

GUIDELINES FOR THE RECOGNITION OF VDWS WATER SPORTS SCHOOLS

Version from 1 February 2025

Previous version dated 1.9.1992, 1.10.1994, 21.4.2001, 1.2.2009, 1.1.2016, 1.2.2020,

A General information

VDWS watersports schools are training centres for watersports recognised by the VDWS. They are members of the VDWS e.V. The guidelines for the recognition of water sports schools can be found in § 2 of the VDWS e.V. statutes.

Training in sporting and nautical behaviour on the water is provided primarily by commercial schools. As a professional association, the VDWS aims to provide qualified training for all water sports enthusiasts. In order to make this training as high quality as possible, the training centres are recognised according to standardised guidelines.

To this end, the following requirements must be fulfilled, whereby the list given here is not exhaustive. These are minimum requirements, which are to be supplemented by further elements from the VDWS Centre Manual criteria catalogue, insofar as this is necessary for an appropriate quality training operation.

The **VDWS recognition guidelines** correspond to the requirements of the VAW (Vereinigte Ausbildungsverbände Wassersport) working group.

Members of the VAW are

VDWS	(Verband Deutscher Wassersport Schulen e.V.)
VÖWS	(Vereinigung Österreichischer Wassersport Schulen)
VÖYWS	(Vereinigung Österreichischer Yachtsport- und Wassersport-Schulen)
SWAV	(Schweizerische Wassersport Vereinigung)

B Recognition requirements

To become a VDWS-recognised watersports school, the following requirements must be satisfied:

1. School management

The management of the school must hold a VDWS school management licence. The school must be on a financially secure basis and provide proof of ownership.

2. Training location

- a) Access to the training water must exclude any obstruction, disturbance and, in particular, danger to other water sports enthusiasts and swimmers.
- b) The right to use the training locations (max. 3) must be confirmed by the owner or authorities by submitting a rental agreement and, if applicable, a water permit. Alternatively, a training licence for the respective training location can be submitted.
- c) At the school or headquarters or at the training locations (max. 3), the following must be available: a protected training area or a classroom with specific media equipment (possibly only at the headquarters), an analogue or digital information platform, changing facilities, sanitary facilities (proof of right of use) and functional and visually appealing material storage. Registration and office can only be available at the head office.
- d) In order to be recognised as a VDWS school, the company must have a location as the headquarters of the school with an office, training area (for theory), possibly a reception area, material store, possibly a workshop. It must be clearly recognisable from the outside that it is a VDWS school. This is to be realised by the clearly visible display of VDWS flags and/or VDWS beach flags and/or banners and a school sign.
Schools or mobile schools that do not have a contractual relationship with the owner or authorities regarding the lease/rental of a training location or headquarters but still have the necessary permits to carry out water sports activities (training and rental), will not be recognised.
- e) The training locations (max. 3) must guarantee the framework conditions for safe operation and training of water sports. Furthermore, all VDWS training locations must be recognisable as such by flags and/or beach flags and may only be a maximum of 60 km away from the school's headquarters. However, the use of other locations for safety reasons is an exception.
- f) Schools (clubs, organisations) with one or more locations in different destinations or countries must provide proof of at least one instructor with a valid VDWS school instructor licence for each location/school and pay an additional school membership fee for each centre in accordance with the scale of fees.

3. Teaching equipment

- a) A sufficient number of particularly suitable training materials (windsurf boards and rigs, kiteboards and kites, sailboats, SUPs, wingboards and wings) must be available for all courses offered at the location.
- b) If the legal conditions or the special features of the area require it, a motorised rescue vehicle must be available (always necessary for kitesurfing and wingfoiling, except in standing areas) as well as a sufficient number of life jackets.
As an alternative to the rescue vehicle, the school can conclude a written agreement with a nearby rescue service or company that can initiate immediate rescue measures in an emergency.
- c) Sufficient protective clothing against the cold must be provided in compliance with the relevant hygiene regulations.
- d) The school or headquarters must have VDWS teaching materials, a suitable classroom and, in the case of outdoor lessons, an appropriate work area. This also includes a selection of analogue and digital teaching media.
- e) The school has a suitable safety concept for the sports offered, in which school and rental standards as well as areas of responsibility and rescue measures are clearly defined.

4. Additional equipment and requirements

The list of requirements listed above is not exhaustive. They are only minimum requirements (marked in red in the checklists), which are to be supplemented by further elements from the VDWS Centre Manual criteria catalogue, insofar as this is necessary for a qualitatively appropriate training operation.

5. Exterior appearance

a) The school or headquarters and the training location must clearly present themselves as a VDWS school. This includes appropriate VDWS teaching materials, VDWS school sign-stickers, VDWS school flag(s) and/or VDWS beach flags.

b) Only the original VDWS logo may be used in advertising. The current VDWS logo must be used for advertising purposes in all brochures and on the Internet (free of charge as a database).

Each member organisation will be represented on the VDWS website.

c) Each VDWS school must have an Internet presence that refers to its VDWS membership. This includes the VDWS logo linked to www.vdws.de, the offer of a typical VDWS beginner course with the possibility of purchasing a VDWS Basic Licence in the respective sport. In addition to the legally required mandatory information, the imprint must include VDWS membership number of the school and postal address of the training location.

6. Training and examination rights

a) At least one instructor must be authorised to manage a VDWS-recognised school (VDWS school manager licence). The school must prove that at least the head instructor holds a valid licence for the water sports offered. All other instructors should have at least a VDWS training licence. Trainees and water sports assistants must be registered with the VDWS with this status.

b) All holders of VDWS licences must be members of VDWS and registered on the digital platform provided by VDWS for this purpose. Schools with several locations must fulfil these requirements at each location (one VDWS-licensed school manager per location and at least one licensed instructor per sport). The school undertakes to organise the training and examination for the acquisition of VDWS basic qualifications and certificates in accordance with the association's regulations.

7. Liability and insurance

The water sports school must provide evidence of adequate public liability insurance in accordance with European standards, in which all locations are explicitly listed. It trains under its own responsibility and is not a servant of the VDWS, which itself does not provide direct basic training. The VDWS is not liable for any claims for compensation from watersport students and schools, regardless of the legal grounds.

8. Prohibition of passing on VDWS materials

a) The distribution of VDWS teaching and learning materials to third parties for resale is prohibited. However, a limited number of teaching and learning materials may be given to other VDWS member schools to bridge short-term gaps.

b) If, in exceptional cases, basic licences are given to another VDWS member school, the VDWS office must be informed immediately, indicating the serial numbers of the basic licences. A violation of this provision may lead to the immediate withdrawal of the recognition of the schools involved and to expulsion proceedings by the VDWS e.V.

9. competing memberships

- a) The VDWS e.V. is an idealistic interest group for the promotion of education and training in water sports. The statutory objectives should be actively supported by each individual member.
- b) The education of water sports instructors for other associations fundamentally represents a weakening of the VDWS training system and is not compatible with simultaneous recognition as a VDWS school.
- c) The school undertakes to obtain teaching and learning materials and certificates from VDWS for all water sports for which it applies for recognition.

10. Recognition

- a) The responsible board members decide on recognition. The school will be visited in person or supervised via an online meeting. Recognition of the school only becomes effective once all the documents listed under point 10.b) as well as the admission fee and membership fee have been transferred. Legal recourse with regard to the recognition is excluded.
- b) The application for recognition must be submitted to
- Membership application
 - School declaration form with complete checklist and details of the training locations
 - Employee confirmation
 - Location / water permit / authorisation of use for each additional location (max. 3)
 - Company registration
 - Proof of insurance (school liability insurance) with the address details of all training locations.
- c) The procedure for recognition is as follows:
- Submission of all necessary documents to the office
 - Examination of the requirements by the board
 - Once the requirements for recognition have been met and approval has been granted, the website must be completed within two weeks with the requirements listed under point 5.c).
 - This is followed by official confirmation and the sending of a starter package.
- d) Newly affiliated schools should receive special support during the first year of membership and be familiarised with the existing VDWS system. During this trial year, membership can be excluded from the association by either party without giving reasons.
- e) A school may also be recognised for a maximum of one year if individual provisions of the recognition guidelines are temporarily not fulfilled. The decision is made by the board.
- f) In the event of non-compliance with the recognition guidelines, the school will first be informed by the Executive Board by e-mail of the unfulfilled requirements. If there is no response from the school within 2 weeks and the deficiency persists, the school will receive an official reminder from the Executive Board and will be given a period of 2 weeks to bring the school or training centre into compliance with the statutes. If the school fails to provide any evidence of remedial action by the end of the deadline set, the school will be excluded by the Executive Board.
- g) Upon recognition, the VDWS watersports school undertakes to pay a one-off admission fee and a regular annual membership fee.

11. Revocation of recognition, exclusion, cancellation

a) Recognition as a VDWS school is valid for an indefinite period. It can be revoked at any time, especially if the water sports school no longer complies with the recognition guidelines. The VDWS reserves the right to review previously recognised schools.

b) In the event of a violation of the recognition guidelines, the VDWS Board may decide to

1. to warn the watersports school,
2. to revoke the recognition of the watersports school,
3. to impose a contractual penalty of up to € 2,500 if VDWS materials are passed on to third parties for resale.

c) In the event of revocation of recognition or cancellation of membership - regardless of whether the water sports school cancels or the VDWS cancels - the school is obliged to return the VDWS school sign and the VDWS flags as well as all existing VDWS training material (training packages, training booklets, certificates of competence) immediately to the VDWS office against reimbursement of the purchase price. Only current materials that are in new and unused condition can be credited.

C FEES

The fees are set by the VDWS e.V. General Membership Meeting.

1. fee for individual members 60 € (due annually in the 1st quarter)
2. fee for schools (one location) 250 € (due annually in the 1st quarter)
3. contribution for each additional location € 50 (due annually in the 1st quarter)
4. admission fee for schools € 350 (one-off)

The admission fee includes a 'starter package' (member card, VDWS school flag, school stamp, school sign, basic learning equipment for the respective sport, promo package).

Any disputes arising from the legal relationship between the VDWS and the water sports schools shall be governed by German law. The place of jurisdiction is the registered office of the VDWS e.V. in D- 82362 Weilheim i. OB.

The recognition guidelines for VDWS member schools shall enter into force in the above version on 1 February 2025.

signed. Dietmar Damith
1st Chairman

signed. Christian Bartesaghi
Head of School