



# The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Employability in Action

## 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.



“ I've found everyone who has completed their DofE has become more confident and shown a maturity that makes them stand out and helps them progress in their careers”

DEAN LIGHTWOOD, HEAD OF OPERATIONS,  
LLOYDS BANKING GROUP



“ Our apprenticeship programme and the DofE component of that is allowing us to bring in young talent. By the end of the programme we're hoping that they've discovered a career. In exchange we get a loyal, dedicated workforce”

JAMIE PROUDFOOT, SCOTRAIL



## 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:** 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.

**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.



“ Here at British Gas we believe the DofE makes young people more employable, developing the skills we need in our workforce – including a positive attitude, tenacity, and a good work ethic. Our belief in the value of The Duke of Edinburgh's Award means that we recognise those who have achieved their DofE in our recruitment process. The skills and experiences gained in achieving a DofE Award really shine through in the recruitment process and help candidates differentiate themselves in a highly competitive market.”

ANGELA WILLIAMS,  
HR DIRECTOR, BRITISH GAS



“ When I get a CV through, to see the DofE is a big tick in the box, because they chose to do something torturous and hard. They took on a challenge and got to the end of it!

THEO PAPHITIS, BUSINESSMAN

## 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?
<b>Self-management</b>	<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>
<b>Problem solving</b>	<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>
<b>Team working and communication</b>	<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>
<b>Positive approach to work</b>	<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: <http://to.ly/u7XN>

“ The DofE gives young people the opportunity to reach their potential and develop into confident adults, while giving back to their communities and learning new skills. We are delighted to be working with the Charity and look forward to forging strong links between DFS and the DofE, making the most of all it has to offer.”

IAN FILBY,  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, DFS



# 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.



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

“ I am applying for different courses and jobs. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award gets probably the best reaction. It has good status and currency amongst employers.”

CHRIS, DOFE PARTICIPANT



## 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.



Contact your local DofE Regional/Country Office to discuss your options: [DofE.org/feedback](https://www.dofe.org/feedback)

