

Developing young people for life and work

Building a brighter future for young people

The opportunity to increase young people's employability in challenging financial times is essential for all educational establishments.

Achieving a DofE Award requires resilience and commitment and enables young people to see how their efforts add value and impact, both to themselves and others. The experiences gained through completing a DofE programme provides them with plenty of discussion points at interviews and examples of situations where they have demonstrated skills such as leadership, team building, commitment, perseverance and organisational skills.

Organisations operate the DofE for a variety of reasons. It can give universities, colleges, schools and academies, for example, a competitive edge by attracting high quality students and helps increase the numbers of students getting a job quickly. A young person who goes through a DofE programme is able to develop life-enhancing skills, which are especially helpful when job hunting.



“

The DofE benefits employers and employees alike, which is why the Welsh Government is proud to support it. The DofE provides an excellent opportunity for young people to gain the experience, skills and resilience employers are looking for and, in turn, provide employers with committed, dedicated well-rounded young employees.”

ELUNED MORGAN, MINISTER FOR WELSH LANGUAGE
AND LIFELONG LEARNING

“

GE Aviation Wales is proud to be a DofE Gold Partner.

The DofE provides our employees with life-changing opportunities and experiences that support their personal and professional development. Being part of the DofE in Wales, our employees also build long-lasting relationships with their colleagues and communities beyond our site.

Achievement of an Award requires commitment, skill, determination and dedication; which are the attributes we need for the future of our business and sector.”

NICK BLAKENEY, MANAGING DIRECTOR,
GE AVIATION WALES

How the DofE transforms young people's lives

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is a voluntary, non-competitive, flexible personal development programme of activities for young people.

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: giving 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.

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

The DofE is a nationally and internationally recognised Award favoured by employers. Participants develop key employability skills and attributes valued in young recruits. These skills include communication, teamwork, problem solving, self-management and a positive approach to work.

The benefits to young people

When a young person does their DofE programme they'll develop the skills and attitudes they need to become more rounded, confident adults. These are all qualities that employers are attracted to.

You can expect your young people to develop the following:

- 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
- Building new friendships
- Problem solving, presentation and communication skills
- Leadership and team working skills

Independent Impact Research

Supported by Pears Foundation, we commissioned The University of Northampton to carry out a study into the value of the DofE.

The Impact Research showed that the DofE continues to offer a successful personal development programme for young people.

Key findings:

- **84%** of young people felt that they have become a more responsible person.
- **84%** of young people cited that they had developed the ability to stick at tasks until they are completed.
- **77%** of young people and **87%** of Leaders said young people's problem solving skills improved.
- **81%** of participants had increased motivation.
- **90%** of young people said doing their DofE has given them opportunities to help others.
- **93%** feel that doing their DofE has helped them to develop teamwork skills.
- **84%** feel that it has helped them develop decision-making skills.

Our research with Gold Award holders showed:

- **93%** felt that by including their Award on an application form it would help to secure employment.
- **58%** believed that having achieved an Award had helped them in their job/career – the most helpful section was Volunteering.
- **64%** believed that having an Award helped them gain their most recent/current job.



“

Businesses that I speak with day-in-day-out recognise the character building, discipline and individual leadership potential that the DofE unlocks and instils in those who do DofE programmes. IoD members and the wider business community understand that young adults need to maximise their potential; improve their life skills and grow in confidence, maturity and initiative so that they become better enabled to hit the ground running when they enter the world of work. The DofE understands this too – they ‘get it’ and address it – and that’s why I am a huge fan of what they do and achieve with young people.”

ROBERT LLOYD GRIFFITHS OBE, IOD DIRECTOR WALES



“

As the UK's most effective and influential business organisation we really value the superb work that the DofE does in helping to develop our future work force with essential soft skills like problem solving, communication and team working. Our aim is to see a healthy environment for businesses to succeed in Wales and ultimately this is driven with determined and enthusiastic employees. Taking part in a DofE programme builds character and tenacity – key ingredients to drive economic growth and prosperity.”

IAN PRICE, CBI DIRECTOR WALES

So what do employers want?

Having a positive attitude is an important attribute and underpins success in working life. It helps young people to be resilient and adapt to changing situations around them.

In addition to business awareness, numeracy and literacy skills, the UK commission for Employment and Skills and the CBI define the skills and attitudes that make someone employable as:

- Self-management
- Problem solving
- Team working
- Communication
- Positive approach to work



Attitude or skill	How can doing a DofE programme promote employability?
Self-management	<p>Every DofE programme is unique as participants are required to plan their own programme and source their own activities. They are required to manage their own time to fit in their activities alongside school, college, work and family life.</p> <p>Realistic yet challenging goals need to be set for each activity and although there are adults to help, no one achieves an Award unless they put in the effort, managing their time effectively.</p>
Problem solving	<p>Problem solving is a key element required across all sections of the DofE but is perhaps best developed through the Expedition section. In this section participants have to make considered decisions to help them complete their journey safely and they are expected to deal with problems without adult intervention.</p> <p>They learn how to apply their knowledge and skills developed through their training, and understand the consequences of the decisions made.</p>
Team working and communication	<p>Working together as a team is imperative to the successful completion of a DofE programme.</p> <p>Working together with new people on their Residential section to reach a shared goal, and working with their expedition team to get from one check point to the next, young people learn the importance of good communication and the value of each other's skills.</p> <p>In the Volunteering section many young people will experience for the first time having to work alongside adults in well-established teams; taking on new roles and accepting new responsibilities, often helping to develop leadership skills and self-confidence.</p>
Positive approach to work	<p>Young people are the driving force behind their own DofE programme and, in much the same way that employability isn't something that you can be taught, you have to be active and committed to achieve.</p> <p>What DofE participants have shown is that they are willing to get involved, take on new challenges and take advantage of opportunities to develop themselves.</p>

Principles of all DofE programmes:

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

See our short employability video: is.gd/4CGZ71

“

The DofE helped me secure my job as a trainee solicitor, having being able to cite examples of challenges faced whilst undertaking my DofE during the interview. In my role as an employer, when I see that an applicant has achieved any level of the DoE, I know that they will have developed skills of resilience and tenacity and the ability to see things through as part of a team. As well as being important life skills, these are all key attributes for any employer.”

RICHARD MACPHAIL, PARTNER, HUGH JAMES SOLICITOR
AND GOLD AWARD HOLDER



Putting it all in perspective

The value of the DofE to employers

Research undertaken by The United Learning Trust (ULT) focussed on the methods major employers used for the selection of new employees.

We interviewed a wide selection of major employers, representing 12% of all UK employers, 3.6% of the private workforce and 47.5% of the public sector including: Boots plc; British Energy Group plc; British Nuclear Fuels plc; BT Group plc; Centrica plc; Civil Service; Diageo plc; Eurotunnel plc; Honda (UK) Ltd; Morrison's plc; Michael Page International plc; Tesco Plc and Vauxhall Motors Ltd.

It was primarily about graduate recruitment and asked for the employers' views on the attributes that were most attractive in candidates. 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, the ability to learn.

From the sample 76% of the organisations emphasised how important it is for schools to enable 'life skills' to be developed. 64% indicated that a specifically designed and packaged course of 'life skills' development activities, pursued by an applicant, can make a positive difference in selecting the applicant for interview.

The sample was asked what they considered to be the most important activities undertaken at school and were asked to rate them from 1-5, with 1 being the highest.

“

I would encourage every young person to participate in a DofE programme. The skills I obtained whilst achieving my Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards have without doubt benefitted me enormously in my career as a lawyer. In particular, the DofE improved my organisational and communication skills, equipped me with the ability to work as a team and, most importantly, gave me the self-belief, determination and confidence to succeed.”

RACHAEL SLEIGH, SENIOR ASSOCIATE, CORPORATE REAL ESTATE,
EVERSHEDS SUTHERLAND



Rank	Activity undertaken at school	Score
1	The DofE	1.96
2	Work experience	2.00
3	Community activities	2.04
4	World Challenge	2.16
5	Young Enterprise	2.20
6	Team sporting activities	2.28
7	Youth awards	2.28
8	Public speaking/debating	2.32
9	County/national sports	2.36
10	Interview skills	2.44
11	School council	2.48
12	School prefect	2.48
13	Individual sporting	2.48
14	Financial awareness	2.52
15	Work shadowing	2.60
16	Industry days	2.60

How to offer the DofE to young people

Many establishments can deliver a DofE programme under their local authority's licence or you could become a DofE Licensed Organisation.

We will help you establish a DofE programme that complements your current work with young people.

You'll need someone to oversee the DofE's operation and we can work with you to identify the right person in your organisation.

Jade Minty, GE
Aviation Wales,
Aircraft Engineer and
Gold Award Holder.



Contact us to discuss your options: DofE.org/wales

