



Guidance on assessing multiple expedition teams

The following guidance shows the DofE's position on deciding upon the number of expedition teams that an Expedition Assessor should assess at any one time. It provides a frame of reference for Licensed Organisations when deciding on the appropriate number of assessments which can be carried out by a single Assessor simultaneously.

Suitable number of assessments:

It is important when undertaking multiple assessments that neither the quality of the experience for the participants, nor the safety of the Assessor is compromised. Please note that, whilst Expedition Assessors have a general duty of care towards young people, the Expedition Supervisor is legally responsible for the health, safety and welfare of expedition participants whilst on practice and qualifying expeditions. Expedition Supervisors must ensure that expeditions are organised in line with the safety and emergency procedures of the Licensed Organisation.

A number of different factors must be taken into account when considering whether more than one team can be assessed at the same time. For example:

- Geography and terrain – e.g. expeditions taking place in wild country;
- Weather conditions and the time of year (which often affects prevailing weather conditions and the amount of daylight hours);
- The mode of travel;
- The level of Award;
- The difficulty of the route chosen;
- The distance the team plan to travel;
- The expedition aim of the team;
- Ability of the Assessor to travel between the teams. Access and transport links between checkpoints and campsites;
- Similarity of routes between teams;
- The abilities of participants within the team;
- Any agreed variations to the 20 conditions;
- If there is a positive working relationship with the Expedition Supervisor, allowing all teams to be supervised and assessed appropriately.

Expedition Assessor role:

Expedition Assessors have a number of responsibilities as part of their role that must be taken into account.

Assessors will:

- Complete the stages of the expedition assessment process (See the Expedition Guide: Assessing DofE Expeditions), to ensure a comprehensive assessment for each team.
- Visit each group a suitable number of times to get to know the participants. The number of visits will vary for each group – the Assessor should meet the team as often as possible to ensure the 20 conditions are being met, whilst being kept to a minimum to avoid intruding upon the expedition.

- Be a fair, impartial and positive person who adds to the expedition experience, supports the team and sees a successful outcome.
- Provide, as appropriate, local expedition area information to teams to help them decide how best to meet the 20 conditions.
- Give their focus to the Assessor role only (apart from the rare examples where the Assessor and Supervisor may be the same person on overseas expeditions, the Assessor role should be their main focus at any one time. They should not be performing dual roles).

Number of groups – best practice:

As the list of variable factors is so wide, the DofE does not put an absolute limit on the maximum number of assessments that it is possible to do at any one time in every situation.

However, bearing in mind the requirements of the role and the factors on suitability listed above, we judge that Expedition Assessors should not assess more than four expedition teams at any one time. In exceptional circumstances (and when the expedition is fully compliant with all the conditions), we envisage that a Regional/Country Office, Assessor Network Coordinator or DofE Manager may allow more than four. Please note that four is neither a recommendation nor a target for any situation and a lower number will usually be preferable. As the examples below show, three expeditions in Wild Country would normally be a suitable limit for any Assessor, when considering all the factors expressed above.

Licensed Organisations and Approved Activity Providers should consider this guidance when arranging expeditions and assessments.

Each individual expedition must be considered separately and on its own merits. The following examples are the suggested best practice for the situations described in basic terms. One Expedition Assessor will normally be able to safely and competently assess the following situations:

Example one: Four teams on Bronze walking routes in a similar environment with overlapping points, and in an area with excellent transport links, allowing the Expedition Assessor to visit each team easily.

Example two: Two Gold teams in wild country terrain during October with walking routes that are similar, accessible and involve no variations.

Example three: One Silver team cycling on Salisbury Plain. All the participants have additional needs and the greater distance covered when cycling means the travelling times for the Assessor are increased.

Example four: Three Silver teams in wild country during July, with experienced participants and walking routes that have sufficient overlap to provide enough meeting points to ensure good assessment.

Example five: One Gold team with a particularly complex walking route which includes remote camp sites in wild country terrain.

The examples above are to illustrate our general approach to deciding upon a suitable number of groups per Expedition Assessor. Use of other modes of travel will have an impact on the number of assessments that one Assessor can do. Licensed Organisations must err on the side of caution and seek advice from DofE offices if unsure.

February 2021