

## Vision and Business Plan



### BU motto:

"Excellence through training and testing ... graduate your game to the next level."

## **Vision and Mission**

The mission of the Billiard University (BU) is to provide assessment tools, a rating system, and learning resources to help pool players strive for and achieve excellence, and to officially acknowledge excellence through the awarding of diplomas.

We want pool instructors, students, and players across the world to use the BU resources for both assessment and training and accept the BU rating system as a standard for measuring pool-playing excellence.

All assessment tools, with detailed instructions and demonstrations, are provided online for free. Payment is required only for a diploma application. With a paid application comes a diploma document sent by mail and official recognition on the BU website alumni list. The diplomas are printed professionally on the same high-quality paper and in the same style used by prestigious universities, and are suitable for framing and displaying with pride.

## **Organizational Structure**

BU cofounders David Alciatore and Randy Russell serve as the BU Dean and Registrar, respectively. They, along with eight other "founding professors" serve as the governing body of the BU. The professors are responsible for maintaining the high standards and integrity of the BU and its reputation. They also serve as advisors to the Dean and Registrar, who have final say on BU matters. The BU founding professors are:

Dave Alciatore (BU co-founder and Dean), Jerry Briesath, Mark Finkelstein, Randy Goettlicher, Bob Jewett, Mike Page, Randy Russell (BU co-founder and Registrar), Tom Simpson, and Mark Wilson

They were selected based on their reputations as excellent and experienced instructors and instructional authors who are also dedicated to the BU mission.

A collection of additional well-known and respected instructors will also be invited to participate in the BU as "senior instructors." We will also add many additional instructors in the future as "affiliate instructors." Privileges and promotion requirements among the instructor designations are as follows:

### Professor:

- All professors are featured on the website (with photos, bio bullets, and links), with the founding professors receiving top billing.
- All professors earn 50% profit sharing on diploma and DVD sales.

### Senior Instructor:

- The list of "senior instructors" is populated originally by invitation only to respected and experienced instructors.
- When the total number of diplomas sold reaches 25, a senior instructor's designation gets promoted to "professor." Promoted professors are listed on the website with the founding professors in the order that they are promoted.
- Senior instructors earn 40% profit sharing on diploma and DVD sales.

### Affiliate Instructor:

- There is no limit to the number of “affiliate instructors.”
- To be added to the list, an instructor must be certified by another organization (e.g., PBIA, BCA, ACS, CIIA, or any other reputable organization that certifies pool instructors) and submit a diploma application (either for themselves or a student).
- When the total number of diplomas sold reaches 10, an affiliate instructor’s designation gets promoted to “senior instructor.”
- Affiliate instructors earn 30% profit sharing on diploma and DVD sales.

All professors, senior instructors, and affiliate instructors, collectively referred to as BU instructors, are listed and promoted on the BU website, with more visibility given to the higher-designation and seniority members. The “professors” have top billing as the featured BU instructors. All BU instructors will remain on the website until they ask to be removed or until they become inactive (i.e., have no diploma or DVD sales) for more than 2 years.

## **Assessment Philosophy**

The assessment tools we have developed have been carefully designed and tested to provide a complete and accurate assessment and rating of pool-playing ability.

The examination process is broken into two parts, both of which consist of drills and challenges at the table. The first portion (Exam I – Fundamentals) is a fundamentals assessment and placement examination that measures all important basic pool skills (aim, alignment, stroke, ball pocketing, speed control, and cue ball control). The second portion (Exam II – Skills) is a skills proficiency examination that tests specific skills important in a variety of game situations (position play, strategy, defensive play, kicks, banks, jacked-up shots, jumps, and the break).

There are three levels of Exam II (Skills) labeled Bachelors, Masters, and Doctorate. The score on Exam I determines which Exam II the student is placed into, based on the demonstrated level of ability. All three Skills Exams test the complete set of pool skills necessary to be a good pool player, albeit at different levels. The drills are consistent, but with increasing difficulty, from one diploma level to the next. This provides a natural and simple progression path as a student advances through the diploma levels, and the increasing difficulty encourages and assesses continued improvement.

The total combined score on Exam I and Exam II provides a single number corresponding to different levels of playing ability. Also, the total score (regardless of Exam II placement) indicates the player rating and diploma achieved directly.

Here are some of the guiding principles followed in the development of the examinations and rating system:

- The standard to achieve a diploma is fairly high, and not all students will be successful at all of the drills; however, a Bachelors diploma is easily attainable to a lower intermediate player with practice and/or training. A novice player with no dedicated practice or training will not be able to receive a diploma. Diplomas require education and training, and the multiple diploma levels provide a mechanism and goals for continued improvement and mastery of the skills required to progress in ability.
- Basic and more-important skills are weighted more in the scoring system, and all skills are tested (even if some people may not be successful at all of the skills).
- The exams are useful to instructors for assessing a player’s ability in a variety of skill areas. The drills help identify weaknesses and can help an instructor develop a training program for improvement and set appropriate short-term and long-term goals (e.g., certain scores in each Exam I and Exam II category).
- All of the drills are from the Video Encyclopedia of Pool Practice (VEPP), with only slight modifications for simplicity, scorability, and appropriate level of difficulty. Both VEPP and the Video Encyclopedia of Pool Shots (VEPS) provide focused and specific learning resources to help a student develop skills in each of the exam areas.

- Unlike league handicap systems and other match-statistics-based rating systems, the BU scoring and rating system is independent of league ability level, which can vary significantly from one league to the next and from one region to the next. The BU rating offers the significant advantage that it is based solely on individual performance and not on the performance of others. Therefore, the ratings are meaningful across all regions and internationally.

## Examination Process

The exams can be administered either through online video submittal or in person through any BU instructor. A 9' table is recommended because the exams and rating system were designed for a regulation-size table. To receive a Doctorate diploma, both exams must be taken on a 9' table; however, a smaller table size (e.g., 7' or 8') is allowed for a Bachelors or Masters diploma.

Everything needed to prepare for and take the exams is available online, including exam documents with diagrams and instructions, video explanations and demonstrations, scoring sheets, online resources, and electronic forms for submitting results and applying for a diploma.

Each of the two exams takes 40-60 minutes. The highest possible score on Exam I is 100, and the score places the student into the appropriate Exam II based on the following ranges:

<b>Exam I score</b>	0-49	50-69	70-100
<b>Exam II</b>	Bachelors	Masters	Doctorate

To qualify for a Doctorate diploma, both exams must be taken on a 9' (or larger) table. If a student takes Exam I on a smaller table (e.g., 8' or 7') and the score falls in the Doctorate range, the student must take the Masters (not the Doctorate) Exam II.

The highest possible score on Exam II (at the Doctorate level) is 100, for a total of 200. The total score provides a player rating according to the following scale:

<b>BU Score</b>	0-19	20-29	30-39	40-54	55-69	70-94	95-109	110-124	125-139	140-159	160-179	180-200
<b>Player Rating</b>	beg-0	beg-1	beg-2	beg-3	int-1	int-2	int-3	adv-1	adv-2	adv-3	semi pro	pro

beg: beginner; int: intermediate; adv: advanced; pro: professional

The score also indicates whether or not you have achieved a BU diploma according to the following ranges:

<b>BU Score</b>	55-84	85-99	100-124	125-139	140-179	180-200
<b>Diploma Awarded</b>	Bachelor of Pool	Bachelor of Pool with Honors	Master of Pool	Master of Pool with Honors	Doctorate of Pool *	Doctorate of Pool with Honors *

\*: Exams must be taken on a 9' table to qualify for a doctorate diploma. If a student takes the exams on a smaller table (e.g., 8' or 7'), the highest diploma that can be achieved is a Masters with Honors.

If a student places into an advanced Exam II (e.g., Masters) and the minimum required total score for an advanced diploma (e.g., Masters) is not reached, a lower diploma (e.g., a Bachelors with Honors) can still be awarded.

If a student achieves a diploma-level score, the results can be submitted online with a video recording of the exams (submitted via YouTube). Alternatively, if a BU instructor administered the exams, the instructor submits the results electronically, and no video is required. The results submittal form summarizes the exam scores and diploma achieved, lists information about the equipment used (table brand/model, table size, and pocket size and shelf depth), and gives the student the option to include the results and data on the official alumni list on the BU website. None of this data appears on the diploma.

## Pricing Structure

If a student wishes to be honored with a diploma and/or official recognition on the BU website, payment is required according to the following rates:

physical diploma (with or without website recognition): **\$100**

electronic diploma (high-quality PDF file printable in various sizes): **\$50**

website-only “diploma” (official recognition on the BU website, with no physical or electronic diploma): **\$25**

These same rates apply to both online video submittals and instructor-administered examinations. A modest shipping/handling (S&H) charge (more for non-US applicants) applies only to the “physical diploma” option. The physical diploma is professionally printed on high-quality parchment paper suitable for framing.

## Profit Sharing

The profits from all **instructor-generated diploma and DVD sales** are shared by the BU and the instructor based on instructor designation as follows:

product	BU retail price	professor share (50%)	senior instructor share (40%)	affiliate instructor share (30%)
physical diploma	\$100 + S&H	\$50	\$40	\$30
electronic diploma	\$50	\$25	\$20	\$15
website-only “diploma”	\$25	\$12.50	\$10	\$7.50
VEPS or VEPP 5-DVD set w/ case	\$135 + S&H	\$67.50	\$54	\$40.50
BU 3-DVD set w/case	\$85 + S&H	\$42.50	\$34	\$25.50

**VEPS:** [Video Encyclopedia of Pool Shots](#)    **VEPP:** [Video Encyclopedia of Pool Practice](#)  
**BU:** [Billiard University Instructional Series](#)

The DVD sets can be ordered with or without a diploma application. Any BU instructor can also pre-order DVD sets at the discounted price (e.g., so they can be on hand for direct sales to students).

There are three ways diploma and DVD sales can occur:

1. Student totally on their own: The student video-records their examination, submits the videos online (e.g., via Youtube), submits the exam results electronically, and pays the BU online via PayPal (for the diploma and/or DVDs).
2. Instructor does everything: The instructor offers training (e.g., through a lesson, workshop, or course) and/or an exam administration session and includes the diploma and/or DVD sets as part of the cost to the student. The instructor administers and scores the exams in person and submits the results and payment online (via PayPal). No video is required. The required payment to the BU is the retail price less the share owed to the instructor (i.e., the instructor keeps his or her share). Then the BU mails the diploma and/or DVDs to the student.

3. Instructor administers the exam, but student applies and pays the BU directly: The student goes to an instructor for tutoring, training, and/or the examination, the instructor submits and validates the results online, and the student pays for the diploma and/or DVDs directly through the BU online. The BU then sends the instructor's share of the profits to the instructor via PayPal.

Instructors are encouraged to charge the retail prices for the diploma and/or DVD sets; although, they are free to offer lower prices (e.g., as part of a package deal). Instructors are encouraged to include a diploma and/or DVD sets as part of the price for a lesson, workshop, or course specifically geared toward achieving a BU diploma. We provide very easy-to-follow instructions to instructors who have not used PayPal before. It is very easy to setup an account to safely send or receive payments via a credit card or bank account.

## Training Based on BU Assessment Results

A useful application of the BU assessment process is to discover areas of a student's game that needs work. This allows an instructor to plan a training program for the student to help them improve. Both the [Video Encyclopedia of Pool Shots \(VEPS\)](#) and the [Video Encyclopedia of Pool Practice \(VEPP\)](#) provide focused and specific learning resources to help a student develop skills in each of the exam areas. These DVD series (by BU founding professors David Alciatore and Bob Jewett, and Tom Ross) include detailed and well-illustrated instruction, countless game-situation examples, and collections of drills to help a student develop and improve skills in all areas.

The following tables identify the skills important to each BU Exam drill. It also lists the VEPS and VEPP disc and section numbers to help an instructor or student locate the relevant learning resources. A student should spend time studying and practicing the shots and drills in all of the section, especially those corresponding to the Exam drills in which low scores were received.

### Exam I - Fundamentals

drill number	drill topic	required skills	VEPS Sections	VEPP Section
F1	cut	aiming, stroke	I-1	I-2
F2	stop	stop shot control	I-2	I-4
F3	follow	follow control	I-3	I-5
F4	draw	draw control	I-4	I-6
F5	stun	stun control, speed control	I-2, II-14	II-8
F6	potting	aiming, stroke	I-1	I-2
F7	wagon	CB direction control	II-14	II-9
F8	target	position control	II-15, II-16, II-17	II-13

### Exam II - Skills

drill number	drill topic	required skills	VEPS Sections	VEPP Section
S1	line of balls	aiming, position control	II-14, II-15	II-16
S2	rail cuts	aiming, position control	II-13	II-16
S3	9-ball patterns	position control and strategy	II-15-17, III-27	III-18
S4	8-ball patterns	position control and strategy	II-15-17, III-26	III-19
S5	safeties	safety strategy, position control	III-21	III-20
S6	kicks	kick shots	IV-31	IV-21
S7	banks	bank shots	IV-33	IV-24
S8	elevated cue	elevated cue shots	I-4, V-42	IV-25
S9	jumps, massé	jump, swerve, and massé shots	V-42, 43	IV-26, 27
S10	break	break shot	V-44	V-28

If a student needs significant help with fundamentals, or if a student wants to set a goal to achieve a certain diploma, he or she should obviously consider scheduling a private or group lesson with a BU instructor for personalized and focused instruction. This will certainly be encouraged on the BU website.

A [3-DVD Billiard University instructional video series](#) (by BU founding professors David Alciatore and Randy Russell) is also available to provide advice and guidance concerning how to practice and learn strategies for helping you achieve the highest BU score and diploma possible. The BU DVDs also provide instruction on techniques and aiming systems that can help you become much more effective both with the exams and during actual play.

The following instructional DVD series are also highly recommended:

[“A POOL LESSON with Jerry Briesath”](#) (also with Mark Wilson, both founding BU professors)

[“Play Better Pool: Mastering the Basics”](#) by founding BU professor Randy Goettlicher and Scott Lee

These series, also created by BU founding professors, provide excellent coverage of pool fundamentals.

## Benefits to BU instructors

Instructors (professors, senior instructors, and affiliate instructors) who participate in the BU enjoy the following benefits:

- You have an additional credential.
- You will be promoted on the BU website.
- You share in diploma and DVD profits.
- You can market to prospective students, offering training and exam administration with clear goals, a graduation reward (an official BU diploma), and opportunities for future training, evaluation, and testing.
- You can use the provided exams to assess deficiencies and monitor progress of students and to help with their further development (as drills).
- The exams can serve as the basis for a curriculum or course outline.
- There is no cost and no commitment.

## Benefits to Students

Benefits to students using the BU assessment and training tools or working with a BU instructor include:

- You will get better at pool in a smarter and faster way and raise your game to the next level.
- The examination process fully and impartially assesses your current level of ability relative to others.
- The exam drills identify your areas of weakness.
- The exam drills can provide structure and purpose to your practice sessions.
- You can use the exam and drill scores to monitor and assess your improvement over time.
- You can set a concrete goal for improvement by working toward a diploma.
- When you earn a diploma, you can frame and display it with pride (e.g., in your office or game room) to show off your enthusiasm and excellence.
- With a diploma, you will receive official recognition of your level of ability on the BU website (with your permission).
- A diploma is a credential you can use as the first step to becoming an instructor.