirements that will emerge from the future development of Scotland's marine business potential.'

Subsea Safety Equipment Trialled at Underwater Centre



Some of the new technology intertwined with umbilical

A new energy-efficient LED fibre illumination technology, that can supply a continuous line of light for up to 100m, was recently trialled at The Underwater Centre.

Using umbilical equipment intertwined with the lit fibre optic rope, surface supplied divers were filmed on a night dive at the Centre by one of their own Seeye Falcon ROVs; testing

and observing the new technology in real life subsea conditions. The footage from the ROV cameras highlighted the effectiveness of the adapted dive equipment in navigating the challenging low-visibility subsea environment.

Developed by PhotoSynergy, the PSL-3000-M Lightpath is designed to enhance subsea diver, ROV and tethered

operations by offering a safe, low-power, permanent light source. Managing Director, Don Walker said, 'We chose The Underwater Centre because of its world-class facilities and the significant support offered by the experienced team at the Centre.'

To see the incredible footage, visit:

www.theunderwatercentre.co.uk/trials_training.asp

Case Study on... Commercial Diver Ian Chandler

Ian Chandler only decided to become a commercial diver at the age of 40, but he certainly looks at this in a positive light: 'I feel my age and experience have helped me progress in the diving industry; I only wish I had known about commercial diving 20 years ago – I love this career and would have loved to have discovered it earlier!'

He started out by completing the Centre's Construction Career Package which included vital tools training, such as welding underwater and inspection. 'It helps to have a

manual skill set to work underwater' he adds.

When he initially qualified, it did take him some time to find work, but according to Ian, this is very common: 'You have to build up a reputation and experience, plus you need to show a lot of commitment. Many divers start with inshore work, working on fish farms or in ports. Once you have built your experience and qualifications, you can approach offshore employers, where the big money can be made. You also have to be ready to go at any moment, so being close to an airport helps.'

Ian has since returned to the Centre to complete their CSWIP 3.1u NDT Prep Course, HSE Closed Bell Course and, more recently, IMCA Diver Medic Course. According to Ian, the best thing about being a closed bell diver is: 'The chance to travel the world and the time off. Most divers work 6 months on and 6 months off – so I have plenty of time to improve my back swing! Since qualifying, I've travelled the world – Egypt, Malaysia, Dubai, Saudi Arabia...'

Ian attends a recent Diver Medic Course at The Underwater Centre



ROV Training with a Difference

The Underwater Centre's head of ROV Training and Operations, Paul Bury, recently headed to Dubai to provide specialised ROV pilot training for a team based at the new Dubai Aquarium and Underwater Zoo.

Paul taught the team how to launch, fly and maintain their new, baby Hyball ROV – known as 'Chuck' – which had been provided by Sonavision. Part of the challenge included learning to fly Chuck around a number of obstacles – including sharks, a glass-bottomed boat, reef exhibits and 33,000 fish – while also learning to maintain the system as a centre point of the display.

According to ROV manufacturers, around 50% of ROVs are

bought by companies whose work is unrelated to the oil and gas industry – those such as maritime salvage, civil engineering, archaeology or police investigations. This further highlights that there are many avenues for work outside the traditional oil and gas sector.

To read more news from Fort William, visit:

www.theunderwatercentre.co.uk/news.asp



Crowds gather to enjoy the spectacle of the world's largest indoor tank

Case study on... ROV Student Don Etchells



Don with one of the Centre's Seeye Falcon ROVs

With more than 20 years in the automotive industry, Don Etchells had developed an enviable skills base in engineering and technology. As an engineering manager, he has worked in car plants across the world, for a wide range of brands including Jaguar, Aston Martin, Ford and Ferrari.

When he was made redundant, he decided to look for a career with a more sustainable future. After careful consideration, he chose the oil and gas sector, specialising in ROVs.

Since leaving The Underwater Centre, Don has worked in the North Atlantic as an ROV pilot on a cable maintenance ship. His primary role was post lay inspection and burial of fibre optic cables.

Don believes that the course was an excellent launch pad for his career as an ROV pilot:

'Once in employment, the training came into its own when the tracks were taken off the ROV so it had to be free flow. This is a vital skill which we had learnt as part of our course at Fort William so I was able to hit the ground running.'

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