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# Five Steps to Completing Your Expedition Section

## Expedition section aim:

To inspire young people to develop initiative and a spirit of adventure and discovery by planning, training for and completing an adventurous self-sufficient journey as part of a team. Participants choose where and how they want to do their expedition.

## Expedition section principles:

- Participation in shared experiences in the outdoor environment can develop initiative, teamwork, communication, leadership, problem-solving and organisational skills.
- Experiencing and overcoming challenges together develops emotional strength and empathy for others.
- Working with a team of peers in the outdoors, experiencing isolation and solitude, develops self-reliance and self-confidence.

## Expedition section outcomes:

Through participation in an expedition, young people:

1. Gain an appreciation of and respect for the outdoor environment.
2. Learn the value of sharing responsibility for success, through leadership, teamwork, self-reliance, and co-operation.
3. Learn the importance of attention to detail and organisational ability.
4. Develop and demonstrate enterprise and imagination.
5. Become more self-reliant.
6. Become more able to overcome both expected and unexpected challenges.
7. Recognise the needs and strengths of themselves and others.
8. Improve decision-making skills and the ability to accept consequences.
9. Gain the skills to reflect on personal performance.
10. Learn to manage risk.
11. Learn through experience.
12. Develop perseverance and determination.



## What is involved?

The Expedition section involves planning, training for and completing an unaccompanied, self-reliant expedition with an agreed team goal.

The choice of team goal will inform how participants complete the journeying element of their expedition.

Journeying	Investigating the team goal
Participants travelling over a physical distance e.g., walking, wheeling, paddling.	Participants researching an area of mutual interest e.g., local flora and fauna.
Participants completing a series of team challenges that involve navigational skills and physical movement e.g., scavenger hunts.	Participants creating or contributing to a community action project e.g., developing a local nature trail or a report on how to improve accessibility in the area.
Participants using gym equipment such as treadmills, bikes, or rowing machines	Participants developing soft and hard skills e.g., improving leadership skills or filming a promotional video for the next DofE cohort.

## 1. PREPARATION

First, participants should decide on their expedition team. There must be between four and seven young people in a team (eight for modes of travel which can be used by two people at once e.g., tandem bikes, open canoes). Participants must be within the qualifying age of the programme level and at the same Award

level i.e., not have completed the same or higher level of expedition.

Members of the team should have a similar level of experience and ability. The DofE is open to all, and every participant will have different strengths and weaknesses so the planning should take this into account.

With teams in place, young people need to decide on the nature of the expedition



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that they wish to do. They must first consider what they want their team goal to be, then the location and how they will complete their journey.

The team goal should relate to the interests and abilities of those taking part and the area they will be exploring. This is the key to any expedition's success. Without it, they can't plan an effective, challenging expedition with a clear outcome. At Bronze level only, the team goal can be set by the Leader.

Once the team goal is set, it will guide their choice of an appropriate environment in which to do their expedition. The environment could be rural or urban and, where appropriate, may include time spent at a fixed site.

Finally, working with you and/or their Supervisor, the team should choose how they will complete their journey. This should be suitable for the team goal and location, something they have the skills to do (or will learn to do) and that they will find enjoyable. Participants should plan to spend at least 50% of the planned activity time journeying. Participants should then spend the remaining planned activity time (up to 50%) investigating the team goal.

The team must plan and organise the expedition; all members of the team

should be able to describe the role they played in planning.

## **2. TRAINING TO DEVELOP KNOWLEDGE**

Safety is paramount when it comes to the expedition. Therefore, it is essential that participants do expedition skills training.

Training should be appropriate to the team goal, location and journey type and may cover:

- First aid and emergency procedures.
- An awareness of risk, hazard perception and health and safety issues.
- Responsibility towards their team members, Leaders, the public and animals.
- Navigation and route planning, appropriate to the choice of location e.g., 1:25,000 or 1:50,000 OS maps, orienteering maps, street maps and mapping software.
- Campcraft and booking suitable campsites/basic self-catered accommodation.
- Equipment.
- Food, cooking and hygiene.



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- Countryside, Highway and Water Sports Codes.
- Observation and recording.
- Team building.
- Budgeting.
- Proficiency in the journey type.
- Mobile phone/electronic equipment usage.

### **3. PRACTICE EXPEDITION**

The practice expedition(s) must replicate as closely as possible the conditions of the actual expedition. This includes equivalent daily hours of journeying, journey type, accommodation, and terrain.

Participants must be adequately trained to safely do a remotely supervised expedition in the environment in which they will be operating. Practice expeditions are a requirement at Silver and Gold levels.

- Bronze – Teams must complete the required training.
- Silver – Teams must complete the required training and a practice expedition of a minimum of two days and two nights.
- Gold – Teams must complete the required training and a practice

expedition of a minimum two days and two nights.

Participants must plan to spend at least 50% of the planned activity time journeying. Participants should then spend the remaining planned activity time (up to 50%) investigating the team goal.

The practice expedition must also include sufficient experience of being unaccompanied and remotely supervised so the Supervisor can confidently sign off the participants' ability to do an unaccompanied qualifying expedition. All expeditions must be supervised by an adult (the Expedition Supervisor) who is able to accept responsibility for the safety of the team.

The Supervisor must be satisfied before the start of the qualifying expedition that the participants have the expedition skills and fitness levels appropriate for the qualifying expedition they are about to do.

### **4. QUALIFYING EXPEDITION AND DEBRIEF**

The team should plan how they will spend their time to complete their expedition and meet the team goal.



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Participants must complete the minimum hours of planned activity on their qualifying expedition:

- Bronze – two days and one night; six hours of planned activity each day.
- Silver – three days and two nights; seven hours of planned activity each day.
- Gold – four days and three nights; eight hours of planned activity each day.

Participants must plan to spend at least 50% of the planned activity time journeying. Participants should then spend the remaining planned activity time (up to 50%) investigating the team goal.

It is crucial that the journey type, including distance and speed, and the activities participants do to investigate their team goal are determined by the team to meet their individual needs. Experienced DofE Leaders and Supervisors will enable young people to choose a sufficiently challenging combination of journeying and investigating their team goal. This should be based on their experiences during practice expeditions in a similar environment.

All expeditions must be unaccompanied and self-sufficient. The team must be properly equipped, and supervision must be carried out remotely. Again, all expeditions must be supervised by an

adult (the Expedition Supervisor) who is able to accept responsibility for the safety of the team. Assessment must be by an Accredited Assessor. At Bronze level only, the Assessor may also be the Expedition Supervisor.

Where appropriate, practice and qualifying expeditions may be completed back-to-back.

It's worth bearing in mind factors such as age, level, amount of training and mode of travel before committing to a back-to-back expedition. DofE leaders and participants are best placed to decide on the length of the gap between the practice and qualifying expeditions.

## **RECOMMENDED ENVIRONMENTS**

The team goal will guide their choice of an appropriate environment in which to do their expedition. The environment could be rural or urban and, where appropriate, may include time spent at a fixed site (restricted space). The environment should become progressively more challenging as participants progress through the levels. At Gold level, the leader should consider the expedition the group completed at Bronze and Silver or their level of experience and training and decide how to increase this challenge at



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Gold. Most Gold level expeditions will be remotely supervised in remote and unfamiliar outdoor environments to demonstrate the progressive challenge between levels. Expeditions can be made more challenging by choosing a location that is unfamiliar, more remote, and more challenging to navigate in. If choosing to run an expedition in a restricted space, leaders should consider how their planned activity can be progressively more challenging at each level.

Examples of progressive challenges across expedition environments could include:

- Increasing knowledge.
- Developing new skills.
- Increasing physical challenge.
- More challenging navigation.
- Less familiar environments.
- Increasing journeying time.
- Increasing independence.
- Increasing remoteness.
- Increasing leadership opportunities.

## **EQUIPMENT**

Teams should carry all their equipment and food to enable them to operate in a self-sufficient way. Participants should

only carry the equipment and resources that they need. For example, if participants are not camping then they do not need to carry a tent.

Participants should wear suitable comfortable clothing for extended periods in their chosen environment.

## **FOOD**

Participants must plan an appropriate menu, including cooking and eating a substantial hot meal each day. This is optional on the final day.

## **ACCOMMODATION**

The route should be a continuous journey and participants should stop at different locations each night. Accommodation may be used more than once when necessary to meet their team goal.

Overnight accommodation can include camping or other simple self-catering accommodation e.g., camping barns, village halls or bunkhouses.

It may be necessary for some participants to return home to sleep each night, due to specific needs which may otherwise stop them from taking part in an expedition



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LIMITS**

altogether. Participants should still plan and cook their meals as a team and take part in any evening activities before returning home to sleep.

## **5. ASSESSMENT AND EVIDENCE**

Qualifying expeditions must be assessed by an Accredited Assessor. During the expedition, the Assessor will meet with the team at various times to check on progress. Assessors may be known to the group at all levels.

Whilst the team will be excited and very tired, make sure the Assessor conducts a full debrief immediately after the

expedition is completed (on the final day). During this meeting, everyone in the team should participate in reviewing the outcomes of the expedition.

Following the qualifying expedition and debrief, the Assessor provides a report that participants can use in eDofE.

At Silver and Gold level, participants then deliver a report to their chosen adult to complete the section. It is entirely up to the team how their report is delivered – it could be in any format. This should be decided on in advance of the expedition and can be completed as a team or as individuals. With your agreement, they can choose who they want to deliver it to. It could be you, their Supervisor, their Assessor, or another suitable adult.