



## The Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) as an alternative curriculum

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is a voluntary, non-competitive, flexible personal development programme of activities for anyone aged 14-25. It gives young people the opportunity to experience new activities and skills or develop existing ones.

There are programmes at three levels, which when completed, lead to a Bronze, Silver or Gold DofE Award.

Awards are achieved by completing a personal programme of activities in four sections (five if going for Gold) - Volunteering,

Physical, Skills, Expedition and, for Gold, a Residential.

A DofE programme is all about personal choice and responsibility. Participants do their activities either in their own personal time, partly as one or a range of options in supported/ core time or as an after-school programme.

The programme can be used as a framework to support or create an alternative curriculum or education programme, e.g. for young people at risk of exclusion, even if it is done in a school environment and entirely in scheduled lesson time.

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- A model for delivery
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To find out more about The DofE have a look at our website  
[www.DofE.org](http://www.DofE.org)

## The DofE Charity



Youth Charity The Duke of Edinburgh's Award supports over 300,000 people aged 14-24 every year, including 30,000 who are excluded and vulnerable.

Our ethos is to enable all young people to take part in our programmes and succeed, regardless of any barriers.

**Winner in the Charity Awards 2012 for our role in developing young people's skills at work.**

*"It doesn't matter if it's Gold, Silver or Bronze, their DofE is something which takes them outside the box and challenges them as an individual to play the team game, to get involved in the community and to do sporting things."*

**DofE Leader**



## The benefits of the DofE

### Key benefits for the participants

When a young person does their DofE programme they'll develop the skills and attitudes they need to become more rounded, confident adults.

- Self-belief
- Self-confidence
- A sense of identity
- Initiative
- A sense of responsibility
- A real awareness of their strengths
- New talents and abilities
- The ability to plan and use time effectively
- The ability to learn from and give back to others in the community
- Problem solving, presentation and communication skills
- Leadership and team working skills

*"This year's curriculum group have benefited hugely from DofE, they have gone through a massive transformation and developed to become positive young people. The students who took DofE as an option are of a low ability and can cause behaviour problems across the school. Being realistic they are unlikely to achieve in more academic areas within curriculum. Giving students the opportunity to take DofE gave them a chance to achieve and be part of a rewarding and challenging experience."*

*"At the start of year 10 the group were challenging to work with and each individual caused concerns. For example, confrontational behaviour, disengagement, low confidence, poor communication and leadership skills. Through their DofE journey each of the pupils in the group progressed and developed to overcome their challenges and by the time they left they were an outstanding group to work with and have benefited in so many ways".*

Dominic Stannard, Cover Supervisor/DofE Leader, Marshland High School

### Key benefits for the school

*"In helping to develop self-esteem, barriers to learning are reduced, producing a 'can do' attitude, which increases motivation in all lessons. This course has assisted us in holding on to students and in practising inclusion. Parents, students and the community value DofE. It's achievements are regularly reported on in the school newsletter and the local press."*

*"DofE sets personal challenges for the students on physical, emotional, and social levels. These are couched within a secure yet demanding environment, where every student is capable of achieving. It has been an immense pleasure to see DofE students of all abilities develop new skills."*

*"Students who in the past have found it difficult to socialise have become team players capable of bringing out the best in each other."*

*"Students who lacked confidence have been able to work with community groups on environmental projects, local community projects and in teaching ICT skills to ICT reluctant adults."*

*"As a result, their self-esteem has soared resulting in a sense of well-being which has in turn allowed them to engage more fully in other areas of the school curriculum and school life".*

Michelle Fox, Head of Curriculum, Marshland High School

## A model for inclusion

This alternative curriculum delivery model has been used at two schools located in West Norfolk; one as a short term key stage 4 solution for a particularly challenging cohort, with the other school into its fourth cohort. Both models saw students participate at DofE Bronze in Year 10, then silver in Year 11. One school devoted one day a week throughout key stage 4, whilst the other 'dovetailed' DofE with ASDAN's Certificate of Personal Effectiveness, which also drew on evidence gained through DofE participation.

In addition to catering for those at risk of exclusion, the cohorts were made up of individuals identified by the schools who would significantly benefit from a personal development programme: Special Education Needs statement, local authority 'looked after', those at risk of disengagement, rurally isolated, self-harmers, traveller community, those with social, emotional and behavioural challenges and those who staff recognised as academically challenged who would benefit considerably, but would not necessarily get the support needed to attend the after school provision.

This particular model saw an experienced DofE Leader (who was working for an organisation with an interest in reducing the risk of offending behaviour) being bought in to deliver the DofE (similarly this model could be delivered by teaching staff with the right experience in terms of programme and client group). Not only did the partner schools recognise the benefits to the individual students, but they also recognised the expense of exclusion.

## The intended outcomes

Using the DofE as a framework for positive engagement, the model was one of confronting and developing behaviours through a programme of challenging tasks focused on personal development.

The programme's intended outcome was one of confidence building, with the aim of developing 'positive behaviours' in terms of socialisation, enjoyment, wellbeing, success, achievement and planning for progression and ultimately employability.

- Team working and leadership
- Problem solving
- Communication skills
- Project planning
- Self-management
- Positive citizenship
- Embedded literacy, numeracy and ICT
- Self & peer evaluation



As the programme was entirely during scheduled lesson time, the participants' section activity was limited around personal choice, however within the activities there was scope for ownership.

*"Students who would struggle with four GCSE option subjects are encouraged to take DofE as their fourth option. This allowed them to focus on fewer academic subjects whilst developing a raft of key skills, independence, and problem solving abilities which enhance their whole-school achievement."*

**Michelle Fox : Head of Curriculum, Marshland High School**



## Celebration opportunity

Year 10 pupils will start their DofE programmes at Bronze level. If they are given the right guidance they will, more often than not, have completed their full programme by the time they start Year 11. This gives you a fantastic celebration opportunity and a chance to enlist the current DofE participants to introduce DofE to the next Year 10 cohort.



In Year 11 they will then start their Silver programme and once they are 16 they can start their Gold programme.



## What the DofE Leader has to say

*“Having worked with each one of these young people, I have seen them change... By using the opportunities the DofE provides through its choice of section activities, I produced a challenging programme of activities which saw the individuals develop through task group work: Planning, organisation, team working, participation, responsibility and the all-important evaluation, which provided the opportunity for celebration achievement or for challenging behaviours.*

*“The whole DofE experience was based around ‘it’s not what you do, but it’s the way that you do it’ in terms of positive behaviour. At the start of the DofE programme, students were told that in principle they would complete their DofE, provided they: Attended, didn’t quit and tried hard...*

*“This is very challenging work: it needs a dedicated and focused practitioner with an acute understanding and empathy for inclusion strategies. Louise, Tom and Stephen are only a few examples of the young people that have significantly benefited from participating in DofE as an alternative curriculum... often it is their main key stage 4 achievement”.*

**Tony Lucas: DofE Co-ordinator, Marshland High School**



## Putting it all in perspective

### The value of the DofE to employers

The United Learning Trust (ULT) recently published the results of a major survey, undertaken by them in association with Ratcliffe Hall Ltd., focusing on the methods major employers used for the selection of new employees. It was primarily about graduate recruitment and asked for the employers’ views on the attributes that were most attractive in candidates.

The organisations interviewed were all major employers, representing 12% of all UK employers, 3.6% of the private workforce and 47.5% of the public sector.

The organisations were asked what attributes and characteristics they valued as key determinants in the selection of employees.

The following were rated the highest: leadership, teamwork, self-motivation, communication, confidence, consideration and the ability to learn.

Rank	Activity undertaken at school
1	The DofE
2	Work experience
3	Community activities
4	World Challenge
5	Young Enterprise
6	Team sporting activities
7	Youth awards
8	Public speaking/debating
9	County/national sports
10	Interview skills
11	School council
12	School prefect
13	Individual sports participation
14	Financial awareness
15	Work shadowing

These results are a great endorsement of the benefits that participating in a DofE programme can provide for a person’s employability prospects.



## DofE programmes

Anyone aged between 14 and 24 can do a programme at one of the three progressive levels which, when successfully completed, lead to a Bronze, Silver or Gold Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

There are four sections at Bronze and Silver level and five at Gold:

**Volunteering:** undertaking service to individuals or the community.

**Physical:** improving in an area of sport, dance or fitness activities.

**Skills:** developing practical and social skills and personal interests.

**Expedition:** planning, training for and completion of an adventurous journey in the UK or abroad.

At Gold level, participants must do an additional fifth **Residential** section, which involves staying and working away from home doing a shared activity.



## Activities undertaken at the pilot schools

### Volunteering

- Planned and completed fundraising events, budgeting and marketing to produce a sensory garden at an old people's home.
- Delivered ICT sessions to 'non-computer users' from rurally isolated areas, teaching how to turn on /off, MS Office basics, sending an email and surfing the internet.
- Road safety: Won funding for a project highlighting the dangers of using a mobile phone when driving, by using remote control model cars.
- Parish Council leaflet distribution.
- Event management/Fundraising: Planned, promoted and performed a series of fundraising events.
- Supporting a charity: Planned and completed fundraising events, budgeting and marketing to create a coastline conservation garden at the local RNLI station.
- Local church project

### Physical

- Physical Achievement -assessed fitness exercises. A real emphasis on personal achievement
- Racquet / bat sports: Tennis, squash, badminton, short tennis and table tennis.
- Team sports: Basketball, cricket, football, hockey, netball, rounders' and volleyball.

*\*\*This section is a worthy morning behaviour incentive, when used in the afternoon!*

### Skill

- Film & video making: Following a visit to the Apple (Mac) Store for a workshop, the group planned, scripted, acted, filmed, edited and produced short films.

- Jewellery making: Very creative and engaging, but a bit expensive and a nightmare with all the little bits!
- Sports appreciation: The Olympic movement, handball research and a mountain bike study.
- Sports leadership / officiating: Junior Community Sports Leaders.

### Expedition

The expedition section followed the same training schedule as mainstream after school groups: Teambuilding, first aid & emergency procedures, health & safety issues, navigation & route planning, camp craft, equipment, hygiene, food, cooking, countryside code, observation recording and presentations.

One of the models saw the alternative curriculum group attend the same practice and assessment expeditions as the mainstream after school group, which facilitated group integration and improved behaviour. Not to mention that the alternative curriculum groups usually performed equally as well... if not better!



## Example: Year 10 Bronze programme

Week	Lessons 1&2	Lessons 3&4	Lessons 5&6
1	Intro & Team Building	Intro & Team Building	eDofE intro
2	Team Building & Problem Solving – Day Out		
3	Volunteering Intro	Skill Intro	Physical
4	Skill Project		Physical
5	Volunteering Project		Physical
6	Skill Project		Physical
7	Volunteering Project		eDofE review
<b>Autumn half term</b>			
Week	Lessons 1&2	Lessons 3&4	Lessons 5&6
8	Expedition Intro	Skill Project	Physical
9	Volunteering Project		Physical
10	Expedition	Skill Project	Physical
11	Volunteering Project		Physical
12	<b>Expedition</b>	Skill Project	Physical
13	Volunteering Project		eDofE review
14	<b>Reward Event</b>		
<b>Christmas Holidays</b>			
Week	Lessons 1&2	Lessons 3&4	Lessons 5&6
15	Expedition	Skill	Physical
16	Volunteering Project		Physical
17	Expedition	Skill	Physical
18	Volunteering Project		Physical
19	Expedition	Skill	Physical
20	Volunteering Project		eDofE review
<b>Spring half term</b>			
Week	Lessons 1&2	Lessons 3&4	Lessons 5&6
21	Expedition	Skill	Physical
22	Expedition: Day walk		
23	Expedition	Skill	Physical
24	Expedition	Skill	Physical
25	Expedition: Day walk		
26	<b>Reward Event</b>		
<b>Easter Holidays</b>			
Week	Lessons 1&2	Lessons 3&4	Lessons 5&6
27	Expedition	Skill	Physical
28	Expedition	Skill	Physical
29	Practice Expedition (2 x days)		
30	Expedition	Skill	eDofE review
<b>Summer half term</b>			
Week	Lessons 1&2	Lessons 3&4	Lessons 5&6
31	Expedition	Skill	Physical
32	Expedition	Skill	Physical
33	Expedition	Skill	Physical
34	Expedition	Skill	Physical
35	Assessment Expedition (2 x days)		
36	Expedition	Skill	Physical
37	Expedition	eDofE review & Silver planning	
38	<b>Reward Event</b>		
<b>Summer Holidays</b>			

## Example: Year 11 Silver programme

Week	Lessons 1&2	Lessons 3&4	Lessons 5&6
1	Expedition planning		eDofE planning
2	Practice Expedition (3 x days)		
3	Expedition planning		Physical
4	Expedition planning		Physical
5	Expedition planning		Physical
6	Expedition planning		Physical
7	Assessment Expedition (3 x days)		
Autumn half term			
Week	Lessons 1&2	Lessons 3&4	Lessons 5&6
8	Expedition evaluation & presentation		Physical
9	Volunteering Project		Physical
10	Skill Project		Physical
11	Volunteering Project		Physical
12	Skill Project		Physical
13	Volunteering Project		eDofE review
14	Reward Event		
Christmas Holidays		Christmas Holidays	
Week	Lessons 1&2	Lessons 3&4	Lessons 5&6
15	Skill Project		Physical
16	Volunteering Project		Physical
17	Skill Project		Physical
18	Volunteering Project		Physical
19	Skill Project		Physical
20	Volunteering Project		eDofE review
Spring half term		Spring half term	
Week	Lessons 1&2	Lessons 3&4	Lessons 5&6
21	Skill Project		Physical
22	Volunteering Project		Physical
23	Skill Project		Physical
24	Volunteering Project		Physical
25	Skill Project		eDofE review
26	Reward Event		
Easter Holidays			
Week	Lessons 1&2	Lessons 3&4	Lessons 5&6
27	Volunteering Project		Physical
28	Skill Project		Physical
29	Volunteering Project		Physical
30	eDofE review		Celebration Event
End of Year 11 & GCSE Examination			

## Don't take our word for it.....

These are the responses given by three former students about their personal DofE experience. Each had presented behaviour challenges due to varying circumstances and had previously been temporarily excluded and had been on the edge of permanent exclusion. They have all achieved Bronze and Silver Awards, with one of them progressing onto Gold Award completion which involved full integration into the main extra curriculum group and saw him Volunteering with Bronze participants.



### Louise - Bronze & Silver Award holder.

*"The most challenging part was the first expedition; not being in control. DofE has helped to build my confidence through working with other people and visiting new places... my Silver was easier than Bronze, because of my increased confidence... : I am happier, more confident and can cope with daily life. I changed."*



### Steven - Bronze, Silver & Gold Award holder.

*"The hardest part was having to get on with others... all the arguing and stuff.*

*I did DofE Leadership for my Gold volunteering... I passed on the skills that I had learnt. I completed my residential whilst on the Prince's Trust Team Programme.*

*On my expedition... I just wanted to come home after two days because it was so hard... but I finished it for my DofE Leader.*

*I've got a job now... everything's good"!*



### Tom - Bronze & Silver Award holder.

*"The biggest challenge for me was learning but I learnt that I can push myself to go further. I didn't quit because it was the best thing at school: better than doing science or drama. I am proud that I finished something!"*

## Principles of all DofE programmes

- Non-competitive
- Achievable by all
- Voluntary
- Personal development
- Personalised
- Balanced
- Progressive
- Achievement focussed
- Demand commitment
- Enjoyable



**For more information on your options of how to get involved with the DofE please contact:**

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