



EXPEDITION GUIDE



**YOUTH
WITHOUT
LIMITS**

DofE.org

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1. THE EXPEDITION SECTION

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1.1 Principles, benefits and aims

Expedition section principles, outcomes, aims and requirements

First and foremost, the Expedition section is about developing teamwork. In this way it is very different from the fitness challenges of the Physical section, the technical learning of the Skills section and the support for others in the Volunteering section.

However, the Expedition section draws on all these abilities and, coupled with the location and concentrated time of the challenge, it often becomes the most memorable section and proudest achievement of a young person's DofE experience.

The Expedition section is an adventurous journey of discovery, both in terms of the outdoor environment and personal and team development.

It is one of the few opportunities young people get to really separate and isolate themselves from their daily lives and modern mass media and communications.

Teams have to truly rely on themselves. Often the Expedition section creates friendships and bonds which last many years.

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.

Outcomes

DofE Leaders, Supervisors, expedition support staff, volunteers and Assessors need to support and facilitate an opportunity where, through participation in an expedition, young people:

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

The aim of the Expedition section

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.





1.2 Expedition Requirements

The DofE Expedition Requirements are the criteria that every expedition team must meet in order to complete the Expedition section. They cover aspects such as planning, environment,

assessment, duration and behaviour and form the structure of all DofE expeditions. Some requirements vary slightly depending on the level of the Award (Bronze, Silver or Gold).

Before an expedition

DofE Supervisors/Assessors must ensure the appropriate parameters are in place:

- ▶ All 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).
- ▶ There must be between four and seven participants in a team (eight for modes of travel which have tandem).
- ▶ The expedition must be of the correct duration and meet the minimum hours of planned activity.

BRONZE A minimum of:

**2 days, 1 night;
6 hours**

of planned activity each day.

SILVER A minimum of:

**3 days, 2 nights;
7 hours**

of planned activity each day.

GOLD A minimum of:

**4 days, 3 nights;
8 hours**

of planned activity each day.

- ▶ 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.
- ▶ Participants must be adequately trained to safely complete an expedition in the environment in which they will be operating.

BRONZE

Teams must complete the required training.

SILVER

Teams must complete the required training and a practice expedition of a minimum of:

2 days, 2 nights

GOLD

Teams must complete the required training and a practice expedition of a minimum of:

2 days, 2 nights





Expedition Requirements continued

Planning an expedition

Participants must plan how they're going to do their expedition:

Team goal Expeditions must have a clearly defined team goal – this could be researching an area of interest, contributing to a community action project or developing soft skills.

Environment The environment chosen must become progressively more challenging through the Award levels – environments could include rural, urban or restricted spaces.

Accommodation Accommodation should be by camping or other simple self-catering accommodation e.g. bunkhouses.

Time of year Expeditions will usually take place between the end of March and the end of October. There should be a reasonable gap between the practice and qualifying expeditions.

Mode of travel Participants must choose an appropriate mode of travel for the environment they'll be journeying through. Journeying must be by participants' own physical effort, although mobility aids may be used where appropriate to the needs of the participant.

Food Participants must plan an appropriate expedition menu, including cooking and eating a substantial hot meal each day (optional on the final day).

On expedition

Supervisors/Assessors should ensure:

-
- ▶ Participants must behave responsibly with respect for their team members, Leaders, landowners, the public and animals, and must understand and adhere to the Countryside/ Scottish Outdoor Access, Highway and Water Sports Codes (as appropriate).

 - ▶ Expeditions must be unaccompanied and self-sufficient. The team must be properly equipped, and supervision must be carried out remotely, considering what is reasonably practicable for participants and ensuring their welfare is paramount.

 - ▶ Participants must actively participate in a debrief with their Assessor at the end of the expedition and, at Silver and Gold level, a presentation must be delivered after the expedition.





1.3 The Expedition section process

Below is an overview of the steps involved for a young person to complete their Expedition section.

1. Team



Participants form a team of between four and seven – eight for modes of travel which have tandem.

2. Team goal and mode of travel



The team will agree their team goal and from that their mode of travel. At this stage participants will often decide on likely expedition environments to help direct their training and practice expeditions (as required).

3. Training



Participants will complete the Expedition Training Framework, mode of travel training and any other training required by the Supervisor (representing the Licensed Organisation or Approved Activity Provider) to be signed off as competent to undertake their expedition successfully and safely. Participants will also begin physical and fitness training appropriate for their expedition.

4. Paperwork



Before undertaking expeditions, participants will need to complete the necessary notification paper work required by their Licensed Organisation or Approved Activity Provider. Participants considering undertaking expeditions outside of the UK should have this in hand at this stage.

5. Practice expeditions



At Silver and Gold level, participants must undertake sufficient practice expeditions to enable them to travel safely and complete their qualifying expedition. Practice expeditions will be followed by reflection and additional training to fully prepare participants for their qualifying expedition.

6. Planning and preparation



The team will ensure they have everything in place for their qualifying expedition including notification, approvals, access, project investigation techniques and presentation.



1. The Expedition section



Expedition section process continued

7. Supervisor's pre-expedition check



The Expedition Supervisor will conduct a check on all the equipment that the team will need and use during their expedition, ensuring it is fit for purpose.

8. First contact and Assessor's pre-expedition check

The Accredited Assessor will discuss the proposed route with the team, provide any local information that may be helpful and, once agreed, approve the route. The Assessor will meet the team in the expedition area either the day before or on the morning of the expedition. The Assessor will ask the team to confirm their training, chat through their expedition and agree their contract.

The supporting adults and DofE team(s) will all review and agree expedition policies, the supervision plan and emergency procedures.

9. Expeditions Requirements



Once fully prepared the team will undertake their expedition, which will be remotely supervised and observed by their DofE Accredited Assessor. The Supervisor and Assessor will meet the team from time to time, keeping intrusion to a minimum, ensuring the team's safety and that the Expeditions Requirements are being met.

10. Debrief



At the end of the expedition the Assessor will conduct an oral debrief with the team. This is an opportunity to congratulate the team and help them to review their expedition.

11. Presentation



At some point after the expedition, all participants completing a Silver or Gold level expedition will deliver a presentation, in any medium, of their expedition which covers their team goal, experiences and outcomes.

12. Assessment



The Accredited Assessor should provide their report for eDofE following the qualifying expedition and presentation.





1.4 Team building and leadership

Team building and leadership

Developing good personal relationships is an essential part of the process and it takes time for teams to develop their own identity and style.

The DofE Leader/Supervisor should be able to recognise the abilities and strengths of all those involved in the expedition and help them to do the same with each other.

DofE Leaders, Supervisors and expedition support staff need to ensure that all participants have an opportunity to develop their leadership and teamwork skills. This cannot simply be left to the most assertive, dominant or loud character in the team.

To make this happen successfully:

- Delegate and rotate realistic opportunities to practise the roles of leadership and teamwork throughout the section
- Give opportunities to build up skills and confidence in leadership and teamwork over time
- Allow participants to review the processes and approaches to leadership themselves.

Leadership and teamwork theories

There are many theories of leadership and teamwork which DofE Leaders and Supervisors can draw upon to help train their team and develop their understanding and experience. These are easily available online or in team management books. For the purposes of DofE, an inclusive group decision making and democratic approach is most appropriate, both between participants and with expedition support staff and volunteers. However, authoritarian styles are not wrong and these can be appropriate in certain situations such as emergencies and where time is very limited.

Leadership and management

DofE Leaders and Supervisors are usually both a 'leader' of the Expedition section, inspiring, motivating and leading their DofE group and expedition teams, whilst also being a 'manager' to facilitate the trip, submit the required paperwork and manage the processes of the Expedition section.

To do this DofE Leaders and Supervisors should have these key skills to allow them to be both an effective leader and efficient manager. These key skills, listed below, should also be developed in DofE participants to help prepare them for their expedition:

- Develop technical competence to inspire confidence and respect in the team
- Develop practical experience over time and discuss with others to develop best practice
- Carefully plan and prepare for the entire Expedition section to build in the capacity to absorb issues, support people effectively and empower participants
- Communicate clearly and consider the audience while making sure other people understand what has been said and have the chance to contribute
- Have an awareness of the team, of the individual and of the environment. Consider the needs, concerns, and dangers for/in each
- Exercise good judgement to inspire trust and confidence in people, analysing and anticipating situations and working in a collaborative way for the best of the team.



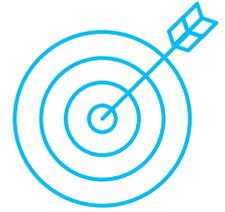


2. DELIVERING THE EXPEDITION SECTION



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2.1 Expedition roles

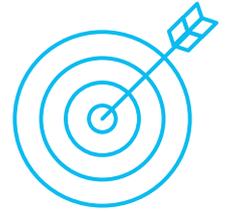
Each Licensed Organisation (LO) and centre will decide how best to manage the Expedition section for their participants. Within the Expedition section there is a considerable amount of interaction between the participants

and the adults who are supporting them. Within each centre and each LO or Approved Activity Provider (AAP) these descriptions may change slightly but the main roles to be considered are outlined in the following table.

ROLE	DESCRIPTION
DofE Expedition Supervisor	<p>A person who is responsible to the LO/AAP for the safety and welfare of young people whilst they are carrying out their DofE expedition. The Supervisor may also be the DofE Leader.</p> <p>It is the Supervisor who signs off the participant as ready to undertake their qualifying expedition.</p> <p>It is up to the LO or AAP to decide how many young people, split into expedition teams, a Supervisor is responsible for. Where there are multiple teams, there are often multiple Supervisors, each with designated young people/teams they are responsible for.</p>
DofE Expedition Assessor	<p>The accredited adult (through successful completion of the DofE's Assessor and Supervisor Pathway), linked to an LO or AAP, who checks on the expedition team's progress and agrees the young people's completion of the Expedition section against the Expedition Requirements, providing an Assessor's Report as evidence for eDofE.</p> <p>The LO or AAP's organisational policies will dictate what experience and technical qualifications the Assessor must have to perform the role.</p>
Expedition support staff	<p>On most DofE expeditions there are expedition support staff who are approved by the LO or AAP. These often include people with outdoor education training or experience and, if appropriate, experience in the relevant mode of travel. These individuals might be LO or AAP staff or volunteers. This may include an instructor who delivers the Expedition Training Framework to DofE participants.</p> <p>Expedition support staff can help their Supervisor, who is the lead adult responsible for designated young people/teams, to deliver an expedition safely, using remote supervision.</p> <p>At all times the LO or AAP ratio of Supervisors to teams must be followed.</p>



2. Delivering the Expedition section



Expedition roles continued

DofE Leader

The adult responsible for a DofE group. They lead, guide and encourage young people, agree their programme choices and sign off sectional activities in eDofE. The DofE Leader:

- ▶ Arranges for the expedition team to be trained in all of the required areas
- ▶ Supports the team with their expedition planning.

They may deliver some or all of the expedition training or delegate training to an appropriate person (an “instructor”), to ensure all participants are adequately trained. Full details about the role of the DofE Leader are set out in *The DofE Leaders’ Handbook*.

DofE Manager

The person who sets up and manages DofE in a LO, supporting Leaders and overseeing groups. The DofE Manager will:

- ▶ Ensure that all adults working with young people have been appropriately checked and approved
- ▶ Ensure that all necessary expedition paperwork has been appropriately submitted.

The DofE Manager may also be a DofE Leader or a Supervisor.

Management

It is usual for one person to have an overall view of the Expedition section, including the training programme, supporting adults and all the participants’ progress throughout the training process.

Most centres have a team of adults who share different aspects of the section, using their skills and experience to deliver DofE to as many young people as possible.

The DofE discourages individuals from taking on the whole of the sectional delivery themselves. As this is enormously time consuming, it usually limits the number of young people who can participate.

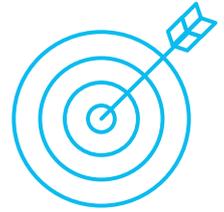
LOs and AAPs must ensure that all staff have appropriate qualifications, experience and competence to the level that they deem appropriate, for the safe and effective delivery of the DofE Expedition section.



More information on training is included in [chapter 4: Planning and training for expeditions](#)



2. Delivering the Expedition section



Expedition roles continued

Combined Supervisor and Assessor role

Bronze level expeditions have the option of one individual performing both the Expedition Supervisor and Expedition Assessor role. The role of the individual completing the combined Supervisor and Assessor role is to ensure the safety of participants whilst on an expedition and maintain the standards of DofE. This includes ensuring that the Expedition Requirements are met by the team.

The individual performing both roles must be a DofE Accredited Assessor and must also fulfil the LO's or AAP's requirements to supervise expeditions. They should be familiar with the key responsibilities of both roles and ensure they are able to complete them effectively without affecting the overall experience or safety of the participants.

At Silver and Gold, separate people must perform the Expedition Supervisor and Expedition Assessor roles. These expeditions usually take place in more challenging terrain so this ensures that both the Assessor and the Supervisor have sufficient time to carry out their role appropriately. The approach also reflects the progressive nature of Silver and Gold expeditions compared to Bronze.



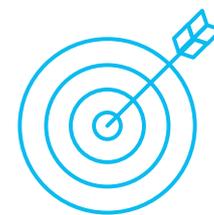
For more information on the roles of the Supervisor and Assessor see [chapter 2.4: Supervising DofE expeditions](#) and [chapter 2.5: Assessing DofE expeditions](#)

Parents, guardians and carers

It is essential that parents, guardians and carers be told what a DofE Expedition entails. They need to understand what their young person will be doing and the steps taken to ensure their safety, welfare and enjoyment. This is particularly important for adults acting 'in loco parentis'.

Parents, guardians and carers have a responsibility to keep DofE Leaders and Supervisors informed of any illness, treatment or condition which may have an impact on a participant's participation in a particular activity. Direct communication with the DofE Leader is recommended.





2.2 Organisations within the Expedition section

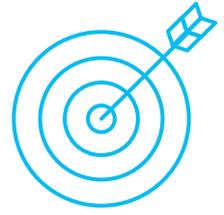
DofE Leaders, Supervisors, Co-ordinators, expedition support staff and Assessors may all interact with the following organisations:

ROLE	DESCRIPTION
Licensed Organisation (LO)	<p>An organisation licensed to manage the delivery of DofE programmes and authorise Awards for participants whose eDofE accounts are registered with that organisation. The Licensed Organisation (LO) will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Provide policies on safeguarding, health and safety, emergencies and the supervision of expeditions ▶ Provide public liability insurance for participants and Supervisors whilst on expeditions ▶ Approve Supervisors and Assessors.
The charity	<p>The DofE charity defines and manages overall DofE policy and central administration. The DofE charity defines the programme and requirements for the Expedition section.</p>
Approved Activity Providers (AAPs)	<p>The Duke of Edinburgh’s Award licenses external organisations that provide opportunities for participants to undertake activities for sections of their DofE. These opportunities have been proven to meet our requirements and so can count towards the achievement of an Award. We call these partners Approved Activity Providers (AAPs).</p> <p>They can be commercial organisations or charities and are usually able to provide a section in its entirety, including accredited assessment and providing Assessor reports on eDofE. DofE Leaders can confidently recommend AAPs to their participants. Organisations wishing to deliver the Expedition section on behalf of a LO must be an AAP.</p> <p>The AAP licence is a quality standard on an organisation’s activity, meeting the programme and sectional requirements of DofE. Please note that the AAP licence does not guarantee the suitability of an AAP in terms of specialisms, health and safety or its financial stability. LOs using AAPs will have their own process for checking the suitability of AAP programmes in terms of health and safety requirements for their young people and they have the final say on the appropriateness of a course in this respect. AAPs who deliver the Expedition section must still meet all of the requirements of the LO, with regards to notifications and qualifications. Participants/parents/carers booking on to activities facilitated by AAPs are responsible for evaluating the policies/procedures and suitability of the provider.</p> <p>Any organisation or individual who is not a part of the LO and who wishes to deliver the Expedition section as the Supervisor is required by the DofE to be an AAP.</p> <p>A list of current AAPs is set out at DofE.org/AAP together with details of how organisations can apply for this status.</p>



2. Delivering the Expedition section

Organisations within the Expedition section continued



Approved Activity Providers (AAPs)

You can use an AAP to:

- **Run the whole expedition from start to finish** – the AAP will take full responsibility for the programme, including supervision, logistics, the role of Expedition Supervisor, and full pastoral care. The LO still retains key responsibilities. These include passing on information to parents and participants, collecting medical and consent forms, managing payments, and completing notification paperwork.

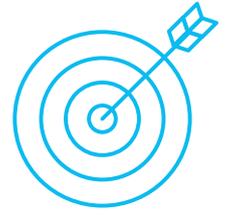
Even in this arrangement, the LO maintains a duty of care. Before proceeding, they must ensure the provider has robust plans for participant welfare, incident management, and clear communication. The pastoral care duties and detailed knowledge of participants cannot easily be transferred to a provider without significant preparation and long-term relationship building.

- **Run part of the expedition programme** – a good option if you are able to deliver the training programme, for example, but don't have enough staff to cover the expeditions
- **Run the expedition for part of a school cohort** – this is useful if you are only able to accommodate a limited number of participants on your expedition programme, as the AAP can work with all the other participants who want to take part in their DofE. You will need to find a fair way to decide which participants work directly with you and which ones go with the AAP.

Whenever an AAP is used, they must still meet all the requirements of your LO regarding leader ratios and qualifications. All the normal approval processes must still be met. These are normally completed by the LO with input from the AAP e.g. AAP staff names and qualifications. Participants/parents/carers booking on to activities facilitated by AAPs are responsible for evaluating the policies/procedures and suitability of the provider.

You do not need to use an AAP if you are able to take full responsibility for an expedition, including having at least some suitably qualified leaders. In this case you may contract in some extra leaders or Assessors, but the LO must take full responsibility for these individuals for the duration of the expedition, including safeguarding checks and checks on technical competence. The expedition will be run under the insurance held by the LO and must meet all their requirements for staffing.





2.3 Open expeditions

Open expeditions are DofE expeditions made available to all DofE participants, to join as an individual, and are run at all levels and in all modes of travel.

Approved Activity Providers (AAPs) offer a range of open expeditions in many different modes of travel and in many different countries around the world.

A range of opportunities for open expeditions are advertised on [DofE.org/opportunity-finder](https://www.dofe.org/opportunity-finder).

Here, participants book onto the open expedition as individuals and not through their DofE centre or Licensed Organisation (LO). In these cases a private contract has been agreed between the participant/parent/guardian and the AAP.

The AAP and Supervisor will take on full responsibility for the young people during their expedition and will have in place robust and complete policies and procedures required under UK law and that reflect best practice. AAPs will also ensure that appropriate and adequate insurance cover is in place for all their expeditions.

For qualifying expeditions, the AAP will take on the full responsibility of the delivery of this part of this section including route planning, presentations and writing of the assessor report.

Participants preparing for an open expedition

It is important for participants to understand what kind of open expedition it is before joining.

- Some will be expeditions with a project focus whereas others may be very physically demanding
- Participants should consider the type of area, local climate and time of year when making a decision on which expedition to choose

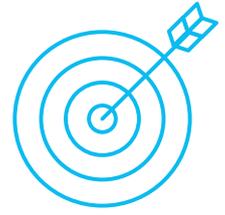
- Participants need to understand that open expeditions require them to get along with people they don't know, so an open mind and willingness to get stuck in is essential
- Participants need to have the appropriate expedition equipment, level of training and practice expedition experience for the open expedition they are undertaking
- Participants will need to provide evidence to the Supervisor in advance of the training and practices (if any) they have completed, and when they did them
- Participants must inform the Supervisor of any medical condition(s) which may affect their performance or supervision needs
- Information about old injuries and dietary requirements will also need to be provided in advance in the medical and consent forms.

All open expeditions will have at least one day, probably several days at Gold level, of preparation, planning and training. This allows the Supervisor to evaluate the participants' expedition skills, equipment, competence and fitness and the group to prepare their route and route cards.

Some participants have to complete all of their Expedition section through open expeditions, in which case they must make it clear to the Supervisor what prior training they have completed.

Not all open expeditions include specific training days, so participants should check in advance that they are on the right open expedition for their situation. It may be necessary for participants to complete a one day first aid course before going on the open expedition. They may also need to link with another local group to complete some training or short practice expeditions to gain or refresh skills.





2.4 Supervising DofE expeditions

The role of the Supervisor

The role of the DofE Expedition Supervisor is a crucial one, both in ensuring the safety of the participants whilst on an expedition and in maintaining the standards of DofE.

Supervisors must have a sound knowledge of the DofE Expedition section and the Expedition Training Framework.

Where expeditions are taking place using modes of transport other than on foot, then Supervisors must be aware of the DofE guidance for that mode of travel.

Note that it is up to the Licensed Organisation (LO) or Approved Activity Provider (AAP) to decide how many young people, split into expedition teams, a Supervisor is responsible for. Where there are multiple teams, there are often multiple Supervisors, each with designated young people/teams they are responsible for.

There are usually expedition support staff, who are approved by the LO or AAP, who help their Supervisor to deliver an expedition safely using remote supervision.



For more information on expedition safety, first aid and emergency procedures see [chapter 6: Expedition safety](#)

Who can supervise?

Each LO/AAP has the responsibility for ensuring that those who supervise expeditions are appropriately trained and qualified. Each LO/AAP will have their own requirements for the approval of Supervisors.

For Bronze level expeditions only, the Supervisor can also be the Assessor (if accredited through The Duke of Edinburgh's Award).

For overseas expeditions at all Award levels, it is acceptable for the Supervisor to also take on the role of Assessor, if they are accredited by the DofE. Support staff, such as teachers or volunteers, may manage the pastoral care of the team – but the cost of taking an additional person to be the Assessor can be prohibitive, so there is some flexibility in these instances.

Registering with a LO/AAP

Every LO/AAP will have a register of those people who are approved to supervise DofE expeditions. Anyone wishing to become a Supervisor must contact their LO/AAP to find out the requirements. Supervisors must register with each LO/AAP they intend to supervise for.

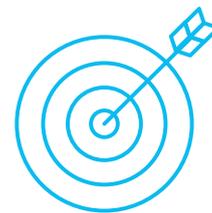
Some LOs/AAPs will require Supervisors to have national governing body qualifications, while others will have arrangements for an internal verification system. The DofE suggests Supervisors obtain national governing body qualifications where possible, as these are transferable to other LOs/AAPs.

LOs/AAPs will also require Supervisors to hold a valid and relevant first aid certificate and to have undertaken the relevant safeguarding checks.

Supervisors must understand the operating procedures of their LO/AAP including the notification and emergency procedures. Failure to follow these requirements may have serious legal consequences.



2. Delivering the Expedition section



Supervising DofE expeditions continued

The role of the Supervisor:

- Ensures that the teams are properly equipped to do their expedition
- Has the legal responsibility for the safety and welfare of young people on their practice and qualifying expeditions
- Ensures that all appropriate expedition approvals have been received
- Is the focal point for communication before, during and after the expedition, keeping everyone informed
- Ensures that all training and practice expeditions have been completed and properly evidenced in eDofE, confirming that participants are fully prepared for a remotely supervised expedition with the skills and confidence to operate safely and independently.
- Ensures that the Expedition Assessor has provided appropriate evidence in eDofE confirming the successful completion of the qualifying expedition.
- Ensures that the team's expedition will meet the Expedition Requirements
- Is responsible for the supervision plan and for co-ordinating other expedition support staff.
- Carries out a risk assessment of the route and the expedition.

To do this the Supervisor must be:

1. Appointed and approved by the LO/AAP.
2. Familiar with the aims, principles and Expedition Requirements.
3. Experienced and competent in the appropriate mode of travel.

It is the role of the LO/AAP to ensure that anyone appointed as an Expedition Supervisor has the correct range and balance of hard, soft and supervision skills. Your LO's policies should

include information about the technical skills and experiences that are required to supervise an expedition.

Supervision skills Knowledge of Expedition section, planning skills, understanding of remote supervision, knowledge of LO procedures.

Hard skills Navigation, campcraft, mode of travel skills, experience, qualifications.

Soft skills Listening skills, empathy, communication, understanding, leadership, teambuilding, interaction, inter-personal skills.

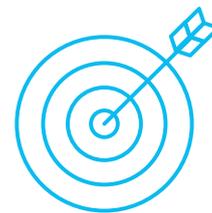
The Supervisor's tasks during the expedition process

Training

- DofE participants must complete the DofE Expedition Training Framework and, if walking is not the chosen method of travel, then the additional training framework for that mode of travel should be completed. Full information can be found in [chapter 4](#)
- The training can be delivered by the DofE Leader, LO staff, volunteers, AAPs or the Supervisor
- Training should only be provided by those who have the necessary skills and experience and are approved by the LO
- It is crucial they understand the principles of remote supervision and the expectations placed upon them (see [page 22](#)).



2. Delivering the Expedition section



Supervising DofE expeditions continued

Preparation

- Check route cards and outlines
- Undertake a team and route specific risk assessment
- Check the accident and emergency procedures for their LO/AAP and gather all relevant safety information
- For qualifying expeditions, make arrangements for a team meeting with the Assessor just before the expedition for the Assessor's pre-expedition check.

Verify training

- Verify that the team have all been trained appropriately
- Carry out a pre-expedition check and ensure that all of the team are properly prepared and have the correct equipment for their expedition
- Know the accident and emergency procedures for their LO/AAP. Participants should be briefed on what to do in various emergency scenarios, and supervisors should be prepared to respond quickly and effectively
- Collect all relevant safety information including medical and consent forms with any alterations.

On expedition

- Carry out the agreed flexible supervision plan. Undertake an ongoing, dynamic risk assessment
- Respond to hazards by changing the supervision plan, where necessary
- Be responsible for communications and keep everyone informed of any changes
- All relevant safety information must be carried by Supervisors. This includes the

names, addresses and emergency contact numbers for all participants, the Assessor, the home contact, and a nominated person in the LO.

In addition, for remotely supervised training walks or practice expeditions

- Check on the team as required
- Where necessary intervene to provide additional training. Decide if further training or practices are required
- Confirm the competence of the team to move on to the qualifying expedition and provide evidence for eDofE
- Debrief the team and decide on any further training needs.

In addition, for qualifying expeditions

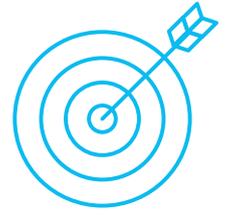
- Check the Assessor's accreditation and its expiry date
- Check the team at least once a day or as the needs of safety make necessary. Attend the Assessor's debriefing, if invited by the team
- Receive the expedition presentation if requested by the team or check on its progress if it is to be received by someone else.

Assessment

- Ensure that the Assessor has provided evidence of the completion of the qualifying expedition
- Review the supervision plan as part of the expedition review and note any learning for next time
- Report any near misses/incidents/accidents to the LO/AAP.



2. Delivering the Expedition section



Supervising DofE expeditions continued

Carrying out a pre-expedition check

The Supervisor's pre-expedition check is intended to prevent participants travelling to an expedition area only to find that their equipment or training is inadequate.

It should take place at the team's home base, normally between seven and 10 days before departure for the expedition, to enable teams to bring all their equipment together but still have time to make any necessary changes.

This check, near the end of the expedition preparation process, is completed by the Supervisor and can be attended by the Assessor.

Levels of supervision

The way in which an expedition is supervised will have a substantial effect on the outcomes for the young people involved.

The key is always to use the minimum level of supervision possible whilst still ensuring the participants' safety. Supervisors must always be able to deal with team emergencies.

'Over-supervising' expedition teams is a common mistake made by inexperienced Supervisors or those who are not confident in the team's ability. This can frustrate participants who feel they are being constantly watched and could lead to them questioning their own abilities.

The three levels of supervision:

1. Direct

- Where the Supervisor is in direct contact with the team and is accompanying them
- Used for training expeditions and journeys
- Used for certain parts of practice expeditions

- It may also be appropriate at a particularly hazardous section on a qualifying expedition, such as a dangerous rapid or crossing a railway line.

2. Close

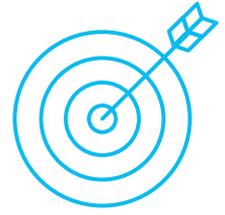
- Where the Supervisor is close enough to intervene if necessary, in order to offer support and guidance and/or to stop mistakes from being made
- Teams are usually aware of the Supervisor's presence and are normally in visual or hearing contact at all times
- Close supervision may be appropriate for the first part of a practice expedition, for some young people with additional needs, or for identified hazards at a particular point on a route.

3. Remote

- Remote supervision involves monitoring participants from a distance, allowing them to navigate and make decisions independently while still under the supervisors' observation. This approach is designed to foster a sense of adventure and self-sufficiency among young people on their expedition, as they must travel along their routes, manage their time, and solve problems without immediate adult intervention. Remote supervision still means supervision – staff must be positioned so that they can monitor participants appropriately and provide assistance quickly
- The Supervisor should know where a team are and how they are progressing. GPS devices and other tracking tools can help Supervisors monitor the group's progress without being physically present. However, these should only be used as an additional tool and not as a sole means of remote supervision. More information on the use of technology can be found in [chapter 4](#).



2. Delivering the Expedition section



Supervising DofE expeditions continued

Ensuring the appropriate level of supervision on qualifying expeditions

All qualifying expeditions must be unaccompanied and self-sufficient. The team must be properly equipped, and supervision must be carried out remotely, considering what is reasonably practicable for participants and ensuring their welfare is paramount. Remote supervision on DofE expeditions strikes a delicate balance between fostering independence and ensuring safety.

The Supervisor must be satisfied that participants are capable of undertaking the planned expedition. Contact with adults should be kept to a minimum.

It is important to remember that all DofE expedition teams have undertaken a rigorous training programme. By the time the qualifying expedition takes place, all of the training and practices (as required) will have been completed, ensuring all the participants are competent and capable.

At this point it is time to stand back and let them get on with it. Remember that the greatest amount of learning will probably come from the difficulties that the team encounter. If the Supervisor is too quick to smooth the difficulties teams encounter then little learning will take place.

If the team does not have the necessary training and skills to operate safely in an area or environment for the duration of the expedition, then they should not be there and the expedition will be deferred.

Supervisors may supervise teams more closely for short periods of an expedition when travelling through potentially hazardous environments. This must be kept to an absolute minimum and used to allow a team to overcome an unavoidable hazardous area in their expedition route.

Remote supervision at camp sites

Remote supervision applies to evenings and nights as much as daylight hours. If Supervisors are on the same camp site then they should camp as far away from the participants as they can and have as little interaction as possible.

At Gold level it should not be necessary for any Supervisor to be present on the same camp site as participants overnight. Participants must be trained to this standard.

If the only camp site available insists on the Supervisor's presence or the participants have additional needs, Supervisors may use the same camp site following the advice above.

At Gold level it is unacceptable to use low levels of training or poor behaviour as a reason for using the same camp site as participants.

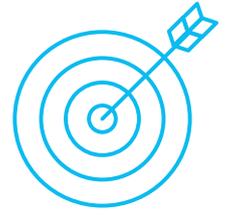
Self-sufficiency

It is essential that expeditions are designed to be self-sufficient. This means participants must carry all necessary equipment and food, and be capable of navigating, managing time, and responding to challenges without intervention. Supervisors should ensure that teams are trained in essential skills such as navigation, emergency response, and decision-making. Clear expectations around self-sufficiency should be communicated during pre-expedition briefings and reinforced through training and practice.



For more information on flexibilities that could be applied to the level of supervision to align with the specific needs of the group, see [chapter 8.2: Expedition Requirements – inclusive practice](#)





Supervising DofE expeditions continued

Supervision planning

Every Supervisor should have a supervision plan for every team that they supervise.

A good supervision plan relies on the Supervisor being knowledgeable about the planned route and surrounding area, including terrain, access points, and potential hazards. This local understanding enables them to make informed decisions, anticipate challenges, and provide timely support to their team.

A supervision plan is:

- An informal, written plan to empower the Supervisor with the strategy and confidence to successfully fulfil their role
- Essential to ensure the team enjoys a safe and successful expedition.

Supervision planning is about being pro-active and having a plan, rather than just reacting if something goes wrong. Supervisors are responsible for the behaviour of their teams at all times, even when they are not directly supervising them. They must all be aware of their responsibility to maintaining the good reputation of the DofE.

A good supervision plan should consider the:

- Planned route and any possible alternative routes
- Expedition environment
- Planned mode of travel
- Expedition team.

The supervision plan should assess the potential risks of an expedition in terms of:

- Specific hazards along the route
- The mode of travel
- The expedition environment
- Weather conditions

- Camp sites
- Team dynamics and leadership.

The supervision plan should define the Supervisor's proposed:

- Levels of supervision during the expedition
- Meeting points
- Route that will be taken between these meeting points
- Alternative plans
- Communication plan
- LO/AAP's emergency procedures
- Contingency plans for if team numbers change whilst on expedition.

Consider the environmental impact by:

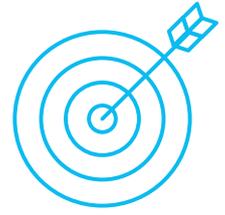
- Referring to the DofE Environmental Impact Policy (see [page 105](#))
- Ensuring that the impact is kept to a minimum
- Ensuring that a positive image of DofE is presented to local people.
- This will include:
 - Removing all litter
 - Parking sensibly and never blocking entrances, gates or rights of way
 - Reducing noise
 - Using footpaths correctly
 - Correctly using local facilities
 - Following the Countryside Code
 - Giving a bit back to the local community.

The supervision plan should be flexible enough to cope with:

- Teams moving ahead or behind schedule
- Changes to the expedition route taken
- Changes in weather conditions
- Emergency situations
- External factors such as road closures, traffic congestion or accidents.



2. Delivering the Expedition section



Supervising DofE expeditions continued

Equipment for the Supervisor

It is helpful for the Supervisor to carry the following with them:

Essential paperwork

- Copies of route cards and tracings for each group
- Copies of health/permission/contact forms as required by the LO/AAP
- Any plans relating to young person's care plan and medication schedule information
- LO/AAP emergency contact details
- Camp site details
- Phone numbers of all staff and Assessors, as well as a back-up landline number.

Essential equipment

- Waterproofs and warm clothing
- Food
- Water (and some spare for the team)
- Flask
- Shelter
- Comprehensive first aid kit
- Mobile phone and loose change/phone card
- Notebook and pen
- Map, compass and any other navigational aids
- Torch and whistle.

Optional equipment

- Binoculars
- Survival bag
- Sit mat
- Repair kit
- Reading book
- Sweets
- Camera
- Walking pole.

Supervising expeditions in restricted spaces

It may be that many of the activities undertaken in an expedition in a restricted space won't require particular qualifications to supervise, but the key, as with a traditional expedition, is that supervision should be remote. Teams must feel that they need to work it out for themselves, and that an adult won't step in the minute that things don't go to plan. It can be very tempting in a restricted space to get involved as soon as things seem to be faltering and offer support and guidance, but this doesn't provide teams the opportunity to work it out for themselves.

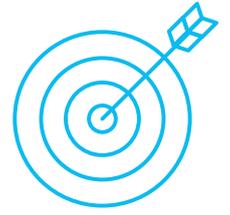
Activities such as cooking should be supervised in accordance with the organisation's normal policies. Rather than having checkpoint meetings with a team as you would with a 'traditional' expedition, think about how you can use your interactions with the team to help draw out the learning that has taken place during activities, and how this can be used to support the team to improve their performance.

Leaving all of the debriefing until the end of the last day would be too long and wouldn't allow teams to grow and develop – so instead you should debrief with the group each day and understand what the successes and challenges were that day.



For more information on expeditions in a restricted space see [**chapter 3.3: Expeditions in a restricted space**](#)





2.5 Assessing DofE expeditions

The role of the Assessor

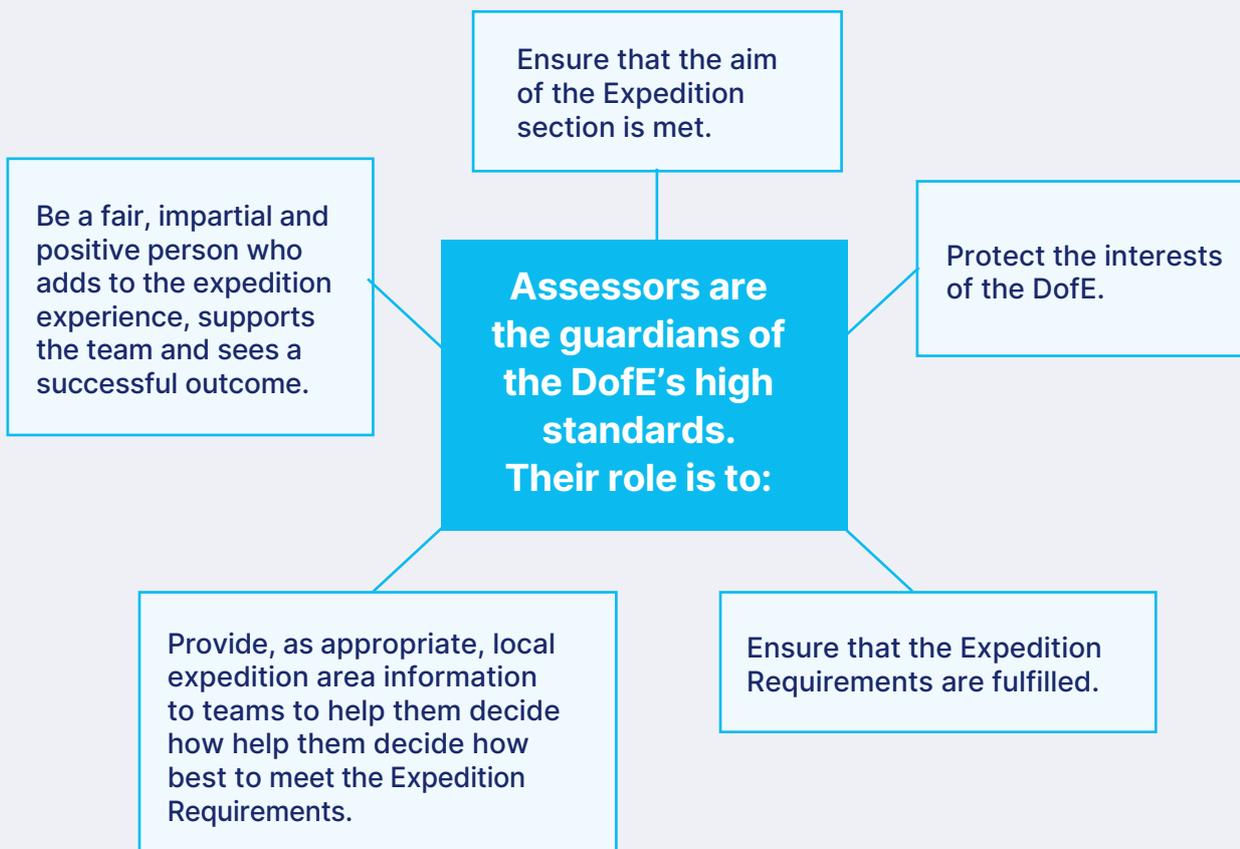
The Assessor is a member of a partnership consisting of the participants, the Supervisor and the Assessor, formed to bring about a successful outcome to the team's expedition. The role of the Assessor is to confirm that the Expedition Requirements have been met.

To carry out their role effectively, all Assessors will be familiar with Expedition Requirements and it is beneficial for the Assessor to know

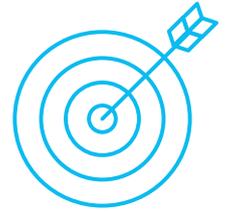
the expedition area(s) they are assessing DofE teams in.

As representatives of the DofE, Assessors will take interest in the participants' other sectional activities. They should encourage them to continue on to achieve their Award and progress to the next DofE level or become DofE Leaders and Assessors.

At a glance: The role of the Assessor



2. Delivering the Expedition section



Assessing DofE expeditions continued

Giving information to aid safety

The Assessor has no responsibility for the safety of the DofE participants they are assessing. Responsibility for the health and safety and the welfare of participants while on their expedition rests entirely with the Supervisor who is the representative of the Licensed Organisation (LO) or Approved Activity Provider (AAP), which has the legal responsibility for their safety and wellbeing.

The Assessor may provide local information about the expedition area to help the team and Supervisor decide how to best meet the Expedition Requirements.

Whilst Assessors can provide information and check routes and teams against stated DofE standards, they have no responsibility for the appropriateness of training or expedition equipment.

If the Expedition Requirements are not being met, or there are serious safety concerns, the Assessor will highlight their concerns and talk with the Supervisor and participants, at the earliest opportunity. Both Assessor and Supervisor should consult with the LO or AAP if needed. As a last resort, Assessors may withdraw their services and defer the team's expedition. This will bring the expedition to an end or turn it into a practice expedition. If the Assessor takes this course of action, they will make it clear to the Supervisor the reasons for doing so and provide a written report to their LO/AAP to follow up.

Who can assess?

All Expedition Assessors must be accredited through The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Assessor Accreditation training.



For more information on becoming an accredited Assessor visit DofE.org/training

There are no restrictions that prevent Assessors being known to the group. During Covid-19, the DofE introduced a temporary flexibility that allowed Assessors at all levels to be known to the group and the feedback was extremely positive. The feedback highlighted the positive experiences for both participants and Leaders when they can see how a young person has progressed over time. It was decided that any restrictions around the Assessor being known to the group would be removed moving forward. As a result, at all levels the Assessor could be involved in the training of the team. Objectivity is still important for all Assessors, irrespective of how well the Assessor knows the group.

In some situations, for specialised modes of travel or in challenging environments at higher Award levels, it may be difficult to find an Accredited Assessor with competence and experience in that area. In these cases organisations can search for Assessors via the Assessor Directory on eDofE. It may be appropriate to use an Assessor who works alongside another adult with the specific mode of travel skills – this might be the Supervisor. To maintain the integrity and value of the Awards, Assessors cannot be family members.

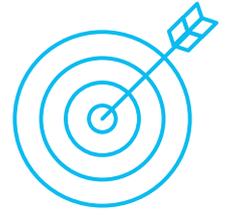


For more information on how many teams an Assessor can assess visit DofE.org/resourcescentre

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.



2. Delivering the Expedition section



Assessing DofE expeditions continued

The assessment process

The foundations of a successful expedition are established by the Leader, the Supervisor and the LO or AAP many weeks before the expedition commences, by ensuring that the expedition is correctly set up in accordance with the Expedition Requirements.

The assessment should be regarded as a continuous process with several significant steps as shown opposite.

The Assessor's contribution can be greater than this, however, and each year many expeditions owe their success to the support, inspiration and encouragement of their Assessor.

Sometimes, the Assessor's knowledge of an expedition area enables them to make a valued contribution, such as guidance on the team goal and how to investigate it.

Guidance will always be encouraging and enrich the experience being offered at an appropriate moment; it will never be intrusive or time consuming.

Assessors will always consult with the Supervisor and remember that the expedition belongs to the young people.

The assessment process:

1. Send expedition information to the Assessor

The Assessor checks that the proposed expedition meets the Expedition Requirements and suggests any essential modifications.

Many of the Expedition Requirements can be checked at this stage from the route outline (or tracings), route cards (information about their team goal and planned investigations) or the supervision plan.

Assessors will often pass information and comments back to the team to help them get the most from their expedition.

2. Make initial contact with the Assessor and discuss their review of the expedition plan

After checking the basic expedition information, Assessors will:

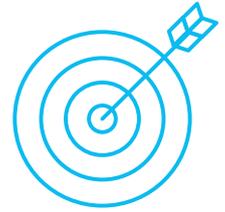
- Discuss any needs of the group and flexibilities that are required during the assessment process
- Phone or email the team's Supervisor/Leader to introduce themselves and approve the submissions or make comments
- Confirm with the Supervisor that all the training and practices have (or will have, by the time of the expedition) been completed. Agree how this will be evidenced to the Assessor
- Confirm that a pre-expedition equipment check will be undertaken by the Supervisor
- Arrange to see (unless they have already been received) the team's route cards, equipment lists, menu plans and further details of the team goal, investigation methods and presentation ideas.

Assessors cannot change a proposed route but may provide information to help the team adjust their route to manage risk and comply with the Expedition Requirements. The preparation of the route outline and cards represents a major undertaking by those concerned and involves many hours of hard work.

The Assessor will talk with the Supervisor to understand the ability of the team based on their training or practice expedition and assess if the proposed expedition will be a sufficient personal challenge. The Assessor will review and approve the balance in activity time between journeying and investigation as appropriately challenging for the team.



2. Delivering the Expedition section



Assessing DofE expeditions continued

Assessors will bear in mind that, while some routes may appear short, the route and distances will be based on the team goal and ability of the team.

The Assessor, the team and the Supervisor will need to arrange a first meeting where they can all get together. Usually this is at a pre-expedition check during the acclimatisation period in the expedition area on the day, or evening, before the start of the expedition.

Agree where to meet, provide a postcode/grid reference where possible, share contact phone numbers and a way to identify each other and vehicles.

The Assessor will bring their DofE Accredited Assessor photo ID card to this first meeting to prove their identity to both the team and the Supervisor.

3. With the team, meet the Assessor in the expedition area for the Assessor's pre-expedition check

This is the most important meeting where the Assessor, Supervisor and team agree their 'contract'. At Gold level this is usually in the acclimatisation period, lasting between one and two hours.

At Bronze and Silver levels, it is usually shorter, often on the morning of the expedition, when teams are keen to start their expedition. An Assessor local to the team might do this a few days before, or during the Supervisor's pre-expedition check. If the Assessor is also acting as the Supervisor (for Bronze level expeditions only) then they may also combine the pre-expedition check.

The Assessor will:

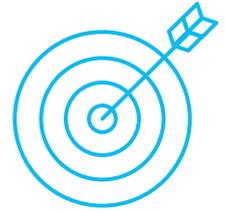
- Establish friendly relations and remove any fears or apprehensions the team may have of the Assessor. Ensure the team sees the Assessor as a positive person who wishes to support the team in their expedition and see a successful outcome
- Set clear expectations and explain the role of the Assessor as the person who simply ensures that the Expedition Requirements are complied with. The young people establish a 'contract' on what is involved and agree to the DofE's requirements, behaviour expectations, environmental impact policy and the Expedition Requirements
- Discuss with the team the Assessor's plans for visiting them during the expedition.

They will:

- Explain that, if all is going well, one visit a day will probably be the norm, except at the beginning of the expedition
- Tell the team it is their expedition so they should not wait for the Assessor at checkpoints
- Explain that Assessors are (usually) volunteers and so may support more than one team or are balancing other commitments, travelling large distances. Assessors supporting more than one team will plan carefully how they will see each team.
- Discuss and give advice on the team's goal and confirm how, and to whom, they wish to make their presentation. If participants want their Assessor to review their presentation then arrangements must be made in advance to book a suitable location and allow enough time



2. Delivering the Expedition section



Assessing DofE expeditions continued

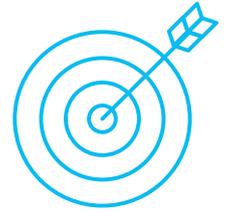
- Discuss and examine the detail of the route on the map with the participants. They will confirm with the team and Supervisor if the supervision plan allows participants to leave checkpoints early and then adjust their remaining route times accordingly
- Review alternative routes for foul weather and emergency escapes and the associated consequences of their use including actions to be taken by the team, Supervisor and Assessor
- Tell participants that many teams make mistakes or get lost (or maybe become temporarily unsure of their position) at some stage on their expedition – this is acceptable and part of the learning process. Providing the team manage to sort themselves out in an appropriate way to reach their destination, it should not present any problems other than being late and tired
- Ask the team to talk through their equipment and pack weights, although the opportunity for the Supervisor to correct shortcomings at this late stage is limited
- Agree the supervision plan with the Supervisor i.e. how many visits will be carried out and when. The Supervisor has the responsibility for the team's safety and will make contact with the team as and when necessary. An Assessor will have concerns when a Supervisor tracks a team or makes contact at every checkpoint. It is usually an indication of inadequate training, a lack of confidence in the team or little experience of the expedition area.
- Establish with the Supervisor (and other staff) where they will be based and the means of communication for daily use, updates after meeting the team(s) and in case anything should go wrong. This is usually achieved by phoning an agreed staffed mobile number with landline backup
- Ensure all of those involved in the expedition, particularly participants, understand and agree the emergency procedures, deciding the action which would be taken if there was an emergency or unexpected end, through illness or impossible weather conditions
- Agree with the team and the Supervisor the expedition policy on mobile phones (particularly for emergencies), GPS, GPS tracking, personal music, speakers and radios.

Topics to cover during an Assessor's pre-expedition check

- Equipment
- Team goal
- Investigation methods
- Navigation
- Emergencies
- Paperwork
- First aid
- Mobile phones
- Other people
- Behaviour
- Cooking/food
- Campcraft
- Route.



2. Delivering the Expedition section



Assessing DofE expeditions continued

What to expect from an Assessor's pre-expedition check

The pre-expedition check allows the Assessor to verify with the team many of the Expedition Requirements including, but not limited to, reviewing their team goal, confirming the completion of their training and practice expedition and checking they are properly equipped.

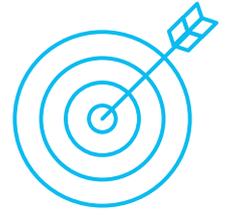
- The objective is to find out what the participants know, not to lecture or demonstrate what the Assessor knows. Assessors will make every effort to involve all of the young people together at each stage of the check, although individuals in the team will be able to demonstrate their own competence
 - The Assessor will use supportive oral questioning and visual inspection, never using written tests or in an examination atmosphere. The tone will be encouraging, where the young people can speak freely about any problems or apprehensions before embarking on what is, for many, one of the greatest challenges of their lives
 - Assessors will usually start by asking the team to talk through their equipment choices as it puts participants at their ease. They will talk about personal clothing, emergency equipment, personal and team camping equipment and the team's plans to keep their equipment dry, especially the sleeping bags and spare clothing. Many young people may have borrowed their equipment; it does not need to be top of the range and it will have already been checked by the Supervisor in the team's equipment check
 - If the Assessor thinks there are shortcomings in any equipment, they will consider this in relation to the overall level of provision and bring it to the attention of the team's Supervisor
- Next they will check participants' training, covering the Expedition Training Framework and if walking is not the chosen method of travel, then the additional training framework for that mode of travel has been completed. The Assessor will ask the participants to talk through their route, describing their strategies, recognising hazards and discussing what it will actually mean to journey from point to point. Attention will focus on evidencing practical navigation skills like setting the map, finding positions, identifying and locating places from the map.
 - Assessors won't need to discuss planning skills as these are evidenced through the route card/outline. Awareness of the dangers associated with the various types of stoves and fuel to be used may be reviewed.
 - There may be wide variations in ability so Assessors will consider the overall competence of the team. The Assessor will accept support given to individuals as long as they have the basic necessary competence to carry out the expedition without being a danger to themselves or a hazard to the rest of the team or the environment. If the Assessor feels there is a problem, they will discuss it immediately with the Supervisor.

The Assessor will meet the team en-route

During the expedition, the Assessor will make contact with the team as often as is necessary to ensure that the Expedition Requirements are being fulfilled. They will keep meetings to a minimum and as short as possible, as all meetings represent an intrusion into the team's expedition and undermines their sense of remoteness, self-sufficiency and self-reliance.



2. Delivering the Expedition section



Assessing DofE expeditions continued

The timing of the visits will be varied. Expect the Assessor to meet the team en-route, at the camp site in an evening and at the camp site in a morning. The Assessor may meet a team at lunchtime, or when they are undertaking exploratory work. This can work well as it can be undertaken quickly and may help to avoid delaying either the team or the Assessor. Often, some teams don't have the experience to set reliable journey times so they will frequently be late at checkpoints and at their camp sites. Assessors will be used to this and be very patient.

Teams can be several hours late and the Assessor will have the resolve and patience not to be panicked into unnecessary action and work closely with the Supervisor to get updates on the team's location. Equally, some teams may be very early to checkpoints. The Assessor and Supervisor can work with teams to re-plan their routes and timings to ensure the expedition remains an appropriate challenge for the participants.

5. The Assessor will debrief the team and sign off the expedition

This is the second most important meeting between the team and their Assessor and comes immediately at the end of the expedition. This is the opportunity for the

Assessor to share in the team's success and congratulate them. The Assessor will help the young people review their expedition and express their feelings and reactions.

The Assessor's debrief will:

- Start by confirming the successful completion of the expedition
- Draw out overall impressions and achievements
- Help participants to recognise their learning and personal development as individuals and as a team
- Remain positive and informal
- Encourage participants to complete their DofE, progress to the next level and stress the value of DofE on their CV and future endeavours
- Normally last between 20-30 minutes.

The Assessor's debrief is separate to a presentation given to the Assessor.

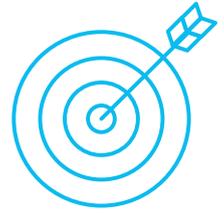
Where an Assessor is debriefing multiple teams at the end of the day, try to ensure that the finish times are staggered so that each team has time for a proper debrief.

The Expedition section is about developing teamwork and success is dependent on the whole team completing the expedition. If a team finishes their expedition and meets the Expedition Requirements, they have successfully completed their expedition.

Assessors cannot pick out individual participants as being unsuccessful if they have made it to the end of their expedition. If an individual persistently and deliberately flouts the behaviour expectations and the Expedition Requirements, they may be deferred during the expedition, but issues with individual participants must be resolved during the expedition, not after it.



2. Delivering the Expedition section



Assessing DofE expeditions continued

Suggested questions for the Assessor's debrief

Assessors will facilitate the expedition debrief by asking open-ended questions to the team, enabling the team to reflect and learn effectively. Supervisors can also use these questions to help participants reflect and learn at the end of the Expedition section.

Reflecting on themselves (reflecting on performance)

- Now you have finished, how do you feel?
- What were the best and most challenging parts of the experience?
- What do you think you learnt about yourself and others in your team?
- Has the expedition experience given you more self-confidence/self-belief?
- Did you discover any hidden abilities during your expedition experience?
- What did you do differently/better than your practice and what would you do differently next time?
- What do you think the benefits were of being on your own away from other friends, family and social media?

Reflecting on the team (teamwork, leadership, self-reliance, co-operation)

- Why do you think it is important to work as a team on an expedition, and how did you get on with each other?
- Were there any factors which helped the team work together?
- Were there any factors which prevented the team from working together?
- Give an example of a problem that arose on the expedition and how you overcame it
- If you made the wrong decision, what happened and what did you learn from the experience?
- Did people take on different roles (leader, navigator, motivator, helper, chef) or did you all share the different roles? What role do

you think you would take on in a different team environment?

Reflecting on the expedition (route, menu, kit, managing risk)

- Was your route plan accurate and how closely did you follow it and your timings?
- In the light of experience, are there any other preparations you would make for future expeditions?
- Were you able to find the balance between keeping safe and having an adventure and where would you want to do your next expedition?
- What advice would you give another DofE team setting out on their expedition?

Next steps (completing the section and achieving your Award)

- Are you going to do a written report or will you create a performance, video presentation or an online report for your presentation?
- When will you deliver your presentation and what work do you need to do?
- What else have you got to do to complete your programme?

6. Signing off evidence

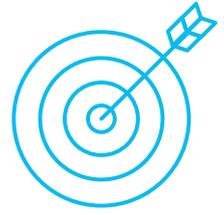
At the end of the debrief the Assessor will provide positive personal feedback to each participant which they can use as evidence in eDofE to show that they have completed their expedition. This can be written directly into eDofE through an Assessor's Report. Assessors' Reports can be made on [DofE.org/Assessors](https://www.dofe.org/Assessors).

The feedback will be personal, usually be several short paragraphs, and reflect and capture the memorable and major achievement that completing a DofE expedition represents.

In the event of an expedition team not meeting the Expedition Requirements, the Assessor will inform them and their Supervisor of the reason.



2. Delivering the Expedition section



Assessing DofE expeditions continued

7. If requested by the team, the Assessor may receive expedition presentations

To complete their Expedition section at Silver and Gold level, participants must deliver a presentation in any format to any suitable adult. Many choose their Assessor and they should agree when and how this will be completed.

If the Assessor is to be sent the presentations at a later date, ensure that they have the participants' and Leader's correct contact details.



For more information on presentations see **chapter 7: After expeditions**

Assessing expeditions with a project focus

It is helpful if Assessors have had experience of assessing DofE teams before assessing those with a focus on exploring and their project. It is also helpful to use Assessors who have a good understanding of the exploration subject to give relevant advice, understand the appropriateness of the investigation methods used and the balance between investigation and journeying.

It may be necessary to have two Assessors – one to deal with the Expedition Requirements and one with the necessary knowledge and experience to assess the results of the team goal. The second Assessor could be a local expert helping with the team goal, rather than a DofE Accredited Assessor, and can also be the person who receives the presentation.

It is essential that all concerned, the two Assessors, the team, the Supervisor and the Leader co-operate right from the initial stages of preparation and planning to ensure a successful outcome of the expedition.

Problems

The Expedition Requirements are designed to help Assessors, and all involved in DofE expeditions, work to the same requirements, so new rules are not inferred or created.

Assessors will always exercise great care not to advise hasty or ill-considered actions which would prevent the Expedition Requirements from being fulfilled.

Problems will still arise during expeditions from uncontrolled factors, such as the weather, injury, illness, fatigue or being very overdue. The Assessor and Supervisor should use their common sense to ensure the safety of the young people and to try to allow the expedition to continue.

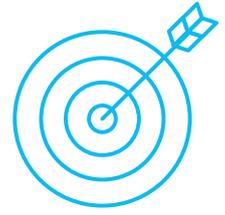
The Supervisor must liaise with the Assessor and agree any changes or actions advised or requested to allow participants to still meet the Expedition Requirements.

If a Qualifying Expedition is cut short for a participant or the whole team due to injury, personal commitments or adverse weather, the Assessor cannot pass the expedition. To meet the Expedition Requirements, participants must complete the full duration and minimum hours of planned activity. These minimums also apply to Practice Expeditions at Silver and Gold. While it can be disappointing and upsetting when an expedition cannot be completed, maintaining these standards ensures parity and preserves the quality of the Award.

Requirements such as those relating to time or team size cannot be modified, while certain requirements such as cooking can be interpreted far more liberally to meet individual needs. Assessors have the discretion to discuss modifying routes in consultation with the team and Supervisor, and will ensure that the new route still meets the Expedition Requirements.



2. Delivering the Expedition section



Assessing DofE expeditions continued

Occasionally it may be difficult for an Assessor to decide whether or not a team has complied with the Expedition Requirements or if a team's inability to meet the Expedition Requirements was due to omissions or inadequacies of a third party.

The Assessor will then reserve judgement and seek the support of their LO or AAP who can discuss the matter with the DofE.



For more information on the key behaviour expectations of DofE participants undertaking the DofE Expedition section see [chapter 6: Expedition safety](#)

Assessing expeditions in restricted spaces

Ensure that the Assessor has a clear idea of what the expedition will consist of before they meet with the team, such as what each activity is designed to achieve. Remember that it is the learning outcomes from these activities that are important, not just successfully doing them.

For this type of expedition, the Assessor will be looking far more at the team's interaction with each other, at their leadership and planning skills, rather than skills such as navigation and map reading. The Assessor should discuss with the group the skills they expect they will find challenging during the expedition, and where they expect their strengths and weaknesses to be.

The Assessor should discuss with the Supervisor before the expedition whether they will meet the team at random intervals, or whether their interactions will be planned to coincide with the end of various activities during the expedition. The Assessor should discuss their interaction with the team at these meetings, including the types of questions they will ask.

The Assessor should be concentrating on personal growth and development, leadership and team working, and how the team have achieved their aim. The Assessor should try to draw out how some of these experiences may help the participants on other scenarios.

Protecting the interests of the DofE

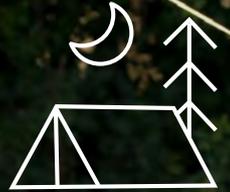
The DofE relies on Assessors to look after its interests in the Expedition section. This is largely achieved by Assessors using their local knowledge to inform teams of possible sensitive areas or issues, such as existing friction with certain landowners or overburdened communities.

Ensuring an observance of the Countryside/ Scottish Outdoor Access/NI Countryside Code/ Highway and Water Sports Safety Codes (as appropriate) during the expedition, and maintaining good relations with the farmers who provide the camp sites and with other local residents, are all part of this task.



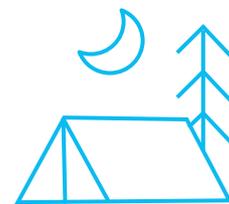
A photograph of two people in a forest setting up a tent. One person in an orange shirt is holding a yellow rope, while another person in a dark shirt is looking on. The tent is green and partially visible in the foreground. The background is filled with lush green foliage.

3. ENVIRONMENTS AND ACCOMMODATION



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3.1 Progressive challenge

The group's team goal will guide their choice of an appropriate environment for 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 must 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 Gold.

Most Gold level expeditions will be remotely supervised in remote and unfamiliar rural 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. If planning an expedition in a restricted space,

Leaders should consider how their planned activity can be progressively more challenging at each level.

Below are some examples of how you might showcase progressive challenge through the levels of a DofE programme based on a theme – although you may blend multiple themes together as well! This is not an exhaustive list, and some may not be appropriately challenging for the young people within your Licensed Organisation (LO), but they are ideas to help you plan an expedition programme that is accessible to all.

Remember, all expeditions must meet the minimum required hours of planned activity.



For more information on the Expedition Requirements see [chapter 1: The Expedition section](#)

INCREASING KNOWLEDGE

Bronze	Journeying to a local country park or National Trust estate and preparing a users' guide explaining how it can be used, e.g. fishing, picnicking, conservation.
Silver	Exploring Sherwood Forest, an area unfamiliar to the team, and investigating the legend of Robin Hood.
Gold	Undertaking an expedition in the Lake District, a national park in the UK which is both remote and unfamiliar to the group, and investigating the poetry the area has inspired.

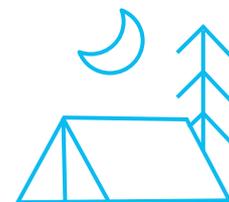
CAMPCRAFT SKILLS

Bronze	Staying in indoor accommodation e.g. camping pods and eating "ready to eat" evening meals.
Silver	Staying in tents and cooking evening meals on an expedition stove.
Gold	Staying in tents and having a "Come Dine With Me" cooking competition amongst groups.



3. Environments and accommodation

Progressive challenge continued



INCREASING PHYSICAL CHALLENGE

Bronze	6 hours of journeying through lowland terrain.
Silver	7 hours of journeying through open moorland.
Gold	8 hours of journeying through mountainous terrain.

MORE CHALLENGING NAVIGATION

Bronze	Navigate via disused railways, canal paths or cycle paths in a familiar location.
Silver	Navigate using footpaths and bridleways using an Ordnance Survey map and a compass to orientate it.
Gold	Navigate through an unfamiliar rural environment requiring the use of a map and compass for bearings.

LESS FAMILIAR ENVIRONMENTS

Bronze	Expedition where the journeying starts and finishes at the LO.
Silver	Expedition at a local Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
Gold	Expedition journeying across a National Park in the UK.

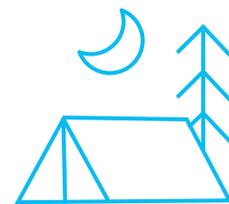
TEAMWORK

Bronze	Do a fun team game or challenge each day to promote team building.
Silver	Learn the basics of British Sign Language and use these to communicate amongst your expedition team.
Gold	Examining group dynamics and teamwork, by applying theories like Belbin or Tuckman to a study while on expedition, then producing a detailed statistical research presentation.



3. Environments and accommodation

Progressive challenge continued



INCREASING LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Bronze	Direct supervision for young people with additional needs navigating via a photo guide of the route.
Silver	Close supervision for young people with additional needs navigating via photo guide of the route.
Gold	Elements of remote supervision built in where appropriate e.g. disused railway lines, cycle paths where leaders can monitor groups progress before moving back to close supervision when necessary.



For more information on inclusive expedition environments see [chapter 8.2: Expedition Requirements – inclusive practice](#)

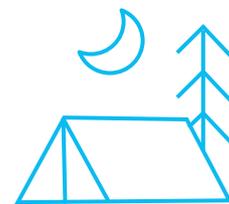
Direct entrants

If expedition teams have direct entrants, then the expedition must be planned at a level which is of a progressive challenge to those that have completed previous levels. If the whole team are direct entrants then the Supervisor will need to consider an expedition that challenges them appropriately and is fair and equal to what others must complete at this level. Most Gold level expeditions will be remotely supervised in remote and unfamiliar outdoor environments; Supervisors can speak to their DofE Operations Officer for advice.



3. Environments and accommodation

3.2 Accommodation



Accommodation will usually be by camping. In most cases, DofE teams use lightweight camping as their accommodation as it enhances the sense of adventure and self-reliance.

DofE expeditions are about solitude and independence, so DofE teams are expected to use only very basic camp sites. DofE teams may use basic facilities such as drying rooms and toilets/showers. Use of other facilities (usually found on larger tourist sites) such as games rooms, bars, cafés, shops and swimming pools are not in keeping with DofE expeditions. Teams need to remain as isolated as possible while on public or busy camp sites.

Teams can also use basic self-catering accommodation on their expedition. Basic accommodation should have limited facilities, and bedding would not be provided for participants. It should be situated in the relevant expedition environment; typically, this will be in or near to traditional camp sites. Groups using the option of indoor accommodation most commonly use Scout/ Guide huts, camping barns or bunkhouses.

If using indoor accommodation, teams must still carry their cooking equipment and food for their expedition, in order to ensure self-sufficiency and for safety purposes, such as making a hot drink or meal in an emergency. For safety reasons, participants must also still carry a tent or other group emergency shelter on their expedition, regardless of whether they plan to be sleeping in it.

Use valley camp sites

Most teams use valley camp sites, which are not far from a road or track allowing vehicle access for Supervisors, for Assessors and in the case of emergencies. These camp sites tend to be more sheltered allowing participants to camp and rest more easily.

Wild camping

Wild camping can be an exciting, memorable and highly rewarding experience for young people but is not a requirement at any level. It is well suited to DofE expeditions and can give teams an unsurpassed sense of independence and isolation.

Teams must gain permission, in advance, to wild camp as some areas and land owners do not allow it. Equally, for some teams this may be too challenging and not what they want to do. Teams that want to wild camp will need to build this ambition into their choice of expedition area and route planning. They will need to complete the appropriate additional training, including hygiene and suitable disposal of human waste.

Bothies

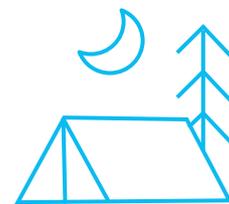
A bothy is an open shelter that can provide protection in bad weather and during emergencies. Bothies open to the public are run by the Mountain Bothies Association (MBA) in Scotland, Wales and Northern England. These are open for anyone to use, and are not bookable. There are also closed bothies which are managed directly by landowners and not open to the public – anyone wanting to use one of these must seek permission from the landowner, conditions of use will vary, and whether this is appropriate must be considered on a case by case basis.

For MBA bothies the bothy code is clear that groups of six or more or commercial groups must not use a bothy. Anyone using an MBA bothy must be aware that there could be other users wanting to use the bothy on the same night, and therefore there may not be enough space for everyone. Therefore, teams can never rely on using bothies. Leaders must also consider their safeguarding policy as unknown adults may arrive at any time. For these reasons, most DofE teams will be prohibited from using MBA bothies for accommodation.



3. Environments and accommodation

Accommodation continued



It will usually be more appropriate for DofE teams to use MBA bothies for breaks during the day, and as potential emergency shelters. Any teams planning to visit an MBA bothy on their expedition must check the MBA website for any closures or restrictions on use. For teams interested in bothies, planning a route around visiting bothies and submitting reports about their condition to the MBA makes a great expedition team goal.

Avoid using the same camp site more than once

The route should be a continuous journey and participants should stop at different locations each night. A camp site may only be used more than once when necessary to meet the team goal or because of specific needs within the team. The team will need to break camp and take all their equipment with them. This both ensures team safety and maintains the sense of self-sufficiency and achievement.



Remote supervision

Remote supervision applies to evenings and nights as much as daylight hours. If Supervisors are on the same camp site then they should camp as far away from the participants as they can and have as little interaction as possible.

At Gold level it should not be necessary for any Supervisor to be present on the same camp site as participants overnight. Participants must be trained to this standard.

Returning home to sleep

The option to return home at night must only be used where participants would not otherwise be able to access an expedition at all (e.g. for medical or religious reasons, or due to specific individual need), and never as a cost-saving measure or due to a lack of appropriate training. Overnight stays are important for young people to experience and enable them to benefit from the outcomes of the section. In situations where this is required, participants must still plan, cook and eat their meals together before returning home in order to meet the Expedition Requirements.

Motorised transport

Leaders can use motorised transport to pick up and drop off at start and end points, where required to support safe transit to camping sites and open up new expedition areas. This could allow, for example, for participants to journey on rivers or coastlines where there aren't campsites on the banks, or to use campsites that are close to busy roads without easy walking access.

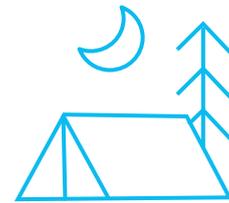


For more information on inclusive accommodation see [8.2 Expedition Requirements – inclusive practice](#)



3. Environments and accommodation

3.3 Expeditions in a restricted space



Running expeditions in a restricted space enables Leaders to design challenges that uphold the ethos and aims of the Expedition section, while allowing completion within a defined area or without leaving the centre. This approach significantly increases access, making it possible for many more young people, including those with complex needs or in secure settings, to achieve their DofE Award.

Interpreting the Expedition Requirements

While the core Expedition Requirements remain the same, their interpretation must be adapted for restricted spaces. The focus shifts from journeying through the countryside to a learning journey. It's young people working together towards a defined team goal, developing independence, resilience, and teamwork.

Teams demonstrate progress by completing a series of challenges that involve navigation, physical movement, and problem-solving. At least 50% of planned activity hours should be spent on physically active tasks, with the remainder dedicated to the team goal.

Tailoring activities to the setting

Expeditions in restricted spaces can be flexibly tailored to the available space, group size, and individual needs. This model is particularly appropriate for participants in secure estates and for those with additional needs, who may face significant barriers to accessing a traditional expedition. By adapting the environment and activities, these young people can experience the same sense of challenge, teamwork, and achievement as their peers.

It is important to recognise that restricted space expeditions require the same high standards of planning, supervision, and training

as any traditional expedition. Activities must be designed to be appropriately challenging for the specific group of participants, taking into account their abilities, interests, and the environment. Leaders should ensure that each expedition offers meaningful opportunities for participants to develop independence, resilience, and problem-solving skills, often through creative and innovative approaches that reflect the unique context of the group.

The examples below are intended to inspire and support planning but should not be seen as a fixed list. Each activity must be adapted to suit the needs of the participants and the aims of the expedition.

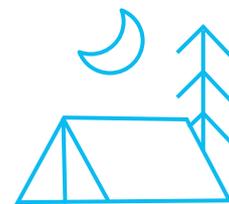
Examples of tailored activities include:

- Navigation-style team challenges such as blindfolded obstacle courses, scavenger hunts, or first aid scenarios
- Multi-modal journeying, where participants plan a route using a map and route card, then cover the distance on gym equipment such as treadmills, bikes, or rowing machines
- Physical challenges like weights or strength exercises, rather than carrying a full rucksack
- Creative or practical projects, for example building a sculpture from natural materials
- Site mapping tasks, where participants create hand-drawn maps of the grounds and use them to navigate between checkpoints
- Problem-solving stations that include team-building tasks such as trust walks, timed puzzles, or silent signal challenges
- Legacy projects such as designing a mural, creating a garden map, or producing an expedition journal to leave something meaningful behind
- Themed adventure quests, where teams solve mysteries or complete challenges to unlock the next stage of their journey



3. Environments and accommodation

Expeditions in a restricted space continued



- Environmental investigations, where participants assess biodiversity, sustainability, or accessibility in their local area and present their findings
- Shelter-building competitions using mats and tarps, encouraging innovation and teamwork in a camp build-off
- Compass-based challenges like decoding messages or navigating to specific locations using basic directional skills
- Role swap relays, where each participant takes on a different expedition role for a short task to understand team dynamics
- Silent signal challenges, where teams complete tasks using only hand gestures to strengthen non-verbal communication
- Expedition podcast creation, where participants record short audio segments reflecting on their journey, challenges, and team dynamics
- Expedition news report, where teams document their activities as if reporting for a local news outlet, including interviews, weather updates, and “on-the-ground” coverage
- Expedition-themed escape room, where teams solve a series of clues and challenges to “escape” or unlock the next phase of their journey
- Expedition time capsule, where participants collect items, reflections, and creative pieces to be sealed and revisited in the future.



Team goal

Every expedition requires a team goal. This could focus on:

- Knowledge-building, such as creating a local nature trail, producing a photography guide, compiling an accessibility report, or investigating environmental sustainability
- Soft skills development, using themed challenges like solving a mystery or searching for treasure that encourage progression and teamwork
- Creative or legacy projects, such as designing a mural, creating a garden map, or producing an expedition journal.

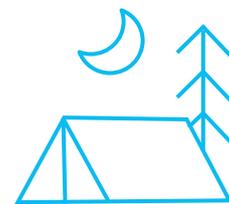
Supervision

Supervision is a key element of all expeditions, including those in restricted spaces. The aim is to support young people to work as independently as possible, with adults stepping in only when necessary for safety or guidance. Activities should be designed so that participants can be remotely supervised for the majority of the expedition, mirroring the autonomy expected in traditional expeditions. Direct or close supervision should be limited to specific tasks that require it, such as certain practical skills or higher-risk activities. Supervisors should ensure that participants are well-prepared through relevant training and practice, enabling them to complete their chosen activities safely and confidently with minimal intervention.



3. Environments and accommodation

Expeditions in a restricted space continued



Planning and training

A key outcome of the Expedition section is that young people plan, undertake, and review their activity. Even within restricted spaces, participants should plan their team goal, menu, clothing, and equipment. Choice and autonomy are crucial, as participants learn from their decisions and take ownership of their expedition.

Supervisors should encourage participants to make decisions, solve problems, and work together, with minimal adult intervention. Activities should have real consequences, mirroring the challenges of a traditional expedition.

All participants must complete the Expedition Training Framework. Navigation training should be adapted to the environment, for example orienteering or street maps instead of OS maps. Practice expeditions and training must be directly relevant to the planned activities, ensuring participants are confident and capable of completing their chosen tasks under remote supervision.

Progressive challenge in restricted spaces

When delivering expeditions at Silver or Gold level in restricted spaces, the principle of progressive challenge is essential. It is important that the Leader ensures the expedition is more challenging than the lower level, particularly if the previous level was not completed using the same restricted space model. This progression should be evident in the planning, execution, and overall experience of the expedition.

Progressive challenge in this context means that participants take greater ownership of planning, decision-making, and problem-solving. Navigation tasks could be made more complex, physical challenges could be extended in duration or intensity, and team challenges could be planned to require more strategic thinking or collaboration over a longer period.

Leaders must ensure that the expedition is tailored to the group's abilities while still providing a meaningful challenge that reflects the higher level. This requires creativity, careful planning, and a commitment to maintaining the integrity of the Award.

Location

Restricted spaces may include school or youth group grounds, the immediate local area or parkland. The location chosen should allow for remote supervision, so outdoor spaces should be used where possible. However, activities can take place indoors if outdoor spaces are unavailable or if a particular activity requires it.

Food

As with 'traditional' expeditions, participants must plan an appropriate menu, including cooking and eating a substantial hot meal on each day. This is optional on the final day.

Accommodation

The same accommodation options would apply to an expedition in a restricted space as to a "traditional expedition".

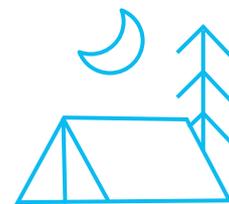


For more information on accommodation planning see [chapter 3.2: Accommodation](#)



3. Environments and accommodation

3.4 Expeditions outside the United Kingdom



Completing a DofE expedition outside of the UK can be an amazing, memorable and inspirational challenge for many participants. The desire to experience completely different environments, from arctic to desert, mountainous to jungle, drives DofE teams to go almost everywhere on the planet.

Whether created from scratch with their Licensed Organisation (LO) or delivered by an Approved Activity Provider (AAP), these expeditions can be some of the most rewarding undertakings of a young person's life.

All expeditions outside the UK must still meet the Expedition Requirements, demonstrate progressive challenge and conform to standard remote supervision and health and safety requirements as normal.

Participants must carefully select destinations which will allow this. Organisers and participants should contact their LO at the earliest opportunity, before money is spent, to ensure the activity will count for the participant's DofE programme.

Although expeditions outside the UK will require more planning, and usually funding, to arrange or participate in, this tends to further motivate the participants who choose this challenge.

In some ways they can be easier as countries with lower population densities allow for more low altitude areas and larger expanses of isolated rural, open and remote areas. However, documentation, visas, inoculations, additional kit, a lack of established camp sites and inadequate mapping can make some countries less accessible.

Remember to consider local restrictions of land use, culture and climate. Ensure that the Supervisor and other staff are appropriately qualified and insured as some countries require them to hold specific qualifications, for example the International Mountain Leader Award,

to supervise. Some areas insist on groups being accompanied by armed guards or National Park guides which rule them out as potential DofE destinations.

Opportunities for different modes of travel can also be greatly enhanced. There are often fewer restraints on mountain bikes than in the UK. Novel modes of travel like camel and dog sled can also be considered. The length, breadth and volume of rivers and canals in Europe can offer a new dimension for canoeing and rowing expeditions and the opportunities for sailing are endless.

Expedition routes and areas

Expeditions outside the UK must follow the same guidance and demonstrate progressive challenge like all expeditions in the UK. However, a more flexible approach is taken with regards to the use of long-distance paths, as they can sometimes be the only way of getting access to large areas of remote land or for making progress through very difficult terrain or forests. Careful selection of remote and rarely used long distance paths can allow for an inspiring and challenging expedition.

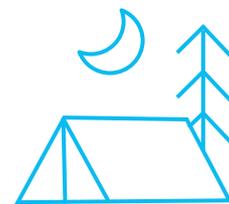
It is essential that expedition staff have prior knowledge or conduct a reconnaissance of the expedition area.

Many areas present such difficulties and hazards that they can only be taken on by experienced and stronger participants. Foothill and lowland areas nearby can provide more suitable challenges for other teams while still feeling part of the dramatic landscape. As with all DofE expeditions, teams should travel through, rather than over, remote area – it is about solitude, not altitude. Teams can struggle to cover good distances unless they choose their routes with care, considering altitude, daily ascent, descent and temperature.



3. Environments and accommodation

Expeditions outside the United Kingdom continued



The team must recognise their abilities and choose an area of appropriate challenge for them. The cost and effort of such expeditions means that misjudging this can result in bitter disappointment.

As in the UK, a Supervisor must be located in the area of expedition at all times and DofE participants must complete the DofE Expedition Training Framework and if walking is not the chosen method of travel, then the additional training framework for that mode of travel should be completed. This will need to be evidenced to the Assessor in advance of the expedition.

Most expeditions outside the UK will include several acclimatisation and additional training days as not all areas or conditions can be replicated in UK training or practice expeditions. This is recommended as best practice.

As part of the progression principle of DofE, it is assumed that expeditions outside the UK will be the qualifying expedition. However, DofE participants must complete an appropriate UK practice expedition (at Silver and Gold level) before undertaking any DofE expedition outside of the UK. Bronze level teams must be adequately trained to safely undertake a remotely supervised expedition in the country in which they will be operating.

Local culture and language

When designing the expedition it is important to gain an understanding of the local culture. Participants should take the opportunity before or after the expedition to experience the social and cultural aspects of the country.

Training in the customs, culture and lifestyle of the destination will enhance the whole experience and ensure participants can maintain the high standards of behaviour

expected by the DofE and not inadvertently give any offence.

All participants should be sufficiently familiar with the destination country's language, not only to exchange courtesies, but to communicate in an emergency. Some essential phrases should be issued to each participant on paper for them to keep and practice.

Training should include using local telephones to be aware of dialling tones, procedures and costs. Leaders should also investigate local reception for mobile phones.

Some teams have secured funding through establishing an international exchange programme by linking with a DofE team in the destination country. They have then been able to undertake another expedition with them back in the UK for the exchange group's DofE programme.

The isolation aspect of the Expedition section means that cultural experience cannot be used as an expedition team goal. Any research, for example visiting a temple or local village, must be undertaken in the acclimatisation period or after the expedition just as in the UK.

Try to find other ways to bring the local culture into the expedition, for example by learning local games to play in the evenings, buy some local music to play and do some pre-expedition shopping at food stalls for the expedition snacks.

Planning

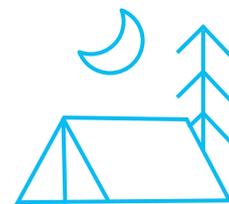
Planning for these expeditions will usually begin early, at least six months in advance. A complete timeline and checklist of all the key steps will be needed to ensure each action is completed in good time.

Build in time to accommodate delays and problems like out-of-date passports or visas.



3. Environments and accommodation

Expeditions outside the United Kingdom continued



Arrange a pre-trip meeting to go through all kit, medication, documentation, travel arrangements and emergency procedures. The Leader should have a photocopy of each participant's travel documents as well as summary sheets of emergency contacts and any specific needs of group members.

Groups must also be aware of local laws and regulations concerning travel, vehicles, supervision and all their modes of travel used in the country.

When travelling by road outside of the UK, ensure that vehicles comply with the appropriate regulations, are serviced before leaving and are fully insured for breakdown and the repatriation of vehicle and passengers.

Drivers must follow local directives on driving, plan routes in advance for safety and include rests.

Road travel can be the most dangerous part of the trip.

International maps

Most of Western Europe is mapped at a 1:50 000 and now also at a 1:25 000 scale. In other areas the quality and availability of maps can vary. The best way to find local maps is either while in the country on the reconnaissance trip or via online shops and support sites.

For remote areas many groups use Google Earth or dedicated mapping programmes to map out the expedition area. It is usually best to provide the Assessor with a prepared map rather than a tracing so that everyone in the area is working from the same resources. The scale of the maps will depend on what is available.

Notifications

Participants must have their expeditions approved by their LO which has the legal responsibility for their safety.

The expedition provider, whether this is the Supervisor on behalf of the LO or an AAP brought in to help, must accept responsibility for monitoring the safety of the expedition. This must be undertaken in accordance with the policies and guidelines of the LO.

Some open expeditions are not run by a DofE LO or centre but by an AAP. In these cases a private contract has been agreed between the participant/parent/guardian and the AAP so the LO is not involved and so may not require notification. Policies may vary between LOs.

It is the Supervisor's/deliverer's responsibility to ensure that it is clear to everyone where insurance and responsibility for health and safety rests, either with themselves, their parents/guardians (if under 18), their LO or an AAP.

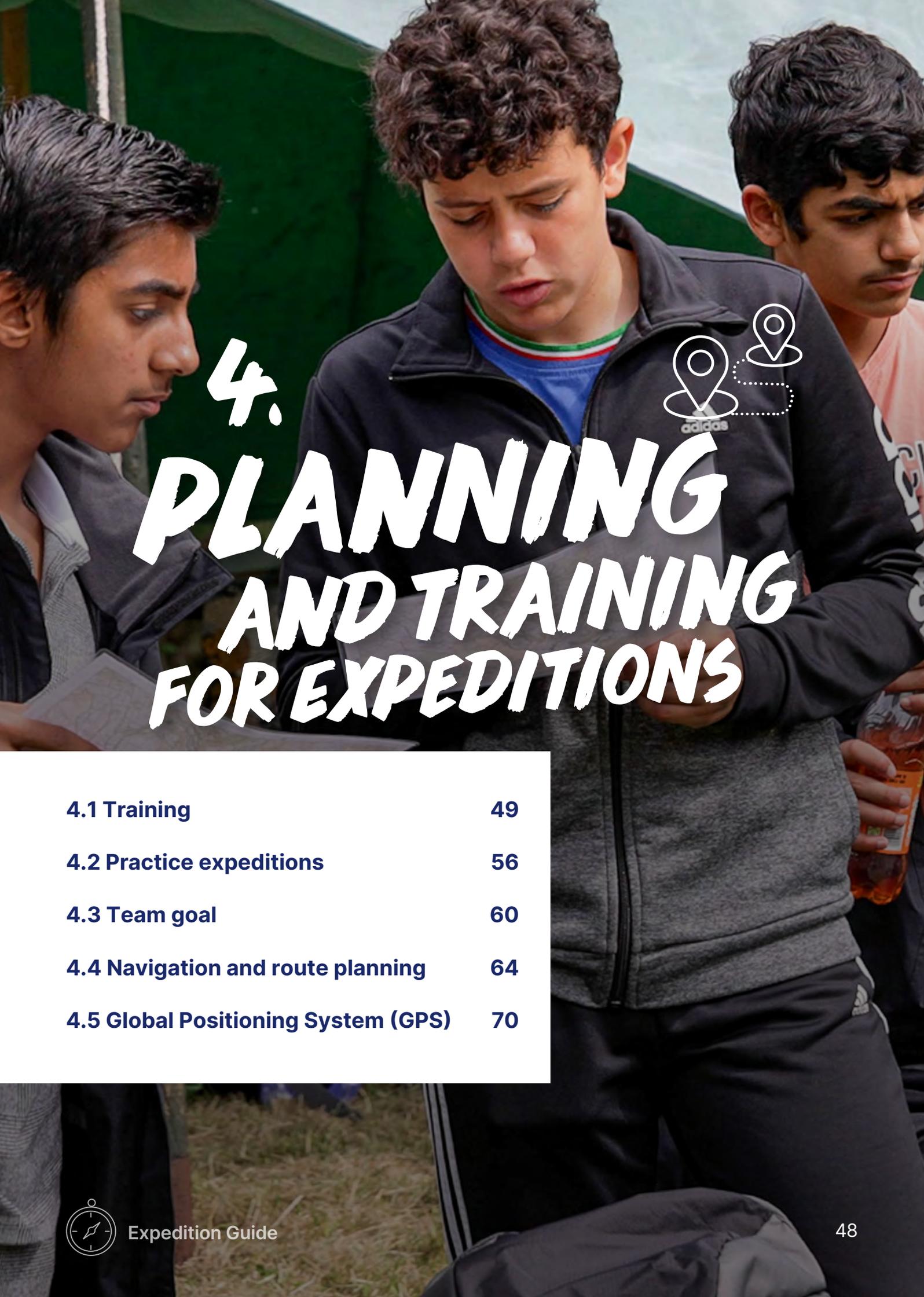
Parents, carers or guardians should be kept informed of the details of the general trip, the expedition and other activities.

The team should notify the destination country's National Award Authority, if the International Award operates in that country.



For contact details visit intaward.org





4. PLANNING AND TRAINING FOR EXPEDITIONS

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4.1 Training



The Expedition section will stretch participants technically, mentally and physically, so training programmes need to prepare them for these challenges.

The excellent safety record of the DofE is largely due to the quality, thoroughness and high levels of training all DofE teams are required to complete before undertaking their qualifying expedition.

Expedition Support Staff and Supervisors will use a range of training techniques, styles and time frames to complete the Expedition Training Framework and prepare teams. However, each should use a systematic approach based on defined learning objectives and outcomes.

DofE qualifying expeditions are unaccompanied, self-sufficient and remotely supervised, therefore participants must have a high level of competence.

During training, participants will require a steadily decreasing level of supervision as their skills, confidence and experience increase, allowing them to remain safe in the outdoors.

Instructors and Supervisors will want to see evidence not only of technical skills, but also of self-discipline, responsibility, good behaviour, positive attitude, maturity and good judgement.



For more information on how to support training including a 'How to use a compass' poster visit [DofE.org/shop](https://www.dofe.org/shop)

The DofE Expedition Training Framework

The DofE's Expedition Training Framework is designed to provide a structure for training young people undertaking their Expedition section and preparing them to meet the challenges of their expedition.

DofE Expedition training focuses on three key areas: the Expedition Requirements and aim of the Expedition section; team building and leadership; and technical expedition skills. The Expedition Training Framework delivers these in nine elements which each participant must complete and in the chosen mode of travel.



The detailed Expedition Training Framework documents are available for free at [DofE.org/resourcescentre](https://www.dofe.org/resourcescentre)

The nine elements of the Expedition Training Framework

1. First aid and emergency procedures
2. An awareness of risk and health and safety issues
3. Navigation, route planning and compass skills
4. Accommodation, equipment and hygiene
5. Food and cooking
6. Countryside, Highway and Water Sports Safety Codes (as appropriate)
7. Observation and recording
8. Team building
9. Proficiency in the mode of travel.



Training continued



If a young person has the skills already, the Supervisor will not need to make them complete a full training scheme if they are able to check their competence. Participants can use skills and training they have picked up outside of their DofE. When the skills were gained is not critical if the competence is checked, evidenced and signed off, usually after their practice expedition.

The Expedition Supervisor should decide what navigation techniques and compass skills are appropriate for the environment and nature of the planned expedition. Compass skills and navigating via an Ordnance Survey map may not be required for an expedition in an urban environment or restricted space.

Forming teams

Each individual participant will depend on the mutual support and collective experience of their team in order to successfully complete their expedition. Where possible, teams should be allowed to form naturally from the DofE group, with friends remaining together. This helps build trust and cohesion early in the process, which is essential for a positive expedition experience.

It is often beneficial for team members to have a similar level of fitness, but working together and travelling at the pace of the slowest team member is a key part of the teamwork skills developed through this section. Teams need to bond and develop trust and respect to cope with the inevitable stresses of an expedition, but also to enjoy the experience. It is the team spirit and their collective commitment that will support individuals through bad weather, blisters, low morale, and navigational disagreements.

Training that includes team-building and leadership development activities is essential, as are team sessions focused on reviewing and reflection. These help participants understand their roles, communicate effectively, and support one another throughout the expedition.

To meet the Expedition Requirements, expedition teams must consist of between four and seven participants (or up to eight for modes of travel that involve pairs, such as tandem bikes or open canoes). This minimum number ensures that participants can experience the expedition in a team environment and that safety is maintained during remote supervision. If one team member is injured, others can provide support without leaving anyone alone.

To help form teams that meet the minimum requirement, Licensed Organisations (LOs) can explore the following options:

- Invite additional young people from within the organisation to join the team, even if they are not currently enrolled in a DofE programme, provided they meet the enrolment criteria and have not completed the same or higher level of expedition
- Collaborate with another organisation to combine participants and form a full team. Establishing ongoing partnerships with other LOs can support sustainable expedition delivery
- Delay the expedition until enough participants are available. Young people have until the age of 25 to achieve their Award.
- Explore whether participants could attend an open expedition with an Approved Activity Provider (AAP). This may not be suitable for all young people, so support from the LO is essential.



Training continued



If a LO is still unable to meet the minimum team size, they should contact their Operations Officer for support. Forming teams thoughtfully and in line with DofE guidance ensures that all participants benefit from the full experience of the Expedition section, including teamwork, leadership, and shared achievement.

Hard/technical skills and soft/people skills

Participants will need training in both the 'hard' technical and practical skills needed to expedition in the outdoors, and the 'soft' or 'people' skills needed to bring the team together as an effective unit. Both are essential and are of equal importance for a successful expedition.

It is usually more effective when the hard skills are used as a basis for teaching and developing the soft skills, rather than teaching them as theoretical concepts. Soft skills should feature specifically in all training sessions and have a special place in the practice expeditions and in the reviews.

Soft/people skills:

- Leadership
- Team-building
- Judgement
- Decision making
- Inter-personal skills.

Hard/technical skills:

- First aid
- Campcraft
- Observation
- Navigation
- Access
- Emergency procedures
- Reports
- Recording.

Experience and judgement

Building progressive experience is an essential part of DofE training. Experience develops through time and variety, and so it is beneficial to include activities outside of formal training sessions. Diverse situations are needed if the greatest benefit is to be gained from the commitment of time and effort.

Of all the qualities essential to the safety and wellbeing of DofE participants, that of sound judgement is the most important. Sound judgement, along with responsibility and maturity, arises from effective training coupled with the development of varied experience over time. It can only develop if participants are given opportunities in which to exercise judgement, both as individuals and collectively.

Safety in the outdoors

In the outdoors there are some situations where there is only one correct way of doing something. Training in these critical techniques to ensure participant safety should involve instruction so that it becomes a drill, an automatic response to follow the correct procedure without need for judgement.



For more information on expedition safety see [chapter 6: Expedition safety](#)



4. Planning and training for expeditions

Training continued



Structured training programmes

DofE Leaders, Supervisors and instructors will carefully plan a training programme to meet the needs of everyone in the DofE group/team.

The timing of the training programme is usually most influenced by the weather conditions and exams. There are several common approaches used but all consist of the core components set out below.

Training sessions

These sessions will cover most of the Expedition Training Framework and are best taught outdoors, although some aspects can be taught indoors during cold weather, over the winter. Sessions are usually regular one or two hour sessions as an expedition team or DofE group.

Sessions will usually focus on one technical skill, working methodically through the framework, but should also include soft skills development at the same time. Begin with the skills that take the longest to learn and when taking on a new mode of travel, ensure the team has plenty of time to gain experience in it.



Training events

Outdoor training sessions, days and overnight camping are used to gauge and refine a team's competence and strengths whilst also identifying areas for improvement. They are great for team building and allowing teams to experience a more prolonged outdoor expedition experience.

Training events are particularly important at Bronze level where a Supervisor may have chosen to not include a traditional practice expedition within the training programme. Building time into a training programme at Bronze for participants to practice their technical skills for a prolonged period of time is essential to ensuring participants have a good qualifying expedition experience.

Practice expeditions

Although outdoor training sessions are essential for all levels, practice expeditions are a compulsory requirement of the Expedition section at only Silver and Gold level. Although it's not a compulsory requirement, practice expeditions at Bronze level provide opportunities to develop hard/technical and soft/people skills whilst in an expedition environment.

Practice expeditions often take place in the early Spring or Summer and continue into early Autumn, depending on the training programme. Several practice expeditions can be needed for teams to gain confidence and competence, particularly when undertaking a new mode of travel.



Training continued



Fitness training

Participants need to plan a fitness programme that is appropriate for the type of expedition they are undertaking, and which will peak just before their qualifying expedition. The programme should start two or three months before this, depending on the participant and their team goal. Physical training activities should become increasingly strenuous as the qualifying expedition nears, and include building strength for and practising carrying their full rucksack.

Participants should focus on aerobic exercise, which builds stamina and strengthens the cardiovascular and respiratory systems. A mix of walking, running, wheelchair sports, swimming and cycling works very well and can be accessible and affordable for many participants.

While fitness training is essential for DofE expeditions, it should be appropriate to the type of expedition that is being undertaken, and it may not be possible for all young people. Leaders should recognise this and consider adaptations to accommodate individual needs.

A range of options available to DofE Leaders and Supervisors to enable all participants to undertake an expedition are set out in [chapter 8: Inclusion](#).

Getting fit requires effort, perseverance and discipline. However, certain precautions should be taken:

- Exercise should always be preceded by a gradual warming up period
- There should always be a cool down period after the exercise session
- Suitable clothing should be worn, including high visibility items if out on roads
- Exercise should be tailored to account for any medical conditions or restrictions.

Participants need to consider their mode of travel and build a training programme which develops the physical fitness needed. Foot and cycle expeditions will place demands on the lower part of the body, while rowing and canoeing will require strength in the upper body. Participants should consider the kit they will be carrying on expedition when designing their fitness regime.

Seek advice from people with experience in the mode of travel, as to how best to prepare. Participants need to gain experience in their mode of travel and they can develop this into a physical training programme by adding weights and increasing speeds. Training in this way will strengthen and harden the right parts of the body for the expedition.



Training continued



Qualifying expedition

The training programme should be planned to continue right up to the pre-expedition check in the days before the qualifying expedition, which usually takes place in the summer or early autumn.

Key points to remember:

- Take into account the weather, availability of instructors and exams. Make the most of long bank holiday weekends
- Leave some time between the practice and qualifying expeditions for additional learning and practices, if required
- Has sufficient outdoor practical training been included in the training programme if a practice expedition has not been included at Bronze level?
- Maintain a good pace of learning from the start of the programme to prevent frantic activity as the qualifying expedition approaches
- Have one person maintain a comprehensive checklist of what needs to be completed and when
- Be flexible as participants will learn at different rates and have different strengths. This is particularly the case for direct entrant participants
- Build on the training from previous DofE levels as participants progress to Gold level
- Teams undertaking project-focused expeditions should identify someone with expertise in the topic area to support and advise them in developing their project and investigations.

Planning training sessions

Each training session should be planned to incorporate these elements:

- Follow a written plan
- Mix the different elements of the Expedition Training Framework
- Focus on the essentials
- Be practical
- Have sufficient equipment
- Review the session
- Record the session.

Focus on sessions being enjoyable, practical and hands-on with equipment. Ensure each participant's learning is recorded to evidence competence to the Supervisor and Assessor, and is signed off in eDofE.

Reviewing training sessions

Reviewing needs to be built into every training session to enable the DofE team/group to examine and reflect on what they have learnt.

It helps instructors to revise existing training sessions and prepare new sessions. Reviewing does not have to take long, but these discussions and reflections are excellent for reinforcing learning, enabling all team members to consider their progression and contribution to the team.

It helps people identify any weaknesses, share them in a supportive environment and recognise the developing team dynamics.

Team reviewing and reflection should be undertaken both with and without adult support.



4. Planning and training for expeditions

Training continued



Instructors can help by asking open questions, similar to those below, to initiate a discussion:

- What did we plan to do?
- How well did we achieve these aims and objectives?
- Some of us had (this issue), what should we do differently next time?
- What was our speed of travel today, can we improve it?
- How effective was learning in (this area), is everybody confident?

Questions should also consider soft skills where more sophisticated team judgements must be made:

- Why did we argue over (this issue)?
- Why didn't we work together on (this task)?
- What was each person's role in (this task)?
- How can we work together to overcome issues in the future?



For more information on inclusive expedition training see **chapter 8.2: Expedition Requirements – inclusive practice**



4.2 Practice expeditions



Good practice expeditions prepare participants for the challenges of their qualifying expedition, allowing them to avoid problems like poor time-keeping, overweight packs, lack of fitness and blistered feet while under assessment.

The focus of a practice expedition is on learning, making mistakes, and improving skills with the guidance of Supervisors. It's not about replicating the exact supervision conditions of the qualifying expedition but ensuring participants gain the necessary experience and support to be ready for it. Some participants may need more supervision depending on their experience, so flexibility is key. Supervisors should adapt their level of involvement to suit the needs of their group, gradually reducing direct supervision as participants become more confident and competent.

Whilst participants may complete several practice day walks or training expeditions, at Silver and Gold level every DofE participant must complete a practice expedition which is evidenced in eDofE and meets all the requirements set out here. The practice expedition should be considered as important as the qualifying expedition.

The requirements

- Participants must complete sufficient journeys to confidently and competently undertake their unaccompanied, qualifying expedition
- At Silver and Gold level, all participants must complete at least one UK practice expedition for the appropriate duration
- The practice expedition must replicate as closely as possible the conditions of the qualifying expedition. This includes: mode of travel, team size, accommodation, terrain, hours of journeying and self-sufficiency
- Practice expeditions must be a minimum of two days and two nights away, consecutively
- Practice expeditions must not be over the same route or be in the same vicinity as the route planned for the qualifying expedition
- Any team undertaking a qualifying expedition in a remote area at Silver and Gold level must complete a practice expedition of the appropriate duration in a similar area
- Most Bronze level teams don't venture into remote areas but, if a team does, serious consideration should be given to running a practice expedition in similar terrain
- While not compulsory, practice expeditions at Bronze level provide a valuable opportunity for participants to develop skills in a practical setting. If a practice expedition hasn't been included in the training programme the Supervisor should ensure sufficient outdoor practical training has been provided and participants must still reach the necessary skills and fitness levels for a remotely supervised qualifying expedition
- DofE Leaders and young people can decide on what would be a reasonable gap between practice and qualifying expeditions. 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
- All normal and Licensed Organisation (LO) requirements for the safe supervision and/or remote supervision of expedition teams must be followed
- Practice expeditions at Silver and Gold are part of the DofE expedition section and must be completed with an Approved Activity Provider (AAP) or LO.





Verifying competence

Teams will need to complete a variety of training days, some of which might include an overnight stay, before they are ready to undertake their practice expedition.

During this training, as the Supervisor gains greater confidence in the team's abilities, they can reduce the level of close supervision. Supervisors should also be adapting their level of involvement based on participant needs. This ensures that during the practice expedition the team is able to demonstrate their ability to journey unaccompanied. Supervisors should encourage reflection at checkpoints, campsites, and debrief sessions to help participants evaluate their equipment, skills, fitness, and team performance.

The practice expedition must be structured so that it allows the Supervisor to be completely satisfied, and able to verify, that before the start of their qualifying expedition participants have the expedition skills and fitness levels appropriate for their unaccompanied, remotely supervised, qualifying expedition. This must be signed off within eDofE. If no practice expedition is run at Bronze level, the listed learning outcomes must still be achieved through training and signed off within eDofE.

For Gold groups who have expedition experience this may mean just one practice expedition which is several days long where the first day is accompanied but the other days are remotely supervised.

For other teams, this process of decreasing direct supervision may take place over several training expeditions and then their practice expedition, as their skills, confidence and experience increase. If after their practice expedition the Supervisor is still unable to verify the competence of the group, then a further practice expedition would be required.

Accompanied training expeditions and day walks, at all Award levels, allow the Supervisor to delegate navigation and leadership roles to individuals team members. Rotate these roles to give all participants the chance to learn and improve their skills. This direct, in situ learning is extremely effective and teams can quickly improve from this approach. This can aid the Supervisor in making the decision of knowing when to remotely supervise and also to identify areas for further training.

Changing the mode of travel between DofE levels can provide great additional engagement, excitement and challenges to participants, extending both the experience and level of skill. This usually requires additional training and practice expeditions.

Practices undertaken some time ago

Some participants come back to their DofE programme after some time, looking to complete their qualifying expedition. The Supervisor must decide if their practice expedition was too long ago to adequately evidence competence and must agree with the participant how they will prove they are capable of safely undertaking a qualifying expedition.

Getting the most from practice expeditions

Consider what the practice expedition aims to achieve and involve the participants to clearly establish the learning outcomes before planning each one. While helping with team building and confidence, they bring together all the skills and techniques learnt by the team so they can be practised under realistic conditions.



Practice expeditions continued



Common learning outcomes for participants

- Practising expedition skills with an emphasis on the mode of travel, navigation and campcraft
- Determining their average speed of travel for their qualifying expedition
- Testing the suitability of their clothing, footwear and equipment
- Considering the weight of their packs and the need for every item they carry
- Identifying how much food, drink and fuel they will need during their expedition
- Understanding the levels of physical fitness required for the qualifying expedition
- Testing their planned menus and the amount of food they need to take
- Provide an opportunity to practise the skills of investigation
- Observation and recording to use in their qualifying expedition
- Developing their team dynamics essential to complete successfully a challenging, physical endeavour in a demanding environment and possible adverse weather.

Common outcomes for Supervisors and other staff

- Providing opportunities for individual and team tuition in expedition and travelling techniques
- Evaluating the competence of the team and the individuals to undertake an unaccompanied, self-reliant expedition
- Observing and, where necessary, facilitating the team-building process
- Considering if any individuals would be better placed in a different team
- Gauging participants' respect, behaviour and attitude to the outdoors.

Practice expeditions are essential for accurately determining a team's speed of travel and giving them the chance to develop how they work together under genuine expedition conditions.

To make up the required consecutive two days and two nights away, practices are usually planned over a bank holiday weekend, school holiday or a Friday night to Sunday afternoon.

It is essential that teams at these levels learn the lessons of multiple night expeditions; coping when tired, possibly with wet camping equipment and clothing and having to use it again the following night.

Always consider carefully how long it will take to get to and from the expedition location and think through what impact this will have on the participants.

Timing and reflection on the practice expedition

The majority of training, including all essential skills, will need to be completed before the practice expedition to ensure participants are properly prepared and not put off by a bad experience.

The Supervisor must ensure that the qualifying expedition happens soon enough after the last practice so participants do not lose their fitness, competence and confidence. If necessary, the Supervisor could consider running a qualifying expedition that is delivered back-to-back with the practice expedition. However, it's worth bearing in mind factors such as the group's age, level, amount of training and mode of travel before committing to a back-to-back expedition. For most participants, progressive, separate practice and qualifying expeditions are far more likely to facilitate a positive experience and ensure participants complete their Expedition section.



4. Planning and training for expeditions

Practice expeditions continued



A back-to-back expedition is often extremely physically demanding and should be a considered choice from the Supervisor. The LO/AAP must have a system in place to check the readiness of participants to take part in this type of experience. There should be a clear divide between the end of the practice and the start of the qualifying and this could include an overnight in indoor accommodation, access to laundry facilities and a substantial meal, all of which will aid in recovery ahead of the next expedition.

Reflection and reviewing is essential in a young person's DofE programme and the Supervisor should facilitate this throughout the practice expedition. So as not to intrude on the team's isolation and self-reliant learning experience, use checkpoints, the camp site and a planned debrief session.

Teams and individuals need to reflect on their equipment, skills, training and fitness; while considering the aims and learning outcomes of their practice and how they have progressed overall.

The discussion should lead to new strategies and techniques that the team can test out during the remainder of the practice expedition and qualifying expedition.

Teams should consider their performance both as a team, and as individuals, what their team roles were and the leadership dynamics. Teams should also be encouraged to reflect on their expedition independently of the Supervisor. Participants can record these reflections in eDofE as part of their development.



4.3 Team goal



The DofE Leaders' Handbook says...

Expeditions must have a clearly defined team goal – this could be researching an area of interest, contributing to a community action project or developing soft skills.

The team goal should relate to the interests and abilities of those taking part. This is the key to any expedition's success.

Before any planning, the first thing an expedition team needs to do is decide on their team goal. Without it, the team cannot plan an effective and challenging expedition with a clear outcome. From thinking about the team goal come all the other decisions like environment and mode of travel.

The team goal may change, for example following a practice expedition, but it must be agreed with the DofE Leader and Supervisor before the qualifying expedition. It may be altered again if circumstances change. It can be helpful to have a backup investigation plan.

Supporting participants to choose their team goal

Participants should think about their interests and abilities and then develop a team goal which enhances these within their expedition. For Bronze level expeditions only, the Leader can set the team goal if teams are struggling to think of ideas or destinations, modes of travel and project themes.

It is the role of the supporting staff to help participants to think clearly and logically about their ideas for destinations, mode of travel and project themes. It is important that Supervisors do not force participants to choose locations or a mode of travel because they know them well. Teams should be encouraged, particularly at Gold level, to push themselves and broaden their horizons. Supervisors should be as inspired as the participants.

This can be a balancing act for Supervisors to support and empower participants' ideas against the real practicalities, time and cost of those ideas, multiple expedition groups and the resources available to the DofE centre.

If the DofE centre and staff feel they cannot facilitate a team goal the team wants to undertake, then there are many open expeditions and Approved Activity Providers (AAPs) who may be able to help.

Participants can fundraise to help cover the costs; this adds another level to their development and commitment.

Get expert advice

As the team goal takes shape, participants should talk to someone who has relevant expedition experience and knowledge. This helps participants avoid poor decisions and get the most out of their efforts and their Expedition section experience.

This person's help may be about the mode of travel, the destination area, local culture, flora and fauna or interesting ways to investigate the chosen project.



Team goal continued



Getting the right balance and expeditions with a project focus

All expeditions are focused on their team goal and it is up to the participants to decide how much time they will give to exploring and investigating their qualifying expedition project.

The expedition needs to challenge the participants physically and mentally. There should be an honest balance between the time genuinely spent exploring and investigating the team goal and the time spent journeying. Teams should be prepared to explain to their Assessor what investigations they intend to do to fill the stated time spent on the team goal and how it is appropriate to them.

Remember that the minimum hours of activity requires at least half the time to be spent journeying and it may be that teams need to complete more than the minimum required hours to meet the needs of their team goal.

As part of good planning, when completing their route cards participants need to clearly show what time will be spent on investigating their team goal and what it is they will be doing. While all expeditions are focused on their team goal, some teams will put much more time into their expedition project.

As the exploring and project element of the expedition is enlarged, so must be the corresponding amount of research before and after the expedition, the investigation during the expedition and scale of the presentation. For Bronze level expeditions with a project focus, participants should expect to discuss their findings in detail in their Assessor's debrief at the end of the expedition. Some teams may want to focus on their project so as to reduce the physical demands of their expedition.

The expedition must remain an appropriate challenge and an adventure, meeting all the Expedition Requirements and Expedition section outcomes.

Think about the presentation

At Silver and Gold level, a presentation must be prepared and delivered after the expedition. For these expeditions the team goal and presentation are closely linked, so participants should think about what kind of presentation they might create at this early stage of the expedition process. Their initial ideas for the presentation may change and develop over the course of their Expedition section, but it is important participants have this end point in their minds.

Team goal ideas

History

- Explore and document cairns
- Investigate the changes in local agriculture over the last 100 years
- Explore an historic place made famous in a film or television programme and document the scenery
- Photograph and describe interesting old buildings along your route
- Find clues to local industry or crafts that historically took place where you visit
- Plan a route near a castle and explore how old it is and who occupied it in the past
- Travel along parts of a disused railway to explore its history and use of any surviving buildings
- Note the period and style of architecture of interesting buildings you pass
- Plan a tour of famous battlefields, learning about their history.



4. Planning and training for expeditions

Team goal continued



Environment

- Decorate a white t-shirt, using inspiration from the scenery that you see along your route
- Search for forms of fungi, photograph or sketch them and record them
- Record evidence of wildlife breeding programmes and consider how you would start your own
- Paint different types of trees and correctly identify them
- List and film the different kinds of birds that you see
- Investigate the features of a river using an adjacent cycle path
- Sketch some of the insects you spot and find out what they are
- Report on the accessibility of open spaces to wheelchair users and others with restricted mobility.

Teamwork

- Create a series of communication signals to use within your team
- Do a fun team game or challenge each day to promote team building
- Make a video diary of your team's experiences, from camping and cooking to reaching your destination
- Design a team motif and make a badge or accessory for each team member to wear that reflects your journey
- As a team, identify different team roles and rotate each day
- Examining group dynamics and teamwork, by applying theories like Belbin or Tuckman to a study while on expedition, then producing a detailed statistical research presentation
- Take a photo of your group at each check point and use to create into a collage to show if you are doing a presentation
- Keep a log of the weather throughout your expedition and how you adapted to it as a team
- Log the incidents that test your team every day and think about how you could have dealt with the incident more effectively
- As a team, on your journey make a flag which you can raise on the last day.



Team goal continued



Conservation

- Monitor the levels of litter on your route and plan how you could campaign to reduce this
- Consider the impact of vehicles on the environment along your route
- Record evidence of wildlife breeding programmes and consider how you would start your own
- Investigate the maintenance of footpaths and hedgerows
- Study local efforts to stop the erosion of coastlines
- Consider the impact of tourism on your surroundings
- Examine the conservation efforts for wildlife in ponds and lakes on your route.

Physical

- Record your different emotions over the expedition and relate it to the physical challenge
- Set a group challenge to speed walk every day for a certain period of time and keep each other going
- Monitoring and evidencing the impact of a physically demanding expedition on the body by walking all day and measuring calorie intake, blood pressure and pulse compared to normal
- Monitor what time of day people have the most energy to push themselves harder and improve
- Film warm up and warm down sessions before and after your day's walk
- Monitor changing heart rates and body temperature on the expedition route.

Literature

- Write a series of poems of your experiences and critique them
- Visit areas which inspired poetry, such as the Lake District and Wordsworth
- Explore sites made famous in folklore, such as Robin Hood's legendary home of Sherwood Forest
- Use your funniest expedition moments to create a play and perform it as your presentation
- Write a short ghost story or mystery tale based loosely on your expedition
- Producing an illustrated guide to a stretch of canal. Research the history and then travel along the towpath using the expedition to gather photographs and sketches to illustrate the guide
- Preparing a users' guide of a country park or National Trust estate, explaining how it can be used, e.g. fishing, picnicking, conservation.



For more information on inclusive team goal setting tips see **chapter 8.2: Expedition Requirements – inclusive practice**



4.4 Navigation and route planning



Navigation

DofE participants use maps/charts and compasses to navigate during their expedition. It is essential that all participants and teams develop, practice and refine their navigation and map reading skills to the level required to undertake their expedition safely. Participants will need to learn the core skills of map reading, practical skills of using maps in the outdoors and how to navigate with a map and compass. The importance of good navigation skills developed through practice cannot be overstressed for DofE teams.

These skills prevent teams from straying off route and losing time and help them to stay safe whilst being remotely supervised. Being able to navigate and map read will allow teams to understand and plan their route, navigate it successfully and have the skills to adapt to issues that may arise while on expedition.

The Expedition Supervisor should decide what navigation techniques and compass skills are appropriate for the environment and nature of the planned expedition. Compass skills and navigating via an Ordnance Survey map may not be required for an expedition in an urban environment or restricted space. All participants must be signed off by their Supervisor as trained and competent. Teams travelling in coastal areas and on open water will need to be competent in the use of appropriate charts and techniques.

Teams undertaking expeditions outside the UK may need specific training based on the maps available of their expedition area. Participants' skills will improve and become more sophisticated as they progress through the DofE levels and undertake their expeditions in more challenging areas.

Teams travelling through remote areas will need to be both confident and competent in compass use to navigate in potential situations of poor visibility and areas with few reference points.



For more information on DofE recommended compasses, maps and map cases [DofE.org/shop](https://www.dofe.org/shop)

Route planning

The route planning process is a key part of the Expedition section and is essential to the success of any expedition. It is important for participants to pace themselves and plan balanced days of journeying for their expedition. Both hot and cold weather can cause problems to teams on long days and the impact of a late finish will disrupt good camping and delay planned early starts for the following morning.

Access restrictions

Teams need to check access. Avoid areas where farmers are lambing or field sports are taking place. UK shooting details can be found online and deerstalking information from the Scottish Hillphones Service. Also be aware of restrictions on Ministry of Defence land.

Create natural, logical routes

DofE teams should create routes which are a continuous journey stopping at different locations each night. Routes should be natural, linear routes which have a purpose linked to the team's goal and which are sympathetic to the landscape.



Navigation and route planning continued



Start early in the day

Teams at all levels should always attempt to start the day as early as possible, particularly towards the beginning and end of the expedition season when daylight hours are restricted. A good way of approaching this is to think about what time participants would like to finish the day's journeying and work back from there. Starting early in the day is also a good way to avoid walking in the hottest part of the day during the Summer months.

Make major ascents early in the day

Participants should plan any prolonged period of uphill walking for early in the day when they are still fresh and before any midday sun. It also allows participants to enjoy lunch in high places; taking in the panorama (in good weather) and knowing the most challenging part of the day is behind them.

As problems tend to occur later in the day, it is also good for teams to already be heading downhill, back into the more sheltered terrain and closer to assistance.

Minimising impact

It's important to consider the impact on local landowners, particularly around busy campsites that see frequent use. One option to reduce disruption is to use motorised transport at the start or end of the day when accessing or leaving these areas. This can help ease pressure on access points, reduce noise and congestion, and show consideration for those living nearby, supporting more respectful and sustainable expedition practices.

Alternative routes

Bad weather, particularly in remote areas, should be considered the norm. All teams must identify and record on their route card, easy to follow, non-hazardous emergency escape

routes to agreed locations where they can get help.

The DofE recommends that all teams should also create alternative poor weather routes. An alternative route is one which enables the team to reach its intended destination, meeting the Expedition Requirements, and yet avoid the full impact of the weather-related hazards which can seriously add to navigation challenges. These alternative routes might be between certain checkpoints or an alternative route for the whole day. Few participants will have the experience to navigate safely and carry on whilst cocooned in mist and cloud.

DofE teams must not feel that using alternative routes is 'not meeting the challenge' or 'letting themselves down'. Managing risk is part of the DofE experience and teams should know when to switch routes and also when to turn back – 'pushing on' can limit options and be dangerous.

Supervisors (and Assessors) will work with participants to redesign routes to still meet the Expedition Requirements; they are there to facilitate success for the team.

Solitude, not altitude

DofE teams travel and navigate independently through, not over, terrain. While it is naturally tempting to head to the highest peak or a popular ridge, this is not in keeping with the concept or outcomes of DofE expeditions.

DofE teams, with their heavy, high-loaded backpacks, are committed to several days of self-sufficient expedition. As a result, traverses of well-known ridges and ascents of summits such as Crib Goch, Bristly Ridge, Lord's Rake and Striding Edge are unsuitable for DofE expedition teams.



4. Planning and training for expeditions

Navigation and route planning continued



All DofE expeditions are about solitude not altitude. Teams should pass through, not over, expedition areas. Setting the team goal to climb peaks is not acceptable. This should not stop teams wanting to reach some summits, cols or passes, but it is too easy for teams to over-estimate fitness and under-estimate the effort of carrying a full pack. Training walks and the practice expedition should help participants identify their capabilities.

The Assessor will look upon excessive amounts of climbing with suspicion. Teams looking to reach a summit should do so over multiple days using more sheltered routes, with little height change on the following day.

If participants are inspired to go on and climb more famous ascents in the future, then this should be considered a successful outcome of the section, giving them a lifetime of enjoyment in the outdoors.

Start points

If supporting several DofE teams, ensure they set off from different locations, a few miles/km apart. This helps to ensure personal and independent expedition routes and prevents teams leapfrogging or following each other. This also puts in a natural time gap and reduces the environmental impact or local disruption at a single start point.



Where possible, plan for start points to include the option to go to the toilet. Many participants often have concerns about needing to go to the toilet whilst out journeying throughout the day so start points, and rest stops, where toilets are available allow participants to hydrate throughout the day without any concerns.

Hours of planned activity, journeying, and distance guidance

Each day of a DofE expedition must include a minimum of 6 hours of planned activity at Bronze level, 7 hours at Silver, and 8 hours at Gold. At least 50% of this time must be spent journeying, ensuring that purposeful travel remains central to the expedition experience. The remaining time can be used for rest breaks, lunch, and project work linked to the team goal.

This structure allows for flexibility in how expeditions are designed. Teams can incorporate meaningful exploration or investigation alongside their journey, and routes can be tailored to suit different physical abilities and interests. This supports inclusive practice and encourages creativity in how teams approach their expedition.

Route planning should begin by assuming the full required hours of activity, then deducting time for lunch, rests, and team goal-related work. In some cases, additional activity time may be needed to fully achieve the team goal.

The distance covered will vary depending on terrain, weather, fitness, route complexity, and the nature of the team goal. Some routes may require frequent navigation stops, while others may involve longer pauses for investigation. While it's difficult to provide exact distances, the table below offers general guidance to help Supervisors assess whether routes are realistic and achievable.



Navigation and route planning continued



When supporting multiple teams, staggered start points a few miles or kilometres apart help ensure independent routes, reduce environmental impact, and minimise local disruption. Where possible, choose start points and rest stops with access to toilets, helping participants feel comfortable staying hydrated throughout the day.

Rests and lunch breaks

Reasonable time for lunch and other appropriate breaks can be included within the hours of planned activity. Thirty minutes should be considered a reasonable amount of time for DofE groups to plan for their lunch stop.

Try to plan lunch stops in an appropriate location, somewhere with great views; but be flexible to have it earlier or later if the weather is poor and a sheltered spot would be better.

Some participants with medical conditions may need to consider locations of toilet/changing facilities as part of their breaks.

Time associated with overnight accommodation and catering is additional to the minimum daytime hours of planned activity.

Continuous expedition days

All DofE expeditions must be completed over consecutive days. Splitting an expedition into separate, non-continuous days does not meet the requirements. This ensures that participants experience the full challenge and continuity of an expedition, including journeying, teamwork, and self-sufficiency across multiple days.

The route card

DofE participants should always plan out and record the details of their expedition route in a route card and route outline/map as a statement of their intentions for their expedition.

The route card is a valuable learning process that encourages participants to recognise the importance of attention to detail and careful organisation. It is also a key tool in enabling participants to identify and manage risk in their expedition route.

The route card informs the Supervisor, expedition support staff and the Assessor where the team is going and when they will get there, it is the cornerstone of expedition safety.

Route cards act as a log of the journey and are a live document which participants will update as their expedition progresses.

They enable participants to compare their actual times of arrival to their estimated times and so judge their own progress against their original plan.



Template route cards are available for free at [DofE.org/resourcescentre](https://www.dofe.org/resourcescentre)



Navigation and route planning continued



Building a route card

Participants complete their route cards as a team following this basic process:

1. Choose departure point

Using a separate route card for each day, participants record their departure point and the end point for the day's journeying.

2. Define route legs

After planning the day's travel, participants divide the route into natural divisions of roughly equal length ending at an unmistakable landmark. These become expedition 'legs' ending in a 'checkpoint'. A route containing between six and eight checkpoints is suitable for a day's journey.

3. Estimate timings

Participants then estimate the time needed to complete each leg. A good team can work out average distances and timings based on their training and practice expeditions.

Participants need to take into account additional time needed for height gained using Naismith's rule, rest periods and for undertaking project investigations. Reasonable time for lunch should be included and it is good practice to identify this as a checkpoint.

4. Calculate estimated time of arrival

Using their estimated timings participants can calculate what time they will arrive at each checkpoint and what time they will set out on the next leg. Participants will also add in their information on bearings (based on the level of their competence) and written details of the route to be followed. These are to allow participants to navigate in the unlikely event that their map is lost or can't be used and to reinforce effective navigation during expeditions.

5. Identify escape routes

For each leg there needs to be one or more identified escape routes as a precaution against extreme weather, becoming lost or in the event of an emergency. All DofE groups should also plan alternative poor weather routes to allow them the possibility of continuing their journey on a safer, low level (lower risk) expedition route.

6. Produce route details

General information like the team name, participants' names and emergency contact numbers should be added and then several copies made. It is these copies, along with a route map, which are used in the notification process. Route outlines/maps are traditionally tracing overlays on to 1:50000 scale maps (rather than 1:25 000 to make them manageable). More commonly now, they are either drawn onto laminated maps or created electronically and emailed.

eDofE Mapping and digital mapping

eDofE Mapping is a free expedition route submission tool designed to create standard DofE route cards and route summaries. It can be used by anyone using eDofE and helps speed up the route approval process.

The eDofE Mapping system allows participants and Leaders to produce digital files that can be printed, emailed, saved or uploaded onto eDofE. However, for safety reasons, while on expedition, teams must carry full Ordnance Survey maps or appropriate charts with them and not rely on eDofE Mapping print outs.

The digital files created can also be used with handheld GPS devices on expedition.

There are a range of other digital mapping products DofE groups may want to use and the mapping files they create can be uploaded into eDofE Mapping.



4. Planning and training for expeditions

Navigation and route planning continued



Urban spaces

The option to run an urban expedition was offered as part of the Covid-19 temporary changes and the feedback afterwards was extremely positive. Feedback showed that when run correctly, these experiences can be both meaningful and challenging.

Routes can be planned through urban areas and when planned correctly these areas can allow for challenging experiences with engaging team goals. Supervisors should be aware of the additional risks posed by these areas including road crossings and the general public and must ensure groups are briefed and appropriately trained.

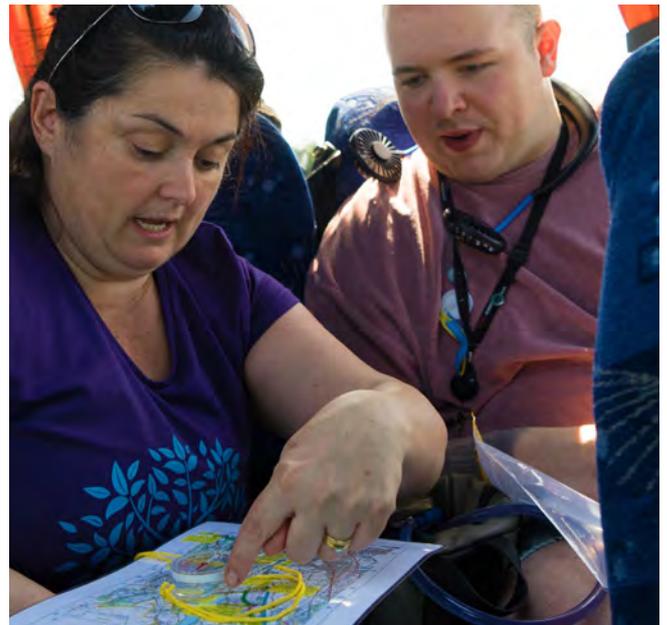
Leaders should consider the expeditions that participants may have done at previous levels to ensure the planned expedition is progressively challenging. The expedition requirements must still be followed in the same way as when completing a rural expedition.

In accordance with the Expedition Requirements, groups must understand and adhere to the Highway Code when on expedition and know how to safely cross any roads which are unavoidable on their route. Under no circumstances should groups need to cross dual carriageways on their route. Teams

need to be trained to understand the thinking behind this and plan their routes accordingly. It is not about taking the fastest and most direct route.



For more information on inclusive route planning see **chapter 8.2: Expedition Requirements – inclusive practice**



4.5 Global Positioning System (GPS)



The increasing sophistication of GPS and handheld mapping devices make them a good additional safety tool for DofE groups. DofE groups may use GPS devices as a secondary navigation tool, but there must be no reduction in the framework or quality of the navigation training and competence of the team.

The expedition team, Supervisor and Assessor should agree in advance the policy of use during their expedition.

The Global Positioning System (GPS) is a satellite-based navigation system made up of a network of 24 satellites, each sending down radio signals every second to determine a location.

GPS works in all weather conditions and anywhere in the world, 24 hours a day. It is usually horizontally accurate to 15m or better; some also show altitude ascent and descent. However, units can break or be damaged, and accuracy and reliability can also be compromised.

Buildings, terrain, electronic interference, forests or sometimes even dense foliage and the human body can block signal reception to the satellites, causing less accuracy, location errors or possibly no location reading at all.

GPS units will require their batteries to be re-charged or replaced during the expedition and low cloud or poor weather will reduce battery life.

A mobile GPS device can store a predetermined route and provide a continuous display of actual bearings, distance and speed over ground compared to this route. It is essential that the planned route takes into account any possible hazards in advance and is checked to meet DofE requirements.

Anyone involved in DofE expeditions, including Supervisors, support staff, volunteers and Assessors must not use GPS devices as a substitute for the high level of navigational ability required to remain safety.

Within a DofE context, GPS should be thought of as additional safety equipment, rather than as a navigation tool.

With all items of equipment, especially those concerned with safety and competence, it is usually the user's level of skill and experience which defines performance.

GPS is particularly valuable when the normal navigation processes have failed and groups are in the dark, have restricted visibility, in featureless terrain, extreme weather conditions and when the team is lost, anxious and stressed.

It is essential that in these conditions, the user can feed in the correct data and interpret the information coming out of the instrument accurately to select appropriate routes or escape routes, which are as free from hazards as possible.

In such conditions, if considerable distances have to be covered, GPS can help by supporting pacing or reducing the uncertainties of 'dead reckoning' when carried out by those who are less experienced. It may be possible to pre-programme escape routes to speed up route selection in an emergency situation.

GPS devices can be very useful when outside of the UK where less accurate maps exist. The GPS device may need its settings changed to reflect the maps being used; units for distance, time zones and the north reference should reflect the magnetic variation of the international location.



Global Positioning System (GPS) continued



GPS as secondary navigation tools

GPS devices may be used as an additional, secondary navigational tool by DofE expedition teams, however the DofE stipulates the following requirements:

- There must be no reduction in the training framework or quality of the navigation training and competence of the team, signed off by the trainer/Supervisor for each participant. The level of competence must be checked by the Supervisor and Assessor during the pre-expedition check
- Teams carrying GPS devices must remain aware of their surroundings and be able to navigate to the same standard as teams not carrying GPS. Teams must be fully prepared should the GPS malfunction and must not be allowed to fall into a false sense of security
- DofE teams are required to navigate using a map and compass, this is an essential skill for all team members. A DofE team must not simply follow the directions of a GPS device nor use it every time they want to check where they are
- GPS allows teams to make informed decisions if a situation threatens to deteriorate and to navigate to avoid hazards. A GPS device should not be used simply to avoid making navigational mistakes, as getting lost and sorting it out for themselves is a valuable learning experience and is an important part of their DofE experience
- Decide how the GPS device will be used and plan ahead to carry an ample supply of spare batteries or method of recharging. Spare batteries may not be carried by the Supervisor/Assessor as DofE teams have to be self-sufficient. If there is an available power outlet then the device may be recharged by the team at their camp site.

Extra training will be required for teams:

- To develop their understanding of the OS national grid system, use 10 figure grid references and the map indexing of 1:50,000 and 1:25,000 maps. For example, it may be necessary to key in the sheet index letters before a six-figure reference
- Abilities to plot positions, bearings and routes provided by GPS onto the relevant maps. Then, like all DofE teams, to choose the most suitable routes, alternative routes and escape routes which pose the least hazard
- To practise using the instrument's functionality to store a series of way points so as to reduce the amount of map work needed in extreme weather conditions
- Expeditioning outside the UK, to be able to establish their location using latitude and longitude, plot positions, bearings and routes on foreign maps of the appropriate scale and to communicate such information to Supervisors and Assessors
- To gain an understanding of the terminology of GPS and the ability to utilise quickly and accurately all the information and data which the instrument is capable of supplying.

GPS devices can add an additional level of safety, particularly when outside the UK or during poor weather conditions; however they are not a necessary piece of equipment for DofE teams.





Supervising groups with GPS tracking systems

GPS tracking systems can be used by DofE groups as an additional safety tool. However great care must be taken to ensure that they do not compromise either the number of supervising adults or the team's feeling of isolation and self-reliance.

There must be no reduction in the framework or quality of the emergency training and competence of the team, nor any compromise of the Supervisor's emergency planning/procedures. The expedition team, Supervisor and Assessor should agree in advance the policy of use during their expedition.

A GPS tracking device can be placed in a participant's rucksack which can then transmit location information to a GPS receiver and then on to a (usually encrypted) secure server. This data can then be transmitted securely to a computer via an internet connection or a handheld device. Supervisors, Assessors, Leaders, Licensed Organisations (LOs) and emergency contacts can then monitor the team's location and progress.

Using tracking systems can be an effective way of supporting team safety. Most systems have a panic button or some (editable) emergency phone numbers that can allow the group to call for help in the event of an emergency.

The tracking systems provide an accurate indication of a team's location, reducing the time taken to find them.

Tracking can help Supervisors and Assessors with effective remote supervision. Knowing where expedition teams are, or are not, can help save time and money for Supervisors and Assessors.

Working out where and when they are likely to meet their teams can reduce the amount of driving and environmental impact of expeditions

and prevent waiting long periods at checkpoints. Such systems can also involve other people in the LO, allowing them to keep up to date with their team's progress.

DofE expeditions are an opportunity for participants to be independent; so allowing parents to be able to monitor progress can undermine this, and delays or travelling off route may potentially worry parents unnecessarily. Therefore it is not recommended that parents have access to GPS tracking systems.

Care must be taken to work out how Supervisors and Assessors will have access to the tracking information while supporting expeditions and to ensure all involved are trained in using the tracking device and the accompanying software. Tracking systems that use the mobile phone networks should not be used as reception is too unreliable.

Within a DofE context, tracking should be used with some caution. Whilst it can enhance remote supervision, giving teams more space and less adult contact, a tracking system does not tell Supervisors how the group is feeling or how individuals are coping.

Tracking systems must not allow a false sense of security to set in with the Supervisors responsible for the young people.

Tracking systems must not be used to reduce the number of Supervisors supporting DofE expeditions. Ratios of Supervisors to young people are based on the needs of emergency situations and not day to day monitoring of the team's/teams' progress.

For participants, knowing they have a tracking device can undermine the spirit of isolation and self-reliance felt by their DofE team and themselves.



4. Planning and training for expeditions

Global Positioning System (GPS) continued



For example, getting lost and sorting it out for themselves is part of many DofE expeditions and knowing that they are being monitored may reduce the feeling of having to get themselves back on route.

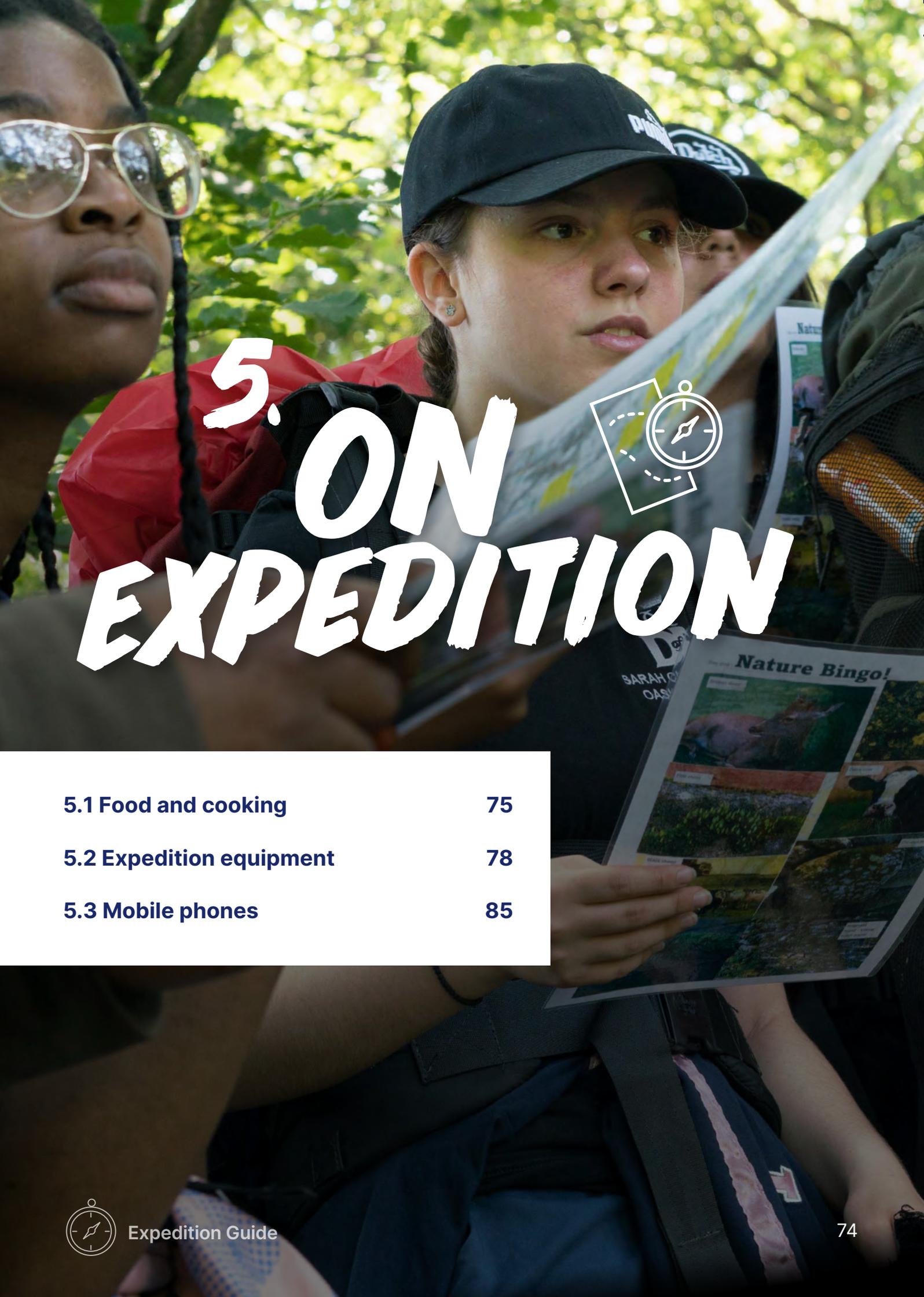
Tracking systems are not there to stop teams making mistakes, but are there to help if a situation deteriorates or if help is needed. Supervisors must ensure, through training, that GPS tracking devices have no more impact on this feeling than groups with mobile phones in their rucksacks in case of an emergency.

While the DofE allows DofE groups to use tracking systems to support the safety of their expedition teams, it is not a requirement, nor is it a substitute for the required emergency training and competent supervision.



For more information on DofE recommended tracking systems visit [DofE.org/shop](https://www.dofe.org/shop)





5. ON EXPEDITION



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5.1 Food and cooking

Good expedition catering is one of the best team building activities of the Expedition section. Getting teams to cook from scratch, prepare meals themselves at home, manage a team budget, choose and agree a menu and share meals are all excellent for team building and developing life skills.

Whilst individual participants can simply use lightweight and high energy dehydrated food packets or boil in the bag meals for their expedition, these can miss many of the potential benefits and personal development opportunities of expedition catering.

Participants should not be taught to think of expedition food as dull, functional or unpleasant. It is an opportunity for them to be creative, show off and use it as a core part of a positive expedition experience.

The key principles of expedition food

Participants should design an expedition menu which considers the following:

- As the length of the expedition increases, so does the need to ensure participants eat a balanced diet, designed for physical activity in the outdoors
- The key task is to pack as much energy (or calories) into the least weight and volume as possible. Depending on the activity and the participant, three, four or even five thousand calories may be needed each day. Choose foods high in sugars, carbohydrates and fats
- Take food which participants like and enjoy, which are quick and simple to cook and that will keep for the duration of the expedition, even in hot weather. Dried, cured, smoked or vegetarian foods will usually last well
- Think about keeping weight and litter down by removing packaging and cooking as a team

- Make sure all food is packed and waterproofed so it will stand up to the inevitable squashing into rucksacks, being sat on and being dropped that will happen during the expedition.



For more information on DofE recommended expedition food and resources to support cooking on expedition visit [DofE.org/shop](https://www.dofe.org/shop)

Expedition meals

Breakfast

It is good practice to start the day with a substantial breakfast. This can include cereals, muesli, porridge, noodles or even a full English with tea, coffee or hot chocolate.

Lunch

There is a wide variety of options for expedition lunches, but the usual approach is for picnic or larder style foods that don't need to be heated or kept chilled.

A lunch break might consist of a hot drink with sandwiches, pitta bread or wraps with other high energy foods like flapjacks, cereal bars, nuts, dried fruit, biscuits, chocolate bars, dried sweets, jelly, mint cake and so on.

Some participants prefer to have only a short rest and 'drip feed' high energy snacks continuously whilst journeying – it's up to them to decide as a team.

Evening meal

Most participants choose to cook and eat their substantial daily meal in the evening at the camp site, when they have more time. With practice and planning, even on one stove, it is quite easy to produce a hot three course meal in a short amount of time.





Food and cooking continued

Soup, curry, stews, pasta, bangers and Smash or noodle stir-fry are all great expedition meals and can be followed up with a hot or cold pudding like hot chocolate cake or crumble and custard.

Snacks

Snacks are essential for keeping energy levels up throughout the day. They boost morale and they're great to share amongst friends, but please keep in mind that everyone has different dietary needs and some participants may have allergies.

Below are some ideas for easy and tasty snacks:

- **Fresh fruit** Apples, pears, and oranges are easy to pack, less likely to be squashed compared to softer fruits, and provide a quick source of energy
- **Energy bars** There are so many varieties of energy bars available these days. Look for ones that are high in protein and fibre for sustained energy
- **Trail mix** Packed with protein, healthy fats, and carbohydrates, it makes for the perfect fuel for a long day on the trails
- **Cheese and crackers** A quick and easy savoury option. Cheese provides protein and calcium, while crackers provide carbohydrates for energy
- **Chocolate bars** They may not offer as much nutritional value as the other options so please don't rely solely on them, but they offer that little extra boost during an expedition!

Drink

Participants need to ensure they take on frequent and adequate amounts of fluid throughout the day, particularly in hot weather.

Participants should 'tank-up' with fluid before leaving the camp site each morning and drink as much as possible as soon as they arrive at their camp site in the evening.

While participants may start expeditions with energy drinks, assume that water is what they will drink for the majority of the expedition and plan routes accordingly.

Having sufficient fluids and topping up

Running out of fluids must be avoided on expeditions so take more than is likely to be needed and keep an eye on how much fluid the team has with them.

As well as the water they carry, participants can get additional water as needed during their expedition. The best places are from their camp site, their Supervisor or other expedition support staff.

Every participant should set out each day with enough water to see them through that day; this means usually carrying at least two litres of water with them, more if it is a hot day. If necessary, this can then be topped up by the Supervisors, for example on very hot days or where teams are running late.

It is not recommended that participants take water from streams, as there is a high probability that it may be contaminated. Participants will need to boil the water or use some kind of filtration device/sterilisation process before they can drink or cook with it. This should only be needed on the most remote and high level of expeditions and should not be relied on as the team's water supply.





Food and cooking continued

Training and preparation

Expedition teams or tent groups don't have to cook shared meals or share menus and they can use ready prepared individual expedition meals. However the DofE recommends that teams work together as much as possible to design their menus, buy the food and then cook and eat as a team while on expedition.

To get the most out of cooking a substantial meal, teams need to practise preparing and cooking meals in expedition conditions.

Techniques can be honed on the final practice expedition, but it is beneficial for participants to have had several training sessions or practices at home to help decide what food they want to use.

A taster day is often a good way to get teams interested in their expedition food. Have a selection of cheap and easy meals for them to try and then ask them to have a go at cooking them at home in their kitchen. The next step is to practise cooking on stoves as a team, developing skills and learning how long different food takes to prepare and cook through. Weigh out meals to see how they compare and think about how to make them lighter.

Teams should work out that the more they can get ready in advance, the faster they can have food ready to eat on expedition. For example, having a homemade pasta sauce with vegetables and meat/vegetarian alternative all mixed in, ready cooked and only needing re-heating.

For shared evening and breakfast meals get participants to design their menus to a budget and then decide as a team who will buy and carry what. It helps to ensure everyone will eat well, includes everyone and shares the responsibility. Most participants will prepare their own lunch meals.

Encourage teams to be creative, but keep them focused on getting enough food, energy and liquids into the menu, rather than just a wide variety of meals. Ask them to think about their favourite foods and how they could adapt them so they could be used during their expedition.



The DofE's stove safety guidance, menu planner and other resources to support cooking on expedition are available for free at [DofE.org/resourcescentre](https://www.dofe.org/resourcescentre) and in **chapter 6.3: Stove safety**





5.2 Expedition equipment

All participants should have their own clothing and boots and may also want to buy some items of personal and emergency equipment like their rucksack and sleeping bag. All equipment must be checked by the Supervisor before being used for DofE activities.

The DofE recommends a basic equipment list available at [DofE.org/resourcescentre](https://www.dofe.org/resourcescentre). Kit advice can also be found at [DofE.org/shop](https://www.dofe.org/shop). Additional equipment may be needed depending on the personal requirements of those involved, the expedition environment and the mode of travel.

If your Licensed Organisation (LO) or participants face barriers to sourcing the required equipment, please speak to your Operations Officer for advice on sources of funding and support.

Expedition equipment can be divided into five categories:

- Clothing
- Personal and emergency equipment
- Personal camping equipment
- Team camping equipment
- Equipment related to the mode of travel.

For DofE qualifying expeditions, participants will also need equipment related to their team goal and investigation methods.

Clothing

There is an element of personal preference in expedition clothing, but here are three key principles for dressing for the outdoors:

1. Use multiple layers

Wear layers of clothing to provide more insulation and to allow better regulation of body temperature by adding or removing them.

This is particularly important in cold climates where clothing must transfer moisture away from the skin, provide warmth and provide protection from the wind and rain.

2. Stay dry

If clothing becomes wet, through rain or perspiration, it loses its ability to insulate. Waterproof clothing will protect against the rain and using breathable fabrics or removing layers will protect against soaking by perspiration.

3. Choose suitable materials

Synthetic fibre clothing offers very good insulation while being lightweight, absorbing less water, being less heavy when wet and drying quickly.

Expedition clothing is often categorised according to the layer in which they are worn. To work well all expedition clothes will need to be kept clean and looked after.

Outer layer

The purpose of the outer layer is to act like a shell, providing protection against the wind and rain. Even the most modern water and windproof trousers and jackets, using breathable fabrics, have difficulty coping with sweat from working hard in severe weather climates. It is important to be able to open vents and zips to allow for ventilation. The best items are flexible – a hood that goes over a hat or that can be removed, a double zip to allow for ventilation, zipped trousers to go over boots and so on.





Expedition equipment continued

Middle layer

These are insulating, lightweight, windproof and quick drying long sleeved tops/fleeces. Fleeces are popular as they absorb little moisture and remain light even when soaked. Trousers also need to have all these attributes and give freedom of movement, so jeans are not suitable for expeditions. Lightweight trousers are often preferable to shorts as they provide greater protection from sunburn, insect bites and grazes. In hot conditions, loose-fitting tops with long sleeves and long lightweight trousers are good to wear to keep cool and also provide good protection against the sun.

Inner layer

The inner layer needs to draw sweat away from the skin into the next layers. More expensive items tend to be made of synthetic materials as they dry out quickly and transfer moisture faster than cheaper cotton clothes which are better used in the middle layer.

Headwear

This should help to retain heat and keep participants warm. On hot days and in strong sun, a light, wide-brimmed hat can help protect the head, neck and face.

Gloves

Choose gloves depending on the environment and mode of travel, for example for water-based expeditions they would need to be waterproof. Gloves should be long enough to protect wrists and to tuck inside sleeves.

Socks

Socks perform three functions; they cushion feet, absorb perspiration and provide insulation against the cold. Participants on expedition should carry at least one spare pair, preferably several, ideally one set for each day.

Gaiters

Gaiters help to keep feet warm and dry in wet and windy weather and when conditions are soggy underfoot. They can be useful even on hot days when dew is still on the ground.

Boots and footwear

No other equipment will have a greater impact on the enjoyment of an expedition than a participant's footwear.

The DofE guidance on footwear is as follows:

- LOs and AAPs will have policies on footwear which participants must follow and which Supervisors will enforce during training and equipment checks
- Footwear must be suitable for the expedition environment and mode of travel. The final decision on what is suitable footwear rests with the participant's LO or AAP
- The DofE expects, and considers it essential, that participants in moor and mountainous areas wear waterproof boots with ankle support
- The DofE recommends that expedition boots with ankle support, rather than hiking shoes, are used on all DofE walking expeditions.

Participants should:

- Ensure their expedition boots are well fitted and should spend time wearing them to break them in before using them on expedition. This helps to reduce blistering
- Wear waterproof boots or use waterproofing products to improve water resistance





Expedition equipment continued

- Carry a pair of flip flops or lightweight sandals/trainers to wear around the camp site. However, these should not be worn whilst journeying
- Not borrow someone else's boots if they can avoid it, as they will be moulded to that person's foot.



For more information on DofE recommended technical clothing and resources to support what to wear on expeditions visit [DofE.org/shop](https://www.dofe.org/shop)

Personal emergency equipment

In addition to clothing, each individual must carry personal emergency equipment. This is usually the same for all environments, although there are some additional items for expeditions in remote areas and those using alternative modes of travel.

Map and compass: Every UK expedition team must take with them full OS maps or appropriate charts for the area(s) in which the expedition is being undertaken. All teams undertaking a DofE expedition should have with them sufficient compasses, route cards and maps to allow for effective navigation and to ensure the safety of all participants, should the

team split up for any reason. Map cases are also really helpful to protect maps and route cards.

First aid kits: Each DofE participant should carry their own first aid kit with them on expedition rather than, or in addition to, a communal kit for the whole team.

Emergency rations: Participants should each take some rations to be eaten in an emergency only. Chocolate bars, nuts, dried fruit, jelly, mint cake and cereal bars all work well and are usually then eaten by participants as a post expedition treat. Participants should also pack hot chocolate, tea, coffee or soup to be able to make a hot drink.

Notebook and pencil: To record experiences and note down emergency information.

Torch with spare batteries and bulb: A head torch can be useful as it leaves hands free.

Survival bag: An emergency 'bivvy bag', large enough to fit inside, is a proven life-saver in an emergency.

Water bottle(s): A strong plastic water container(s), usually totalling around two litres of capacity. Some people like to use a plastic bladder which fits into the top of the rucksack, allowing a steady intake of water without needing to stop journeying.

Whistle: Every participant should carry a plastic whistle to attract attention in an emergency.

Matches or a lighter: Essential to light the stove to make hot drinks and cook food. Make sure they are kept in a dry container; waterproof matches can also be bought.

Spare clothing: This should be appropriate for the expedition environment and be kept waterproofed and dry.





Expedition equipment continued

Personal camping equipment

Every member of the expedition team will need to carry their own personal camping equipment.

Rucksack

The rucksack needs to be big enough to contain all the equipment and be tested for fit and comfort. The shoulder straps should be wide and well padded and it is essential that there is a padded hip belt to take the weight off the shoulders. A chest strap is also beneficial. It is recommended that participants take a rucksack liner and high visibility rucksack cover to improve water resistance and help keep all kit dry.

Sleeping bag

Choose a sleeping bag that is appropriate to the expedition environment and is suitable for use in the expected night time temperatures. Using one that is too warm can add weight and make sleeping at night uncomfortably hot. Use a stuff or compression sack to reduce the bulk and a waterproof bag to put it all in. An inner bag can add a layer of flexible insulation and is useful when using a borrowed sleeping bag.

Sleeping mat

Lightweight and inexpensive, these add insulation, are useful in an emergency and make sleeping much more comfortable. Self inflating sleeping mats can also be used but are more expensive.

Changes of clothing

As well as emergency clothing, participants will also need a complete change of clothes for an expedition lasting more than one day. They will also need some appropriate dry clothing for wearing in the tent.

Eating utensils

Lightweight mug, knife, fork and spoon and something to eat from; a flat based bowl can often work for all meals.

Wash kit and towel

Take the essentials only: soap, lightweight towel, antiseptic hand gel, toothbrush, toothpaste, toilet paper and wet wipes. Some items like toothpaste can be taken by one person to be shared amongst the whole team.

Team camping equipment

Team members should carry their share of the team's camping equipment.

Tents

There are dozens of lightweight tents to choose from and LOs and AAPs usually have a selection that participants can use rather than having to buy one. Practise putting up the tent before the expedition, preferably in the dark or blind folded.

Extremely lightweight pegs can also be bought to save on weight.

Cooking stoves

Participants need to be well trained and experienced in using cooking stoves in the outdoors before going on expedition. This includes handling fuel, fuelling and refuelling the stove.

DofE participants and adults must follow the instructions and safety guidance given by the manufacturer of the stove they choose to use.

Fuel bottles

Liquid fuel needs to be kept in specifically designed bottles which have a secure screw top. Fuel bottles need to be easily distinguished and kept separate from water bottles.





Expedition equipment continued

Use the practice expedition to work out how much fuel will be needed on the qualifying expedition.

Cooking set

Teams will need a suitably sized, lightweight cooking set for each cooking group and their food choice.

Washing up materials

Teams will need a small amount of ecological liquid washing detergent, abrasive pads/a nylon scouring pad and a tea towel. Take plastic bags to put wet items into and to use as rubbish bags.

Watch and stop watch

This is an important tool to support navigation and keep to route card timings.

Other items

There is also a whole range of other optional items that teams might take with them including walking poles, cameras, sun block, a collapsible water container, tin opener, money, a football, pack of cards etc. String is also enormously useful and can make a handy washing line.

Keep weight to a minimum

As all items are carried on the back, equipment should be chosen with care. All rucksacks must be weighed before departure and packs should not be more than one quarter of the participant's own bodyweight.

Keeping the weight down is an essential part of expedition planning and is often a key factor in the expedition success and enjoyment. Take only essential items – other items will slow participants down and increase discomfort, exhaustion and risk.

Participants need to think ahead, plan as a team and balance need with use. There is little point in every team member taking toothpaste, one small tube to share is best, but equally don't cut the toothbrush in half as it makes it difficult to use. Participants are often focused on weight saving in one area, only to use it up with something else (e.g. taking a large towel).

Packing at the last minute usually means poor decisions are made, often using whatever is to hand.

Training events and practice expeditions are the best time to learn what to take and what to leave behind. However, participants must remember that this is a team undertaking and that stronger team members may have to carry more of the team equipment and have heavier bags, even if they have been particularly efficient with the weight of their personal kit.

Equally, everyone can have bad days and the team needs to come together to support them, perhaps by redistributing the kit.

Keeping everything as dry as possible keeps it light. No matter how expensive rucksacks are they are never fully waterproof – they always need waterproofing with inner bags and then all items individually waterproofed in bags.

Packing the rucksack

Modern bags are designed to keep the load near the bearer's centre of gravity. Participants need to maintain this by placing heavy items as close to the body as possible and high up towards the shoulders.

This needs to be balanced with the 'last in, first out' rule, putting items that will be needed frequently at the top of the pack or in the side pockets. This includes the first aid kit, food and water.





Expedition equipment continued

Sleeping bags and clothing, although bulky, are often comparatively light and as they are not needed during the day they should go to the bottom of the pack. Teams should divide up team equipment like the tent, food, stove and fuel equally and these items be placed near the top.

Anything attached to the outside of the rucksack must be securely fastened, so it does not get lost or swing around.



For more information on rucksacks visit DofE.org/shop/rucksacks-and-packing

The DofE Expedition Kit Guide aims to help participants and parents to choose and then find the right kit for their expeditions. Each category includes key information, expert tips and money saving ideas, as well as directions towards online resources packed with additional advice. Visit DofE.org/shop to download the guide.



Expedition campcraft and hygiene

Campcraft is divided into two parts:

- The provision of shelter (e.g. tents, bivvies and so on)
- The provision of food.

Campcraft has at its centre the care of the environment in which participants are camping.

Preparing equipment for a DofE expedition

Camping equipment should be divided into personal equipment and team camping equipment that is shared between the occupants of a tent. Two or three people should usually be considered as the basic unit occupying each tent, with two or more tents forming a DofE expedition team. Participants and teams should follow some basic steps when preparing camping equipment.

Choose containers

Successful camping begins at home by planning what equipment is needed and deciding what containers should be used to hold and carry it in. These containers will range from rucksacks for expeditions on foot to panniers for cycling expeditions or waterproof containers used by those engaged in expeditions on water. It is essential that all equipment is waterproofed, even during the summer months.

Packing equipment

All equipment and gear should be inside the chosen container(s), with the possible exception of sleeping mats, due to their bulk. Anything carried outside of the container needs to be securely fastened and waterproofed. Participants may want to dry clothing while they travel by securing clothes to the container to expose them to the sun and wind.

All wet or damp clothing and socks which have been washed should be dried as soon as possible so as to lighten the load and make them usable. Participants need to keep an eye on their own and other team members' equipment attached to the outside of containers, to ensure it does not become loose or lost.





Expedition equipment continued

Hygiene

Hygiene is the most important aspect of campcraft and is of major concern to Supervisors when they visit a camp site. Personal cleanliness should always remain at a high level throughout the expedition.

Participants need to make every effort to keep feet clean and dry; removing wet socks at the end of the journeying, and airing them and feet in the evenings is usually advised.

Try to plan in advance what toilet facilities are available at a camp site, or if a pit latrine will need to be dug.

Water supplies must be kept clean. No washing should take place in streams and never throw dirty or greasy water into a stream or river. Pour dirty water into a hole in soft ground, well away from any water courses, made by removing a piece of turf with a trowel.

Camp sites and camping

DofE participants need good campcraft skills to enable their enjoyment and comfort, allowing them to remain safe while being remotely supervised.

Choosing a camp site

A camp site suitable for mobile, lightweight camping should be:

- Sheltered from the wind
- Permissible to camp
- Free from danger
- Within reach of water
- Able to provide privacy
- Reasonably level
- On solid ground.

Setting up and leaving camp sites:

- DofE teams should set up their tents as soon as they arrive at their camp site. Drive tent pegs in at an angle of 45 degrees. One team member may take charge of setting up a stove to start cooking
- While cooking, participants need to keep their area clean and litter-free, washing and packing away equipment after use
- Participants will need to agree who does what in their tent team and how they will share the small living space
- Participants should make every effort to keep their tent dry, leaving all wet clothing and boots in the porch. Participants need to keep a set of dry clothing for sleeping in, even if this means putting on wet clothes the next day to journey in
- If no toilets are available, participants can dig a pit latrine following the training from their Supervisor.

When leaving the site:

- Ensure it is clean and free from litter, leaving the site as if a team had not camped there
- Wipe clean and dry (if time allows) the underside of the groundsheet and wipe mud off tent pegs
- Shake tents to remove moisture before packing
- Pay any bills due to the camp site owner
- The Supervisor and team should agree at what checkpoint they will next meet.

Camp fires

The DofE does not encourage the lighting of camp fires on expeditions. Camp fires might be used by participants when faced with a hazardous situation or using a camp site which allows the lighting of camp fires. Participants must follow LOs' policies.





5.3 Mobile phones

The Expedition section is designed to develop self-reliance and self-confidence through isolation and remote supervision, overcoming challenges and managing risk as an independent team of peers.

Mobile phones can seriously undermine these outcomes and compromise the team's attitude and approach to the decision-making processes during their expedition.

The more advanced mobile phones become, the greater their potential impact on effective expeditions, so it is vital that the expedition team, Supervisor and Assessor agree well in advance how they may be used by the team in line with the Expedition Requirements.

Increasingly a DofE expedition is one of the very few times that young people will experience isolation away from mass media and instant communication, working only with a team of their peers. This must be embraced as one of the core principles of the Expedition section.

Policies

LOs and Supervisors can select one of the following three policy options to agree in advance with the expedition team and Assessor.

1. No mobile phones will be carried by the team and so the emergency procedures (and evidence gathering methods), must be carefully thought out and designed to take this into account.

2. Mobile phones may be taken by the team for emergency use only. These phones must be switched off, kept in sealed bags and packed with first aid kits. Teams should make allowance for this when planning how to gather evidence.

3. As for policy two, but additional mobile phones without SIM cards or satellite internet access may be taken by the team for use as cameras, digital video recorders and alarm clocks etc.

Mobile phones should always be thought of as a team kit item and not as an individual kit item. Mobile phones may never be taken for navigation or GPS purposes.

The expedition team, Supervisor and Assessor must agree their mobile phone use policy in advance of the expedition.

Emergency mobile phones should be kept switched off to remove the temptation to answer incoming calls and to protect their battery life. The emergency phone is there to allow the participants to raise the alarm if there is reception. Supervisors and staff must use alternative means to contact teams as part of remote supervision.

In determining whether to prohibit mobile phones, or what restrictions to place on their use, you should consider the risks and balance them against any potential beneficial uses during an expedition. You should also consider the risks of participants' phones becoming lost or damaged if they take them on an expedition, and the LO's responsibilities if participants are required to hand them in.





Mobile phones continued

Radios

Radios can provide an effective alternative for teams, Supervisors and Assessors to contact each other in areas where there may be poor mobile phone reception or outside the UK.

Radios with a pre-arranged frequency can work well over a radius large enough for most expeditions; test them in the area to ensure they work. Radios can be combined with Leaders having sat-phones to allow a communication line to the outside world. The guidance given here for mobile phones also applies to the use of radios. They are for emergency purposes only and must be kept in sealed bags.

Behaviour and misuse

In the DofE context, mobile phones must be thought of as either additional, unreliable, team safety equipment or as a team evidence gathering tool. It must be made very clear to participants that it is not acceptable to use them for general communication.

Persistent or deliberate misuse of mobile phones may lead the Assessor to defer the expedition.



Mobile phones as emergency equipment

For many teams mobile phones are a normal part of their emergency equipment and emergency procedures.

As well as being used to raise the alarm or seek advice in an emergency, they can also help save Supervisors and Assessors time by training teams to send texts if they have fallen well behind their schedule and/or are significantly off route. They can be an excellent support tool when used correctly and thought is given to minimise their limitations; accommodating them appropriately into emergency procedures.

Key requirements

- Mobile phones must always be considered unreliable as there are several potential problems which can make them useless. Teams carrying mobile phones can feel a false sense of security and they must not assume they will have reception throughout all their entire expedition. Everyone must know what to do if their mobile phone fails as a means of contact
- Carrying mobile phones must not change the way expeditions are planned, supervised or assessed. For example, the Supervisor must still visit the team at least once a day
- Teams must be trained in the correct use of mobile phones, both technically and as part of emergency procedures. There must be no reduction in the quality of emergency training or equipment used by the team
- Leaders must locate themselves at night where they have access to incoming and outgoing calls; this also applies to any base camp location in the area, so mobile phones must always be backed up by a landline 'fall-back'





Mobile phones continued

- In remote areas and outside the UK, mobile phones will frequently have no reception and therefore have limited use for the majority of terrain used by land-based Gold expedition teams.

Getting the most out of mobile phones on expeditions

- Create a safety list of pre-programmed emergency numbers in the mobile phone, including the Supervisor(s), base contact, Assessor, Licensed Organisation (LO) and emergency services (999 and 112) etc. The Supervisor and base contact will also need participants' home contacts
- It may be better to agree to text rather than call as this requires less reception, prevents being misheard, will not break up or be cut off, can be stored for future reference and uses less power
- Ensure all phones in the safety list are not withheld numbers so callers can be identified
- Ensure that everyone is trained in the technical use of the phone so they can set the volume to loud, set up the personal greeting or call diverts to other numbers
- Ensure that voicemails are turned on and users know how to retrieve messages
- Ensure that any 'pay as you go' phones have sufficient credit on them to remain active in a prolonged emergency situation, or the user is able to add more credit
- Do not be tempted to hold or use a mobile phone during a thunder storm as evidence suggests that they increase the danger of lightning strikes
- Try to identify in advance where mobile phones will/will not work in the area and where they can be recharged.

Mobile phones as evidence gathering tools

Mobile phones can help gather excellent evidence for eDofE and presentations of a participant's expedition and team goal. Many participants will not own a separate camera, digital video recorder or even alarm clock/watch. However, using mobile phones for these purposes should be treated with caution and the following guidance followed:

- Mobile phones taken for use as evidence-gathering tools are considered team equipment and as tools for the evidence function they are intended for, such as a team camera, and not as personal mobile phones. The SIM card must be removed and the phone must not be used for general communication. If this stops the phone from recording evidence then it cannot be used on the expedition and other arrangements will have to be made
- Mobile phones are often very expensive and make up a huge part of a young person's social life. Most phones are not designed to survive the kinds of conditions and robust use that expeditions inevitably include. Participants should carefully consider if they really want to risk damaging their phone by taking it with them. If they do decide to take it, they should take steps to protect it with covers, insurance and back up any important information
- It is highly recommended for participants to keep an expedition diary or log in a variety of formats. However, keeping an online blog or posting online updates to social networking sites during an expedition is not acceptable
- Many phones include mapping, GPS and navigation features, which appear very sophisticated. These must not be used by the team as they are wholly inadequate for the remotely supervised expedition environment





Mobile phones continued

- Using features like cameras and digital video recorders can quickly drain a mobile phone's battery and memory, so teams should plan how to manage this, particularly if participants want to be able to phone family or friends on the way home.

When DofE teams can use mobile phones for communication

It is often tempting for a team to use a mobile phone if they have it.

Clear training is the most effective way of ensuring that teams understand what the role of a mobile phone is during their expedition and when they should use it.

Communicating with expedition staff and emergency services

It is a core part of the Expedition section that participants take responsibility for their decisions, manage risk or unexpected challenges and learn through experience.

When a team gets into difficulties, or is lost, it is up to the team alone to work out what to do and how to solve the situation.

Having a phone has, in the past, led to teams calling out mountain rescue teams just for being lost. If there is a serious accident, illness or injury within the party, it is a different situation and rescue teams expect to be involved.

Teams need to be able to establish emergency communication with their Supervisor or other staff at a base camp using either their mobile phone or a public phone box or house. If there is a need to call the emergency services with a mobile phone it is important that teams remain stationary. There can be a loss of signal by moving even a few metres and it is important that the rescue team is able to remain in contact.

If teams decide to carry mobile phones for communication purposes then they should be used sparingly for essential supervision and safety/emergency purposes only.

A timely text from a team to their Supervisor to say that they were lost but are now at a given grid reference and are running two or three hours behind schedule, or they are running late and will arrive after dark, can be a good way to help effective supervision. However, repeated texts to Supervisors for advice should be considered as demonstrating a similar lack of competence as a team that needs to be shadowed.

Communicating with the outside world

As part of the pre-agreed mobile use policy it is just as important for parents and friends, as well as participants, to understand that while on expedition they should not expect to have any communication with each other. If any communication is required it should be through the Supervisor.

Participants with care responsibilities should make arrangements before leaving or ask contact to be made through the Supervisor if necessary. Participants should not plan expeditions for times when they may need to take urgent action, such as applying through clearing following the release of A-Level results.

The Supervisor should use good judgement to decide if direct contact is appropriate. For example, a new parent may want to talk to their partner in the evening, or if there is an accident involving a relative or an incident which requires urgent action from the participant. A phone call home by a participant might be the difference between them dropping out or keeping going. This can be permitted, but should be a last resort as the team and Supervisor should be providing this encouragement.





Mobile phones continued

It should be made very clear to parents that no news is good news and that they should expect no contact at all from their child during the expedition.

The use of mobile phones by Supervisors and Assessors

A mobile phone is an extremely useful tool for Supervisors and Assessors supporting Bronze and Silver teams in normal rural and open country, but is more limited in remote environments, coastal waters or outside of the UK.

An expectation of mobile contact in unreliable areas of reception can increase the anxiety of Supervisors or Assessors. This has led to unnecessary call outs to mountain rescue for teams who are in fact in excellent condition and needing no assistance. This is an inexcusable waste of the mountain rescue team's time.

Establish the Supervisor or a base contact as a hub for all phone communication, ensuring they have mobile reception with a landline back up available. This ensures fast and accurate information updates and allows the team to call for emergency assistance. This hub can get updates from staff and Assessors as they see participants, relay information in an emergency situation and let parents know if teams are running late to the pickup point on the last day.

It is unacceptable, at any DofE level, for Supervisors and staff to rely on text messaging or phone calls with participants for updates rather than seeing the team.

A text or phone call cannot provide the same level of understanding of a team's morale, attitude or physical ability as a face-to-face discussion and observation during a Supervisor's visit.

Personal music players, speakers, radios and games

There is a view that if a participant is prepared to carry it, then they are allowed to take it. However, this general rule of thumb needs to be measured against the principles and outcomes of the Expedition section, most fundamentally that it is a team activity. An expedition is an opportunity for participants to have a unique and memorable outdoor experience, different from their normal routine, which will stay with them their whole lives.

The basic approach should be that the device is for the team and not for an individual to isolate themselves. Any items taken must enhance the team experience and not detract or reduce the feeling of isolation and adventure while on a DofE expedition.

Participants should always think very carefully before taking any expensive or personally valuable electronic equipment, which is not designed for the outdoors, with them on expedition. Some LOs do not allow this kind of equipment to be taken on DofE expeditions, so teams should check with them first.

It is unacceptable for participants to use these devices while journeying as they can greatly increase the risk of accident or injury by drowning out sounds around them or by causing participants to pay less attention to where they are going. Equally, it is not acceptable for a team to sit down and watch a film or TV.

Even in the evenings, using such devices should be discouraged. The Expedition section is about being in a team and communicating with that team. So while it may be acceptable for participants who want to get a few minutes of time to themselves to listen through their





Mobile phones continued

headphones this should in no way lead to them being isolated frequently, or in a prolonged way, from the rest of the team.

Being in the environment is part of the experience, so they should also not be used to drown out the night time noises. The Supervisor and Assessor should agree with the team what is and is not acceptable use before the start of expedition.

A much better use is to take small speakers so the team can have some music in the evening, set at an appropriate volume considerate to other people around and to any rules at the camp site. Often sharing music and agreeing the playlist can be a very positive experience. Most teams will develop a team song and this interaction (volume allowing) is all part of an enjoyable and engaging expedition.





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6.1 Safety



Licensed Organisations (LOs) and, where used, Approved Activity Providers (AAPs), are responsible for the safety and wellbeing of participants. They also approve their Supervisor's and Assessor's experience and/or qualifications and set the training that is required.

Whilst the DofE does not insist on specific qualifications, it is strongly recommended that suitable national qualifications for the chosen modes of travel are obtained.

The LO, or the chosen expedition provider, is responsible for the suitability of expeditions, safety aspects, the adequacy of the training and the emergency procedures. LOs should ensure that any AAP they are using is reputable, risks have been assessed and that Supervisors and Assessors are suitably competent, meeting the LO's requirements.

Risk assessments

Risk assessments are a vital part of preparing for DofE expeditions. They help identify and manage potential hazards that could affect the safety and wellbeing of participants. This process involves recognising what could go wrong, such as injuries, environmental challenges or equipment failure, and evaluating how likely these risks are and how serious their impact could be. Appropriate control measures are then put in place to reduce risks to a manageable level. The approach should be proportionate, practical and reviewed regularly, especially as team dynamics, routes or conditions change. It is essential that appropriate risk assessments, preventative actions, emergency procedures and reviews are completed for all expeditions to ensure the safety of the young people involved. A well-prepared risk assessment supports safe, confident decision-making and helps teams respond effectively to both expected and unexpected challenges.

Expedition safety

Through participation in an expedition, young people learn to manage risk and become more able to overcome both expected and unexpected challenges. All expeditions have an element of risk, so safety must be a key consideration for all DofE expeditions.

Risk is managed and expeditions are made safe through:

- Thorough planning including completing a risk assessment and following the recommendations
- Thorough expedition training
- Taking appropriate precautions and treating the environment with respect
- The attitude of the participants to take control of the situation and be mentally strong.

There are a few basic steps all DofE expedition teams should follow to help ensure their safety:

- Tell someone the plan. Always tell a responsible person the names and contact information of all involved, where the team and adults are going and what the estimated time of arrival is. This is achieved through the notification process, route summary and route card system
- DofE participants must keep together at all times. Unless dealing with an emergency situation, DofE teams must never split up or allow anyone to push ahead or be left behind. An Assessor who sees a team allowing this to happen on a qualifying expedition will end the assessment. It is also a serious safety issue that the Supervisor will follow up on. Training events and practice expedition(s) should allow teams to become used to walking together at a shared pace
- Update everyone. Always tell the responsible person that everyone has arrived safely and provide an update to all staff involved as to any change of plans or delays.



Safety continued



Here are some other recommendations which can help make the expedition a success:

- Choose camp sites with relatively easy access in case of an emergency
- Limit the amount of ascent to avoid unreasonable physical demands
- Make any major ascents early in the day where possible
- Plan natural routes that are sympathetic to the environment
- Have alternative poor weather routes.
- Select escape routes in advance.
- Start early in the day
- Be physically fit for the expedition
- Ensure everyone is trained in first aid
- Update risk assessments after each expedition and according to different team and individual needs
- Keep the weight of backpacks to an absolute minimum
- Have more than four in the team in case someone has to pull out unexpectedly.

Safety and emergency procedures

Each LO/AAP must have its own safety and emergency procedures and it is essential that Supervisors have this information to hand throughout the expedition. The expedition team(s), Supervisor, support staff and Assessor will all have agreed an emergency plan based on these procedures. If things appear to go wrong, then the Supervisor needs to allow the team to put the plan into action before rushing to see if anything is wrong.

The Expedition Supervisor is legally responsible for the safety and welfare of the young people whilst they are on their expedition. The Supervisor can ask for help and support from the Assessor but can never hand this responsibility over to them.

Participants must be trained and confident in the agreed emergency procedures.

Emergency procedures will usually include:

- A process summary of the actions to complete and the order in which to do them
- Getting to immediate, relative safety
- Conducting any first aid needed
- Deciding who to contact for assistance
- Deciding how to call for assistance or attract attention and knowing the International Distress Signal and answering signals
- Deciding how to get help, who will stay at the emergency and who goes for help
- Redistributing equipment as required
- Identifying the current locations and planning the route to find help
- Preparing a written message
- Going for help and recording how to find the way back.

All expedition teams must be trained in how to identify an emergency and respond correctly. A well-trained Gold team who are two hours behind schedule may simply give the Supervisor an opportunity for another break, whilst the same delay by a novice Bronze team on a training walk may give greater cause for concern.

Whilst Supervisors may fear teams getting completely and hopelessly lost, there is really very little danger that they can get into even if they are lost. Remember that they have all of the equipment and training they need to survive quite happily, without adult supervision, out in the countryside overnight, including tents, food, sleeping bags, stoves and fuel.



For more information on what types of incidents must be reported to the DofE visit [DofE.org/incidents](https://www.dofe.org/incidents)



Safety continued



Mountain Rescue

Groups operating in areas served by Mountain Rescue must be aware of when and how to contact them in an emergency. It's essential to understand the process: calls should be made via 999, asking for Police and then Mountain Rescue. Groups should be prepared to provide key information such as their exact location, the nature of the emergency, the condition of the casualty, and any actions already taken. Clear planning and briefing on these protocols are vital to ensure a swift and effective response in case of an incident.

Weather

Weather conditions in the UK will always be an unknown factor. Always be prepared for the unexpected. All teams should plan alternative poor weather routes – the importance of this cannot be over emphasised. Those doing expeditions in remote areas must plan alternative, low level (lower risk) routes that can be used in the event of poor weather. A well-planned alternative route will allow a team a much greater degree of flexibility if conditions deteriorate. It also means that everyone is working to an agreed plan, rather than to ad-hoc decisions.

Managing expeditions in hot weather

There is no defined upper heat limit for DofE expeditions, as some take place in extremely hot environments such as deserts and jungles. Setting a universal temperature threshold is impractical due to the wide range of conditions encountered globally. However, participants must be aware of the risks associated with exercise-induced heat exhaustion and take appropriate precautions.

To help manage expeditions in hot weather, Expedition Supervisors should ensure the following measures are in place:

- Ensure all participants begin each day carrying a minimum of two litres of water, with more required on particularly hot days
- Monitor hydration levels and assist with water top-ups, either by carrying extra supplies or positioning at strategic points along the route
- Make sure participants are aware of water refill points and that Supervisors are prepared to assist with top-ups throughout the day
- Encourage participants to wear wide-brimmed hats to provide shade and reduce direct sun exposure to the face and neck
- Ensure the use of sun protection, such as high-factor sunscreen, and reapplication throughout the day
- Advise participants to dress in lightweight, breathable clothing that covers the skin to help prevent sunburn and overheating
- Adjust the expedition schedule to start earlier in the day, avoiding activity during peak heat hours (typically 11am–3pm)
- Plan for longer and more frequent rest breaks in shaded areas to allow participants to cool down. Where possible, select routes with natural shade and avoid long, exposed climbs
- If appropriate, lighten participants' rucksacks by delivering group equipment to the campsite, ensuring they still carry their personal emergency kit
- Ensure emergency procedures are in place, including access to emergency shelter and clear communication protocols
- Brief participants on the signs of heat exhaustion, such as dizziness, nausea, fatigue, and excessive sweating, and ensure they know how to respond.





Safety continued

Extreme heat

In the event of an official Red warning for extreme heat (e.g. issued by the Met Office), LOs must take this extremely seriously. The health, wellbeing and safety of young people and all volunteers involved in DofE activities is the highest priority.

While the final decision on whether to proceed with planned activity rests with individual LOs, we strongly urge all LOs and AAPs to review their risk assessments in light of any extreme weather warnings. This includes considering the impact of heat on participants, staff, and volunteers, and whether the expedition can be safely delivered.

Where there is a risk of wildfire or after prolonged dry weather, LOs and AAPs may remove the requirement for participants to cook a hot meal. Alternative cold meals should be planned that still meet nutritional needs and Expedition Requirements. This adjustment must be clearly communicated to participants and reflected in the risk assessment and supervision plan.

Poor weather

Expedition Supervisors must ensure that participants are equipped and trained to manage the weather conditions they may face. When assessing poor or extreme weather conditions, the safety and welfare of participants must always be the primary concern. However, the likely enjoyment and morale of the team should also be considered. Expedition Supervisors should follow their own health and safety policies and risk assessments, and may take the following actions:

- If the weather is forecast to be poor, check the local forecast for the expedition area, as it may differ from conditions at home.
- Contact your LO to determine if any special

weather warnings or decisions have been issued. Supervisors must follow LO procedures for expeditions in poor weather or winter conditions

- Contact planned campsites to confirm they are open, accessible, and have essential facilities such as running water
- Consider the team's training and experience in relation to the expected weather conditions
- Consult the weather forecast to plan the expedition at the most suitable time of day, avoiding periods when storms or severe weather are most likely
- Assess the team's equipment to ensure it is adequate for the forecasted conditions.
- Review the supervision plan to confirm the Supervisor can still remotely supervise the team, whether closer supervision is needed at certain points, and whether they can move effectively across both roads and expedition terrain
- Reassess the risk assessment, including alternative weather routes, emergency escape routes, and emergency procedures, to ensure they remain suitable.



Safety continued



Expedition Assessors

In the event of an emergency, the Assessor may assist the Supervisor, at their request, following the emergency procedures agreed with the Supervisor and set out by the LO/AAP. An expedition team must always follow their first aid training and emergency procedures regardless of an Assessor being present at the time. Where an Assessor cannot contact the Supervisor and the emergency needs immediate action, the Assessor may act to ensure the safety of the participants.

As with any member of the public with formal first aid training, Assessors who have first aid training may use it to help save lives or help participants in immediate danger, but will need to then defer to the team's Supervisor and their emergency procedures as soon as practically possible.

Assessors will maintain a written record of incidents including what happened, to whom, where, when, what has happened since and the times of phone calls, etc.

Safety and emergencies – overseas expeditions

It is essential that teams clearly understand the emergency procedures in place for an overseas expedition. Many areas do not have mountain rescue or search teams. Expedition teams, Supervisors and Accredited Assessors will be entirely dependent on their own resources.

Insurance must be in place for all participants and supporting staff which covers search and rescue as well as repatriation of the sick or

injured. It should also ideally cover the cost for a parent or guardian to visit participants admitted to hospital while abroad.

Supervisors and participants should have a thorough working knowledge of first aid and prolonged casualty care, proportionate to the risks involved in the country and area to be travelled.

There should be a documented emergency action plan which is familiar to, and practised, by all involved in the expedition, who then also carry emergency equipment which conforms to this plan.

In the event of a serious accident, the restraint exerted by the UK police regarding the release of names to the press until the next of kin have been informed does not necessarily apply abroad. There is a strong probability that parents, carers or guardians may find out about a serious accident by the media, internet etc. unless efficient two-way communications are established beforehand between them and the team.

Participants must be prepared and know how to deal with the weather and temperatures they will encounter as there can be a higher risk of exercise-induced heat exhaustion or frostbite than in the UK.

Clear precautions must be taken to reduce these risks, for example using strong protection against the sun and preventing dehydration.

Thunderstorms and lightning strikes are more severe and frequent, and wildlife may pose a threat through rabies, malaria and snake bites.



Safety continued



Dealing with the press

If things do go seriously wrong and the emergency services have been called then Supervisors may find that the press become involved.

Local authorities and national youth organisations usually have a policy for dealing with press enquiries. In many LOs only their own press or public relations officer can make comments to the media. It is essential that Supervisors have and follow the correct LO/AAP emergency procedures with regards to the press.

The press have their job to do but it is important that:

- The enquirer's name, organisation and contact number are recorded and then tell them that they will be contacted with an answer as soon as possible. Never say 'no comment'
- Supervisors must not speak to the press without the permission of the LO/AAP
- Young people must be protected from press attention and should not be allowed to talk to the press. No names may be given out until the parent/guardian has been informed and the LO and emergency services have authorised staff to do so
- LOs/AAPs should follow the incident reporting procedures outlined at [DofE.org/incidents](https://www.dofe.org/incidents)
- Remember, in all circumstances, the welfare of participants and support to their parents or carers should be prioritised.

Duty of care

Licence requirements

Under the terms of a Licensed Organisation or Approved Activity Provider licence, there must be in place the following:

- Systems for the health and safety of participants and those that support them. These must be in line with relevant legislation as amended from time to time
- A system for the approval of staff, including Leaders, Supervisors and Assessors, which ensures they are appropriately qualified or experienced and acceptable for their roles
- Safeguarding policies and procedures.

Care of the participant

Supervisors and staff need to comply with LO/AAP guidelines and procedures and have a duty to look after the physical and emotional welfare of the young people, and act as any reasonable adult would.

Points to consider are:

- The age and maturity of the participants
- The team's wishes with regards to decisions
- Parental wishes
- Cultural issues
- Team numbers and gender mixes
- Relationships within the group
- Team and individual training/fitness
- Additional needs and health conditions.

Remember it is the responsibility of the Supervisor to know their LO's/AAP's safeguarding and health and safety policies.



6.2 First aid and emergency procedures



First aid training should only be delivered by people who have been approved by the Licensed Organisation (LO)/Approved Activity Provider (AAP). The training must adhere to the DofE's Expedition Training Framework, and be to an appropriate level for the nature of the expedition they are undertaking.

Some LOs and AAPs choose to define who can deliver first aid training, for example:

- An instructor in first aid who is recognised by one of the voluntary aid societies, the Armed Services or the Health and Safety Executive.
- A qualified teacher or youth leader who holds a valid first aid certificate.
- A State Registered Nurse or Health Visitor (who may not have a first aid certificate).
- An instructor approved by the LO/AAP.
- LOs/AAPs will require Supervisors to hold a valid and relevant first aid certificate.

First aid procedures change and develop and it is therefore essential that participants are taught by instructors who are using up to date resources and materials.

There are a number of first aid manuals available and instructors should choose the one that is most appropriate for the abilities of the participants that they are working with, to ensure their participants become competent.

The First Aid Manual, published by St. Andrew's Ambulance Association, St Andrew's First Aid, St John Ambulance and the British Red Cross, is regarded as being the definitive first aid guide.

First aid kits

Each DofE participant should carry their own first aid kit with them on expedition rather than, or in addition to, a communal kit for the whole team.

Personal first aid kits allow participants to adapt them based on their needs, conditions or allergies. It ensures that each will have their own kit, should they become separated on expedition. When personal kits are combined they will provide sufficient resources to deal with more serious emergencies.

Participants should make the Supervisor, Assessor, other staff and team members aware if they are allergic to an antibiotic or any other medicine or drug.

All first aid kits should carry plenty of disposable plastic gloves to prevent contact with body fluids, especially blood.



For more Information on DofE recommended first aid kits and resources to support what's in a first aid kit visit [DofE.org/shop](https://www.dofe.org/shop)



Sunburn

While participants are often well prepared for the rain and cold, many get caught out by sun and wind burn, particularly over long expedition days, when they may not realise they are being burnt. Teams need to be trained to cover their skin in loose fitting clothing that does not prevent sweating and use suitable, high factor blocking agents. The head and neck should be very carefully protected.





First aid and emergency procedures continued

Blisters

Blisters are common on DofE expeditions of all levels and prevention is better than cure, although they may be unavoidable.

Ensure boots are broken in and socks are clean and do not wrinkle when they are put on. Participants should decide if they prefer wearing one or two layers of socks and should bear in mind the expedition route and weather conditions. Boots and, if possible, socks should be removed at camp sites so they can dry and to allow feet to dry and harden. Flip flops or open lightweight sandals are great for this as they are lightweight and protect the feet whilst still airing them.

At the first signs of discomfort participants should stop, remove their footwear and address the rubbing or blistering, even if this delays the team.

Hypothermia, heatstroke and dehydration

The Expedition Training Framework requires all participants and instructors to take a role in preventing hypothermia, heatstroke and dehydration while on expedition. This can be achieved by knowing how to recognise the early symptoms and being able to take preventative action.

Participants need to be aware of the risks of exercise-induced heat exhaustion and ensure they take on frequent and adequate fluid throughout the day. They should be aware of replacing salt lost through sweat and look out for team members feeling lightheaded or faint. A short rest, lying in the shade with their head down and legs up, and taking on fluids usually remedies the situation.

Every participant should set out each day with enough water to see them through that day; this means usually carrying at least two litres of water with them, more if it is a hot day. If necessary, this can then be topped up by the Supervisors, for example on very hot days where teams are also running late.

Cold-induced numbness and non-freezing injuries

It is essential that participants protect themselves from cold-induced numbness and non-freezing injuries. These can occur in cold, wet weather during long periods of immobility, for example when camping or waiting for the minibus.

Young people who are susceptible to the cold or are of an African or Caribbean descent can be particularly vulnerable. Cold-induced numbness and non-freezing injuries are entirely preventable – the best solution is to stay warm and dry.

Spare socks, well fitted boots, a hat, waterproof gloves and covering skin in wind and cold weather, are all simple and effective preventatives. Participants should also eat and drink well and often.

Weather

All expedition teams need to have suitable clothing and equipment with them to remain safe in all weather conditions that they may experience during their expedition.

It is possible for the weather to deteriorate to such an extent that a team will need to use their alternative, low level poor weather routes, or even postpone or end the expedition. The weather is always more extreme in upland and exposed areas with stronger winds, higher rainfall and lower temperatures. Supervisors need to ensure they have up to date weather forecasts of the areas where teams will be undertaking their expeditions.





First aid and emergency procedures continued

Teams need to:

- Understand how weather will affect them and their mode of travel.
- Know how, where and when to obtain weather forecasts by television, internet, radio, phone and local area services.
- Understand forecasts and relate them to the observed conditions on the ground.
- Be able to look for signs which indicate changes in the weather. This is essential in upland and exposed areas where weather is hardest to forecast.
- Include in their planning alternative, low level (lower risk) routes to be used in the event of poor weather if intending to travel through remote areas. The DofE recommends that all teams plan alternative poor weather routes. This may not be possible for some modes of travel.

Ticks and Lyme disease

While journeying through rural or wooded environments, participants should be aware of the risk posed by ticks, which can carry Lyme disease. Lyme disease is a bacterial infection that, if left untreated, can lead to serious health complications. Teams should be trained to recognise tick habitats, such as long grass, bracken, and woodland and take preventative measures including wearing long sleeves and trousers, using insect repellent, and conducting daily tick checks. If a tick is found, it must be removed promptly and correctly using a tick removal tool. Participants should be advised to seek medical attention if they develop symptoms such as a circular rash, flu-like illness, or joint pain following an expedition. Supervisors must include tick awareness in their safety briefings and ensure that participants understand how to minimise risk and respond appropriately.

Allergies and anaphylaxis

Expedition Supervisors have a responsibility to ensure that allergy management is considered during planning, training, and delivery. It is important to review participant health forms early and follow up on any allergy-related needs. Leaders should be aware of which participants carry medication and understand their role in supporting its use. While participants are generally responsible for carrying and administering their own medication, Leaders must be prepared to assist if needed.

Leaders should be trained to recognise the signs of an allergic reaction, understand how and when to administer adrenaline auto-injectors, and respond appropriately in an emergency. This should be included as part of pre-expedition training and risk assessment processes. AAPs and LOs are encouraged to access training and resources from recognised organisations such as Anaphylaxis UK, which offer practical guidance and courses tailored for youth settings.





6.3 Stove safety guidance

General safety

- Always be familiar with the stove and fuel before setting out
- Be confident in how to use the stove and what dangers are associated with it and the fuel, for example gas canisters
- Have water and a wet tea towel nearby, ready to use as a fire blanket. Always be careful to check if there is a flame or not, especially in bright sunlight
- Never leave a lit stove unattended or unwatched
- Never use a stove to heat a tent when cold. All gas powered items need plenty of ventilation to prevent producing carbon monoxide
- Make sure to store gas canisters in a ventilated and secure area that is away
- A risk assessment and careful planning is essential for a safe cooking experience
- Maintain the equipment throughout the year and check stoves operate safely before expeditions
- Remember that stoves will remain hot for a while after the flame has gone out. Know how long it takes to cool down so it's safe to pack away.

Location

- Take some time to pick the cooking location. A firm level surface at ground level where the stove will not be knocked over is ideal and it must be at least two metres away from flammable items/tents
- Make sure the stove cannot overheat any surface and cannot cause an accident

- Consider the weather conditions and wind direction
- Make it clear to other people that stoves are lit/hot and get everything needed together before starting to cook. Have somewhere safe nearby to put hot pans
- Never use a stove indoors, or inside a tent. Always choose a ventilated area that is outside and away from any obvious risk
- from direct sunlight or heat.

Gas stoves

- DofE teams must never use a gas stove that does not use self-sealing cylinders or cartridges
- Remove cartridges from the stove for journeying and replace part used cartridges for full ones before the start of the expedition
- It is best to use a gas stove that is low, stable and easy to shield from the wind
- For exposed areas participants can use wind shields made of aluminium foil which can be bent into shape
- Be confident how the cartridge or cylinder fits on the appliance
- Check there is no leak of gas before using stove
- Make sure you know the sound and smell of gas which may result from incorrect connection
- Make sure you know which way to turn the regulator so you can turn it down or off quickly
- It is against the law to sell a substance with butane as a constituent part to any person under the age of 18.



Stove safety guidance continued



Methylated spirits stoves

- Fill the stove from a small container, never from a bulk container
- Fuel should not be handled near tents or any naked flames; it is good practice to have a 're-fuelling' area where fuel is handled away from the designated cooking area
- Take great care when re-fuelling the stove, make sure that the flame is completely extinguished (the flame can be invisible, especially in sunlight) and the stove/burner has cooled before removing the burner to re-fill it (take the burner to the fuel, not the fuel to the burner).

Gel fuels (bio-ethanol)

- Do not fill the gel burner over two thirds full
- Never refill a lit or hot stove – the flame can be hard to see. Always check for heat – bubbling and a crackling noise indicates the gel is alight
- Always refill from a small gel container, not a bulk container
- Always keep unused fuel at least three metres away from the stove or any source of ignition and do not store in direct sunlight.



Cooking and cooking stoves

The most popular stoves are those fuelled by gas or methylated spirits. Participants need to be well trained and experienced in using cooking stoves in the outdoors before going on expedition. This includes handling fuel, fuelling and refuelling the stove.

DofE participants and adults must follow the instructions and safety guidance given by the manufacturer of the stove they choose to use.

Gas stoves

Gas stoves are clean, reliable, easy to operate and heat water very quickly. Butane cartridges do not vaporise very well in cold weather, but propane cartridges or butane/propane mixes are available. Gas stoves are a safe cooking option but teams must be trained to use them safely.

Spirit stoves

Spirit stoves are robust, easy to use, light and compact, often consisting of the stove and pans packed together into a single unit. They are stable with a broad base, burn with a moderate heat and do not damage the ground.

Clean and free from oil, they are also fuel efficient. Methylated spirits is cheap to buy in bulk and does not have the storage restrictions of oil or petrol.

Treated with care, spirit stoves will last a long time and so remain a popular choice for DofE centres to buy and use year on year.

Fuel bottles

Liquid fuel needs to be kept in specifically designed bottles which have a secure screw top. Fuel bottles need to be easily distinguished and kept separate from water bottles.

Use training events and practice expeditions to work out how much fuel will be needed on the qualifying expedition.



Stove safety guidance continued



Basic cooking safety and hygiene

It is essential to maintain good food hygiene while on DofE expeditions. Some basic considerations and tips for your participants are set out below:

Do:

- Wash hands at least as often as if at home. Antibacterial wipes or gel can be helpful
- Make sure, if cooking on a stove outside, that it is level, easy to see and use
- Plan menus before setting out and take into consideration the cooking facilities and the environment
- Make sure food is properly packed or wrapped to prevent cross-contamination.
- Make sure hot food is hot and cooked all the way through and that cold food stays cold
- Dispose of all waste responsibly
- Clean up and wash up after every meal
- Be aware that, at altitude, water boils at a lower temperature, but food will take longer to cook.

Don't:

- Be tempted to cook in or near the tent if the weather is bad, a tent fire can be horrific
- Wash up in streams or under camp site taps
- Use the same utensils or containers for raw and cooked food
- Let everyone crowd the cooking area, that's how accidents happen
- Cook more than can be eaten, leftovers will attract all sorts of pests
- Leave cooking food unattended
- Try and cook in the dark, always have plenty of light
- Let accidents occur, remember that everything used will either be hot, wet or sharp.



Information on DofE recommended cooking stoves and fuel visit [DofE.org/shop](https://www.dofe.org/shop)





6.4 Care for the environment, Countryside, Highway and Water Sports Safety Codes

The DofE Leader and Supervisor both have a key role in ensuring that the impact of the Expedition section is a positive and sustainable one, for both the participants and the local communities, wherever it takes place. They must ensure participants understand the Countryside Code, Scottish Outdoor Access, NI Countryside, Highway or Watersports Code (as appropriate) and understand the importance of behaving responsibly and positively with landowners and members of the public.

Everyone participating in DofE should follow the DofE's environmental impact policy (see [page 105](#)). Supervisors should review all of the expedition plans and routes to make sure that the impact on the environment and rural communities is as minimal as possible. Expeditions often take place in popular areas visited by tourists and day visitors; DofE participants and Supervisors need to be aware of their responsibility to protect the good image of the DofE.

Supervisors are responsible for the behaviour of their teams at all times, even when they are not directly supervising them.

Issues to be aware of include:

- Noise on camp sites, especially early in the mornings or late at night
- Inconsiderate car parking – blocking roads or farm entrances
- Excessive use of public facilities
- Litter, especially uncollected 'dead-letters'/ checkpoint cards completed by teams
- Failure to adhere to the Countryside Code/ Water Sports Safety Code
- Overuse of particular footpaths or areas
- Walking abreast on narrow paths rather than walking in a line

- Not following access laws and rights of way
- Excessive disturbance for the local community at the start and finish of an expedition when participants are dropped off or collected by parents or the minibus
- The expedition's carbon footprint.

From the local people's and landowners' perspective, these issues can occur frequently as many DofE groups often use the same area for expeditions and have the same sorts of expedition plans. If on the qualifying expedition the team do not adhere to the Countryside Code, Scottish Outdoor Access, Highway or Watersports Code (as appropriate) the Assessor should draw attention to the issue immediately and discuss it with the team. This should allow the team an opportunity to improve and successfully complete their expedition.

However, if the Assessor feels that the team then goes on to persistently and deliberately flout the codes listed above, then they may defer the expedition team.

Litter

All litter created during an expedition must be removed by the participants; it must not be buried, hidden or burnt, but must either be carried away or may be disposed of in appropriate bins.

Participants should leave areas as they would wish to find them and should be willing to remove other litter they find as well as their own.

If teams and Supervisors are using a 'letterbox', 'dead-letter droppings' or 'dead-letterbox' system for remote supervision then these must be collected and never left behind.



6 Expedition safety

Care for the environment, Countryside, Highway and Water Sports Safety Codes continued



Gates

During expeditions, especially those that pass through farmland or rural areas, it is essential that participants understand the importance of shutting gates properly. Leaving gates open can have serious consequences for farmers, including livestock escaping, disruption to grazing patterns, and damage to crops or property. These impacts can affect livelihoods and strain relationships between landowners and expedition groups.

To help participants take responsibility, Supervisors often teach a simple technique: the first person through the gate is responsible for closing it. This ensures they observe how the gate was found, whether it was open, closed, or locked, and understand how to return it to that exact state. Rotating this role throughout the group helps build awareness, accountability, and respect for the environment and those who work in it. Training should include practical demonstrations and discussions about the wider impact of these actions, reinforcing that small decisions can have significant consequences.



DofE environmental impact policy

Care for the environment

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award aims to provide a programme of development for all young people, long into the future. Therefore, sustainability of our environment is essential.

The environmental impact policy aims to:

- Promote sustainable use of the outdoor environment
- Enhance partnerships with the wider community
- Educate participants about the natural environment and local area
- Conserve global resources.

Promoting sustainable use of the outdoor environment:

- Exercise care and concern for the environment in line with the Countryside Code/The Scottish Outdoor Access Code/ NI Countryside Code
- Monitor locations used for environmental damage
- Consider modifying the use of locations to reduce damage
- Consider assisting with the repair or maintenance of sites, especially if DofE activities have significantly contributed to that damage.



6 Expedition safety

Care for the environment, Countryside, Highway and Water Sports Safety Codes continued



Enhancing partnerships with the wider community:

- Respect the interests of others, especially those who live, work, manage or carry out their recreation in the environment of DofE activities
- Comply with bylaws and access agreements
- Liaise with landowners, local communities and other organisations over any activities which may affect them or the land over which they have control, or an interest in
- Be sensitive to the potential and actual impact of the DofE's operation on an area or community
- Follow the Countryside Code/The Scottish Outdoor Access Code/NI Countryside Code.

Educating participants about the natural environment and local area:

- Promote awareness and respect for the natural environment
- Encourage a greater understanding of the natural world and the cultural setting of their surroundings
- Educate participants as to the appropriate way to enjoy, explore, move or live in the countryside.

Conserving global resources:

- Reduce use of global resources and recycle waste products
- Use products and materials that support the ethos of the DofE
- Use materials from sustainable sources and recycled materials
- Using environmentally efficient methods such as eDofE and other online resources.





6.5 Behaviour

Key behaviour expectations of DofE participants undertaking the Expedition section

The DofE expects to see high standards in terms of attitude and behaviour from all those taking part in a DofE programme. It is essential that participants respect the interests of others in the countryside, particularly those who live or work in that environment. The Expedition Supervisor, as the representative of the Licensed Organisation (LO) or Approved Activity Provider (AAP), is responsible for the behaviour and conduct of their participants.

The DofE expects every DofE participant while on expedition to adhere to and comply with the following:

- The code of conduct and behaviour expectations agreed between the expedition team, Supervisor and Assessor
- A mobile phone policy agreed between the expedition team, Supervisor and Assessor
- Their LO (and AAP, where relevant) code of conduct and/or behaviour expectations
- The Countryside Code/Scottish Outdoor Access/NI Countryside Code
- The law of the country where the expedition activity is taking place, including access rights
- The Highway Code and, if undertaking an expedition on water, the Water Sports Safety Code
- The DofE Care for the environment policy, with specific attention given to the area and environment visited.

The expectations of the DofE are to avoid disturbing rural communities, to have regard for others enjoying the countryside, especially at camp sites, and not to act in anyway that may damage the reputation of the DofE or bring the DofE into disrepute.

Very occasionally participants do not meet these expectations in terms of attitude, behaviour or training. Teams not complying with the above whilst on training or practice expeditions should expect to be asked to complete additional training and practices. This is to demonstrate that they can comply before undertaking their qualifying expedition.

On qualifying expeditions, the Assessor should draw attention to these matters immediately with the individuals concerned, and consult with the Supervisor, to negotiate a way forward. This should allow the team an opportunity to improve, comply with the Expedition Requirements and successfully complete their expedition.

The Assessor will wish to highlight the issue to the DofE Leader to prevent a similar situation happening again. However, if the Assessor feels that the team then goes on to persistently and deliberately flout these requirements, they should consult with their LO or AAP and may end the assessment and defer the expedition as they have not met the Expedition Requirements.

Assessors cannot pick out individual participants as being unsuccessful if they have made it to the end of their expedition. If an individual persistently and deliberately flouts the behaviour expectations and the Expedition Requirements, they may be deferred during the expedition, but issues with individual participants must be resolved during the expedition, not after it'

Any individuals or teams that are identified as causing damage to the countryside and/or causing difficulties for landowners, such as releasing livestock or ruining crops, are subject to the laws of the country in which they are journeying and as such may expect to have to pay compensation for damages.





7.



AFTER EXPEDITION

7.1 Expedition presentations and reflection

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7.1 Expedition presentations and reflection

Reflecting on, summarising and telling others about their expedition experience is a key part of the DofE Expedition section.

Like the team goal, for Silver and Gold level expeditions the presentation needs to be considered very early in the planning as they will be closely integrated.

Participants are free to give their presentation in any format and this will often direct how their team goal will be researched, investigated and recorded.

It is the responsibility of the participants to choose a team goal, research and organise a presentation which represents a genuine effort and contribution from all members of the team, be it arts or academically focused.

The almost unlimited choice of presentation styles is designed to accommodate all aptitudes, abilities, interests and resources.

Participants should be encouraged to use their imagination and take the lead, be it written, oral, photographic, audio or video, drama, song, artistic or any other appropriate form or combination of forms.

The presentation

The presentation should provide a permanent record of a major achievement for each participant. Whatever the method it must be agreed in advance with their DofE Leader, although it may be later changed, if needed.

The presentation should bring the expedition team goal to life and be more than just a report of their project. It must be based on the participants' own first hand experiences, observations and investigations during their expedition and be in a format which inspires them.

The presentation may be produced and delivered as a team or as individuals.

Whichever is chosen, it must reflect the contribution and involvement of each participant during the expedition and afterwards in the preparation of the presentation. The person(s) receiving the presentation will need to know who is responsible for what.

At Silver and Gold level, most Expedition sections which are not achieved are because a presentation was not completed. Build it in at the earliest planning stages and set a date for the presentation soon after the expedition to make sure it happens.

Reflection and recognising achievement

Through creating a presentation and communicating their experiences publicly, participants have to think carefully about what impact the expedition had on them and what they have achieved.

For this reason the presentation should be more than a simple display of research results to complete the team goal, it should be an account of their journey and adventures.

Much of the value of the Expedition section comes from participants considering their thoughts and feelings, reflecting on what they have undergone, the positives and negatives and gaining an insight into themselves. Their presentation should reflect this.

Some participants may prefer the idea of producing a digital video log of their experiences, which can then be edited after the expedition and easily shared online with the presentation Assessor as well as staff, friends and family.





Expedition presentations and reflection continued

Alternatively they could record one sentence statements about themselves and the team every few hours. Many of the experiences, both the highs and lows, will be easily remembered and add an extra level of interest for the presentation viewers. Not every participant will want to keep a full log of their experiences but they can be an invaluable way for participants to manage their thoughts and anxieties.

Oral presentations

Most teams will use a range of presentation styles, but the most common is an oral presentation given at an open evening for parents, friends and supporters, or a school assembly. Oral presentations must be backed up with other materials such as photos, video and written research in addition to the usual observations and recordings. Oral presentations can be given to the Assessor at the end of the expedition, providing this has been planned in advance to allow for sufficient time.

Who assesses the presentation?

It is up to the participant/team to decide who will receive and assess their presentation. It can be any suitable adult. Often it is their DoFE Leader, their Supervisor, Assessor or an expert they received advice from, but it could also be a teacher, tutor, youth worker or social worker.

It is usual for the person chosen to know the team and their individual abilities so as to properly assess their contribution and effort. For this reason there are no guidelines for the length, quality or scale of a presentation.



For more information on open expeditions see [chapter 2.3: Open expeditions](#)

Presentation ideas

Written/document

Printed booklet, written formal report, holiday brochure, statistical report, environmental report, story book, I-spy book, 'top tips' or accessibility guide.

Images

Portfolio/scrapbook of photos, paintings, sketches, comic book, collage of colours or textures seen, annotated map and photo wall display, expedition poster, create own map of expedition area, comparative map/photo book between land use/panoramas now and 100 years ago.

Oral presentation

PowerPoint, speech, comedy, story, drama, team song or sea shanty, poetry, music from sounds/catchphrases recorded on expedition.

Video

YouTube video diary, documentary short film, 'how to' expedition guide, music video.

Mixed

Advice on mode of travel report, navigation skills guide, market a selection of new games, a fashion show of jewellery made of litter or their rubbish collected on expedition, present local myths and legends, expedition masterchef or expedition experience evening for parents.



For more information on inclusive expedition training see [chapter 8.2: Expedition Requirements – inclusive practice](#)





8. INCLUSION



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8.1 The Expedition section – advice on inclusion



The DofE Expedition section is designed to be inclusive, equitable and empowering for all young people. It should always be centred on a participant's strengths, interests and aspirations, rather than any perceived limitations related to their identity, background or needs.

This chapter explains how to make the Expedition section accessible and inclusive for all young people, outlining practical adjustments, flexible approaches and key considerations to ensure every participant can plan, train for and complete their expedition successfully.

What inclusion means in DofE

Inclusion within DofE means ensuring that every individual feels welcomed, respected, supported and able to thrive. This includes welcoming, recognising and celebrating diversity in all its forms, such as race, ethnicity, sex, gender reassignment, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, neurodiversity, mental health, religion and belief and socio-economic background. It also means creating environments where participants feel a true sense of belonging and are equipped to role model inclusivity.

The requirement to complete an expedition remains a core part of the programme. Flexibility and reasonable adjustments are available to ensure no participants are disadvantaged. Reasonable adjustments can be made for all participants, particularly those who have a physical or mental disability that impacts their ability to carry out day-to-day activities. These adjustments are designed to uphold the integrity of the section while ensuring that every young person has the opportunity to succeed.

Why inclusion matters

The Expedition section offers a unique opportunity for young people to explore who they are, grow in confidence and develop essential life skills. The non-competitive nature of DofE allows participants from different starting points to experience success and pride in their achievements.

Participants may choose to do their expedition with others who share similar lived experiences or identities, or with friends and peers from their wider community. All choices should be respected, and young people should be supported to participate in a way that feels safe, affirming and inclusive.

Creating an inclusive and open culture

Expedition teams should be formed early in the planning process, with open conversations about individual needs, preferences, and goals. Leaders and Supervisors should take a person-centred approach, fostering an environment where participants feel comfortable sharing personal requirements and discussing topics such as mental health, accessibility, cultural sensitivities, and wellbeing.

This openness helps ensure every participant feels supported and can experience a challenging and rewarding expedition. Each team member should be appropriately challenged, whether physically, socially, emotionally, or intellectually. For some, the physical challenge may be adapted; for others, the focus may be on developing teamwork, leadership, resilience, or self-expression. Where adjustments are needed, they should be planned and implemented in a way that ensures equitable access and maintains the integrity of the expedition experience.





Maintaining challenge while adapting

Supporting young people inclusively can be deeply rewarding. It expands the scope of what's possible and helps participants build confidence, independence and a sense of belonging. For some, the expedition may be one of the few opportunities to step outside of daily routines or support structures and discover new capabilities. Supervisors should aim to maintain appropriate challenge while ensuring safety and dignity, avoiding overprotection or assumptions about what participants can or can't do.

The role of parents, carers and support networks

Parents, carers and trusted adults should be kept informed throughout the expedition process. They may have concerns about safety, cultural or religious practices, mental health, accessibility or other factors. Their insights can be invaluable in planning inclusive and supportive experiences.

They may also play a role in helping participants develop specific skills in familiar environments, think and plan things that will support their engagement, and encourage them to discuss this with Leaders where beneficial. Their encouragement can be key to a young person's success. The Expedition section often leads to outcomes that exceed expectations for both participants and their families.

Assessors' responsibilities for inclusion

Assessors should be kept informed about the individual needs including any cultural, emotional, identity, or accessibility considerations. Their role is to confirm that the Expedition Requirements have been met, and they should work in partnership with Supervisors to ensure that decisions around supervision, environment, self-sufficiency and mode of travel are inclusive and affirming.



For more information on assessing see [chapter 2.5: Assessing DofE expeditions](#)





Delivering inclusive expeditions through Approved Activity Providers (AAPs)

When expeditions are delivered through AAPs, early and ongoing communication between the AAP and the Licensed Organisation (LO) is essential. This ensures that all parties understand the needs of participants and can make informed decisions that promote inclusion and success. AAPs should be equipped to support diverse groups and, if they have questions about inclusive practice, they can consult with their DoFE Operations Officers for advice on available flexibilities and options.



For more information on AAPs see [chapter 2.2: Organisations within the Expedition section](#)

Key actions for Leaders

- Create an open, supportive environment for participants to share needs and focus on strengths and aspirations, not limitations
- Maintain challenge while adapting for safety
- Respect cultural, religious and identity considerations
- Encourage team conversations early about roles and expectations
- Keep parents, carers and trusted adults informed throughout planning and delivery and use their insights to support accessibility and wellbeing
- Encourage families to help with skill-building at home where appropriate
- Inform Assessors of any participant needs before the expedition so they can ensure assessment remains fair and inclusive
- Ensure adaptations continue to meet Expedition Requirements
- Communicate needs early with AAPs and confirm they're able to provide inclusive support and supervision
- Check all staff are trained in inclusive practice.





8.2 Expedition Requirements – inclusive practice

Overview of flexibilities

The Expedition Requirements offer significant flexibility. This allows Leaders to make suitable adaptations while still meeting the outcomes of the section and ensuring that all participants are appropriately challenged. This flexibility supports a person-centred approach, where expeditions are shaped around each participant's strengths and interests.

Parent and carer information evenings can provide a valuable opportunity to introduce these flexibilities and discuss any reasonable adjustments or inclusive practices that may be needed before planning begins for each group's expedition. Leaders should ensure that expeditions are centred on what participants can do, rather than being defined by what they may find challenging. By embedding inclusive practice from the outset, every young person can feel respected, supported and empowered to succeed.

Planning and route planning

Key considerations for accessibility

Inclusive expedition planning begins with understanding the needs, strengths and preferences of all participants. Leaders are encouraged to consider these factors early in the process so that expeditions can be designed to reflect the diversity of the group.

The aim is for young people to choose when and how they complete their expedition, with the flexibility to shape the experience around their own goals and capabilities.

Some participants, including those with additional needs, may benefit from prompts, visual aids, structured guidance or support from a buddy during the planning process.

If a participant finds it difficult to describe the role they played in planning, Assessors can gather information from Supervisors to ensure their contributions are recognised and valued.

Rest and recovery points

Route planning should take into account a wide range of considerations to support inclusion. This includes physical accessibility, such as choosing paths that accommodate mobility needs and ensuring access to toilets and changing places throughout the day. It also involves planning for rest and recovery points, which are essential for participants who may experience fatigue, sensory overload or medical conditions. These breaks provide opportunities to recharge and reflect, contributing to a more enjoyable and sustainable expedition. Familiarity and predictability can be especially important for some participants, such as those who are neurodivergent or experience anxiety. Planning practice walks along similar or familiar routes can help build confidence and reduce uncertainty. The sensory environment should also be considered carefully. Routes that avoid noisy, crowded or visually overwhelming areas can support emotional regulation and wellbeing, while nature-based settings often provide a calming and restorative atmosphere.

Cultural and religious needs

Cultural and religious sensitivity is another key aspect of inclusive route planning. Leaders should ensure that participants have access to prayer spaces and planned time for religious observance when needed. Open communication with participants and their parents, carers and trusted adults can help identify these needs early and incorporate them respectfully into the expedition plan.





Adapting navigation to learning styles

Navigation methods should be flexible and tailored to different learning styles and preferences. Some participants may benefit from picture-based route cards, annotated maps, or digital tools. Technology such as talking compasses or navigation apps can enhance independence and engagement, especially for those who respond well to auditory or visual cues. These tools can make expeditions more accessible while maintaining an appropriate level of challenge for both individuals and the team. When deciding on technology use, consider the needs and abilities of all participants. Adaptations like smartwatches, voice notes, and photo route cards can support inclusion, provided everyone has access to the tools and feels confident using them.



For more on route planning, see [chapter 4.4: Navigation and route planning](#)

Team goal

Inclusive goal-setting tips

Establishing a team goal is a key part of the Expedition section and provides a meaningful way for participants to shape the purpose of their journey. At Bronze level, the team goal may be set by the Leader, while at Silver and Gold levels, participants are encouraged to choose their own goal. Some young people may benefit from support in identifying a goal that reflects their collective interests, strengths and preferred ways of engaging with the expedition.

An inclusive approach to team goals ensures that every participant can contribute in a way that feels authentic and empowering.

Goals should be flexible and adaptable, allowing for different types of involvement across the team. This might include creative exploration, environmental investigation or cultural learning.

The team goal should reflect the diversity of the group and offer opportunities for each member to take ownership of the expedition experience. Some teams may choose to focus more deeply on their project and complete a project-focused expedition. This type of expedition places greater emphasis on the investigative and reflective elements of the team goal, such as exploring a topic of interest, conducting observations or creating a presentation. While participants must still spend at least 50% of their planned activity time journeying, the remaining time can be dedicated to their chosen project. This approach offers a valuable alternative for participants who may find the physical aspects of the expedition more challenging. By shifting the focus towards exploration, creativity and teamwork, project-focused expeditions allow young people to engage meaningfully with the experience in a way that best suits their strengths, interests and needs.



For more information on the team goal see [chapter 4.3: Team goal](#)





Environment

Choosing suitable locations

The choice of environment plays a key role in shaping an inclusive expedition experience. The team goal should guide the selection of a suitable location. A pre-visit and thorough review of proposed routes are essential to assess accessibility, safety and suitability for all participants. Accessible routes, such as disused railway lines, cycle paths and towpaths are available. These can support effective remote supervision while offering a safe and manageable terrain for participants with mobility needs or those who benefit from a more predictable environment.

Expeditions should become progressively more challenging as participants move through the levels. This progression can be achieved by selecting environments that are increasingly unfamiliar, remote or complex to navigate. However, challenge does not need to be purely physical. For some participants, the challenge may lie in navigating new social dynamics, managing sensory input or developing independence.



Restricted space expeditions

Expeditions can also take place in restricted spaces, such as within a school, youth centre, secure estate or prison. This approach allows Leaders to create meaningful challenges that align with the ethos and aims of the Expedition section, while ensuring the environment remains safe and supportive. When planning in restricted spaces, Leaders should consider how the activity can be adapted to provide appropriate progression at each level, ensuring that all participants are challenged.



For more information on progressive challenge and completing an expedition in restricted space see [chapter 3: Environments and accommodation](#)

Accommodation

Options for tents, indoor spaces, and adaptations

Accommodation choices should reflect the diverse needs, preferences and circumstances of all participants. Supervisors should take a person-centred approach when selecting accommodation, considering factors such as mobility, sensory sensitivities, privacy, and religious, cultural or emotional comfort.

Examples of adaptations

For example, camp beds that sit higher off the ground may be more suitable for participants who use wheelchairs or have difficulty transferring from the floor.

Frame tents or large dome tents can offer a gentle introduction to camping and may be essential for some participants during their expedition. In certain cases, participants may benefit from having their own tent to support





Expedition Requirements – inclusive practice continued

privacy, sensory regulation or emotional wellbeing. Supervisors may need to pre-place tents at campsites to support these arrangements.

Teams may be permitted to use the same campsite for more than one night if this supports their team goal or meets the needs of the group. Journeying to and from the campsite can still be achieved using a cloverleaf pattern or varied routes to ensure the expedition remains appropriately challenging.

Alternative simple self-catering accommodation options such as barns, bothies, mountain huts or narrow boats may also be suitable, depending on the group's needs and the expedition environment.



For more information on accommodation see [chapter 3.2: Accommodation](#)

Returning home to sleep

In some cases, participants may need to return home or to a secure location to sleep during their expedition. This may be necessary to support complex additional needs or, in secure estates and prisons, due to security restrictions. This arrangement is permitted only where the young person would otherwise be unable to access the Expedition section of their DofE. It must not be used because of a lack of training, injury, or cost.

There's no formal approval process for this arrangement, but organisations must ensure it's clearly justified as part of their planning.

If cost is a barrier to participation, organisations should speak to their DofE Operations Officer to explore available funding options.



For more information on returning home to sleep see [chapter 3.2: Accommodation](#)

Religious and cultural needs

Leaders should also consider religious and cultural needs when planning accommodation. This includes arranging space for prayer, supporting participants to carry prayer mats and ensuring access to suitable toilet and washing facilities at campsites or overnight locations. These considerations help create a respectful and inclusive environment where all participants feel valued and supported.

Supervision

Levels of supervision explained

Supervision should be tailored to the individual and collective needs of the expedition group. Leaders and Supervisors must consider the nature and level of supervision required to ensure that all participants feel safe, supported and empowered. While expeditions are typically supervised remotely, the level of supervision should be aligned with the specific needs of the group.

Adapting supervision for young people with additional needs

Some participants may require closer adult support to complete their expedition, particularly those with additional needs, mental health considerations or those participating in secure estates. The Expedition requirements allow close supervision where necessary to ensure the safety and welfare of participants. Even in these cases, the aim should be to preserve a sense of autonomy and challenge, with adult involvement kept to a minimum unless required for specific activities.





Supervisors may observe teams from a distance, visit periodically or, in some cases, remain on the same campsite. This may be particularly relevant at Gold level or where additional support is needed.

Supervisors should provide guidance and reassurance while allowing participants to take ownership of their experience. For example, some participants may need support with cooking or setting up camp, and this should be offered in a way that promotes learning and confidence.

In secure estates or prisons, supervision may need to be continuous and structured, but it should still aim to foster independence and personal growth.

Respecting privacy and confidentiality

Leaders and Supervisors must respect participants' privacy. Young people may choose not to share certain information with others in the group, such as accessibility requirements, mental health considerations, or aspects of their identity. These choices should be honoured. If a participant discloses something to a Leader or Supervisor, it should only be shared further when necessary for safety or support and, wherever possible, with the participant's consent. It should never be assumed that all participants with additional needs require extra supervision, nor that those without disclosed needs do not.



For more information on supervising expedition teams see [chapter 2.4: Supervising expeditions](#)



Time of year

Seasonal considerations

Expeditions should be planned for a time of year that best suits the needs of the team, giving all participants the greatest chance of success and enjoyment. Weather conditions can have a significant impact on the experience, particularly for participants with medical conditions that may be affected by extreme temperatures or seasonal changes.

Managing religious observances and other events

It's important for Leaders to be aware of any significant events that could clash with expedition plans. These may include religious observances such as Ramadan, Diwali, Passover, or Easter, which could require participants to take a break from their activities or adjust their routines. Similarly, major sporting events, such as national championships or international competitions, may impact availability or energy levels. Planning around these events helps ensure that all participants can take part fully and comfortably.





If an expedition is planned during Ramadan, Leaders should work closely with participants and their families to ensure appropriate support is in place. Participants may choose whether to fast during their expedition. Some may decide to break their fast after consulting with their Imam, as travel is considered a valid exemption under Islamic guidance, but some may choose to continue observing the fast. If a participant feels unwell or dehydrated, Leaders must follow their organisation's health and safety policies and risk assessments to ensure appropriate action is taken.

Meal planning should also be adapted to support fasting. As fasting occurs during daylight hours, Supervisors should facilitate safe cooking and eating spaces during hours of darkness, either early morning (Suhoor) or late evening (Iftar). Leaders should also ensure access to suitable toilet and washing facilities and arrange space for prayer, including supporting participants to carry prayer mats if needed.

Open conversations with participants and families can help identify the most suitable timing and arrangements for each group. By choosing the right time of year and being mindful of significant events, Leaders can create a more inclusive expedition experience.

Training

Taking a flexible approach

Identifying each participant's strengths is essential to ensure they have a full and valued role in the expedition. Each participant will learn at a different pace, so training plans need to be flexible. Some participants may benefit from repeated practice, structured routines

or visual aids to help build confidence and familiarity with key expedition skills. Creating clear and accessible learning pathways can help participants feel safe and comfortable, particularly when trying new activities such as navigation, cooking or setting up camp.

Confidence-building strategies

Confidence building is essential preparation for all participants undertaking their Expedition section. You can slowly build expedition experience during smaller camping trips, trips to youth hostels, using frame or large dome tents, or even camping in the garden at home. For some participants, preparing their own meal and using a sleeping bag may be challenges more easily tested and achieved for the first time at home or at their DofE centre.

Where expeditions have a shared emphasis on exploring and journeying, Leaders should give sufficient training to the methods of investigation, observation and recording associated with the expedition aim.

Some participants may benefit from completing their training or practice journeys in the same area as their qualifying expedition. This can help reduce anxiety, build familiarity and increase confidence. In some cases, more than one practice expedition may be needed to ensure that teams feel prepared and able to take ownership of their qualifying expedition. Leaders should plan for this additional time and support from the outset.



For more information on training and practice expeditions see [chapter 4: Planning and training for expeditions](#)





Mode of travel

Accessible routes and alternative modes

Careful route planning and effective practice expeditions are essential to prepare participants for the challenges of navigation, journeying and carrying equipment. The choice of travel mode should reflect the strengths, interests and needs of the team, ensuring that all participants can engage meaningfully and safely.

Examples: canoeing, cycling, horseback

Expeditions don't need to be completed on foot. Other modes of travel, such as canoeing, rafted open canoes, horseback riding or adapted cycles, may offer a more suitable and engaging challenge for some participants. These options can also provide opportunities for the whole team to learn new skills and participate on an equal basis. In many cases, the chosen mode of travel can be linked to the Physical section, creating a more integrated and rewarding experience.

The growing availability of accessible routes, such as towpaths, disused railway lines and national cycle tracks, has opened exciting opportunities for participants who use wheelchairs or have mobility challenges. These environments allow for remote supervision while maintaining a sense of independence and adventure.

Wheelchair routes

When planning a wheelchair route, acknowledge the independence of the participant in a wheelchair. Always investigate if it's necessary for them to be pushed or lifted by others. Where intervention is required, Leaders and participants should consider potential dangers as part of their risk assessment process.

It's essential that routes are visited in advance, ideally checking the route with a wheelchair, to identify barriers and obstacles that might be easily overlooked when completing the route on foot.

Often expeditions where participants are using manual wheelchairs will progress more slowly than those on foot. The group should adjust to a shared pace and plan project activities carefully to ensure everyone can participate successfully. All terrain wheelchairs can be used on an expedition, and these are excellent if the route consists of tracks and trails where a traditional wheelchair may struggle.

If using powered wheelchairs, ensure adequate battery power or recharging facilities are available, as well as rain covers. Larger tents may be required for sleeping, and toilet facilities must be suitable for people using wheelchairs.

Wheelchairs may need to be repaired and maintained while being used for expeditions and this should be covered as part of the pre-expedition training, for both group members and expedition support staff, to ensure the participants remain as self-sufficient as possible.



For more information on different modes of travel see [chapter 9: Mode of travel](#)





Self-sufficiency

Supporting self-sufficiency is a key part of the Expedition section and should be approached in a way that reflects each participant's individual needs and capabilities. If a participant's medical conditions preclude the carrying of heavy loads, consider whether a different mode of travel such as canoeing or cycling might alleviate this, before using enroute equipment drop points by staff or pre-positioned kit at camp sites.

If participants are walking with a reduced load, it's important they still carry important safety equipment in case an accident occurs.

When pre-positioning equipment, if possible, allow the team to set it up when they arrive so they still feel in control of the expedition.

Any specialist equipment required to support a participant must be checked with the same care as all other expedition equipment to ensure it's in sound condition, is suitable fit for purpose and sufficiently robust to stand up to the task involved.

Debrief and presentation

Accessible and creative presentation formats

The nature of the expedition debrief must be appropriate for the group, and relative to the expedition they have completed.

Give early attention to the team goal and preparation of the presentation. There's a rich variety of presentation styles and techniques, ranging from poetry to film, painting to dance, written to spoken, which are available to participants, therefore enabling them all to give an interesting and creative account of their expedition.

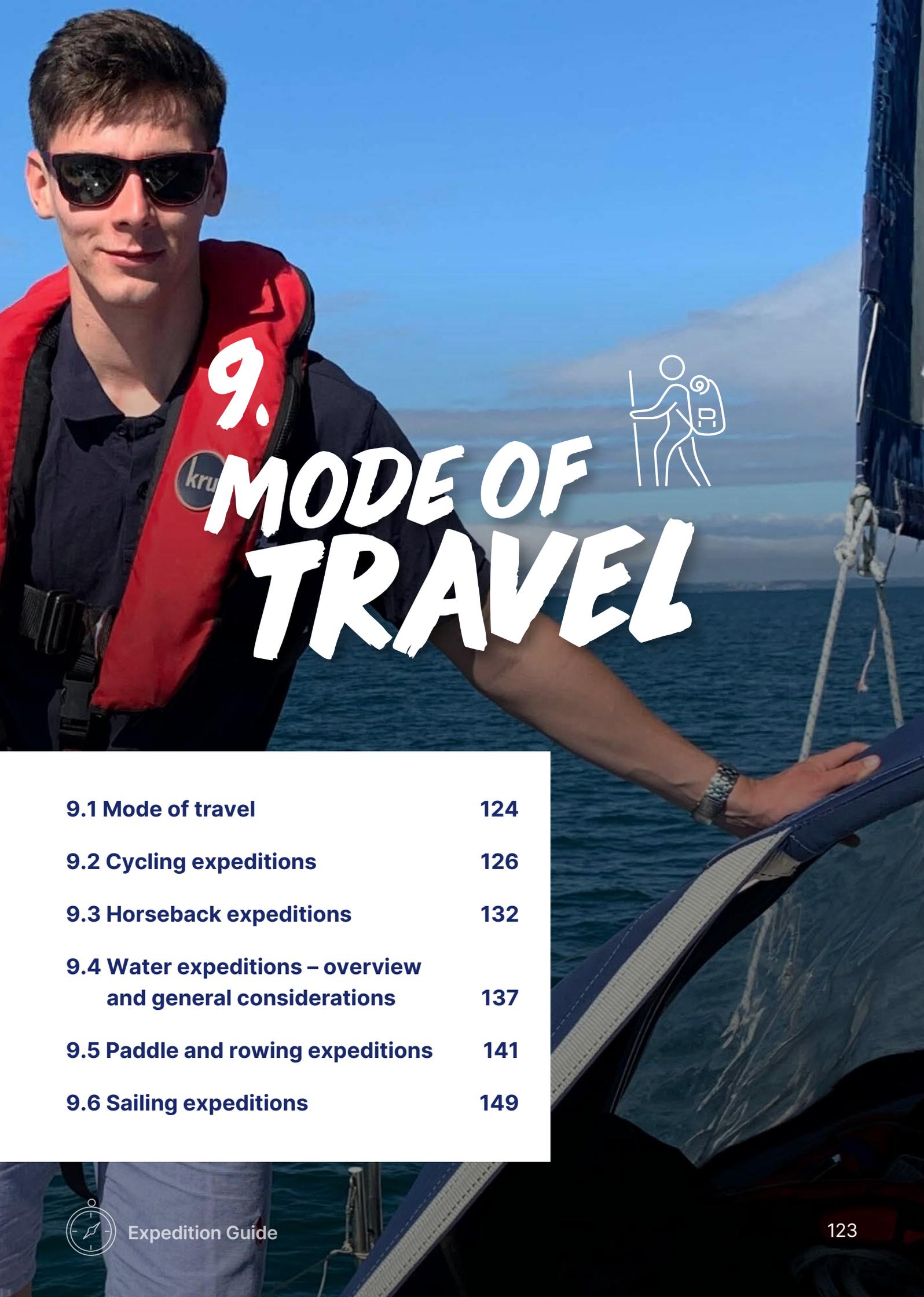


For more information see [chapter 7: After expeditions](#)

Key actions

- Adapt routes for accessibility – include rest points, toilet and washing facilities and prayer spaces where needed
- Support creative, flexible team goals that reflect the teams' interests
- Choose safe, suitable terrain – consider restricted spaces if needed
- Explore all accommodation options
- Returning home or to a secure location should only happen when complex needs or security restrictions prevent overnight stays
- Adjust level of supervision based on safety and independence
- Try to avoid clashes with major events or religious observances
- Consider alternative modes of transport (canoe, cycle, horseback) for young people with mobility needs
- Use visual aids, repeated practice, and confidence-building activities during training activities
- Keep independence central, even with adjustments
- Offer accessible formats for debrief and presentation (video, spoken, creative).





9. MODE OF TRAVEL

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9.1 Mode of travel

The DofE encourages participants at all levels to be adventurous and consider modes of travel of their expedition other than going on foot.

Changing modes of travel as they progress from level to level can add interest and broaden horizons while being part of the challenge of progression.

Other modes of travel for DofE groups are cycling, canoe or kayak, rowing, horseback and sailing including dinghies, yachts or multihull and sail training vessels. However groups have also completed expeditions on other modes including camels, dog sled and skis.

Expeditions must be completed by the participants' own physical efforts with minimal external intervention and without motorised assistance.

Proficiency in the mode of travel

Participants must be properly prepared and competent in their chosen expedition mode of travel, to allow them to safely complete their planned journey. Each Licensed Organisation (LO) and Approved Activity Provider (AAP) will stipulate the level of competence they require from the participants under their care. Some LOs will have their own training frameworks they follow to ensure and evidence competence.

The DofE sets out the minimum levels of training that participants need to complete. These requirements are set out in this Expedition Guide and detailed in the DofE Expedition Training Framework.

The DofE Expedition Training Framework includes required competencies and also includes several specific training documents for modes of travel.



These documents are listed below and are available at [DofE.org/resourcescentre](https://www.dofe.org/resourcescentre)

- Expedition Training Framework – core paddling skills
- Expedition Training Framework – horseback expeditions
- Expedition Training Framework – boatwork

In addition participants need to follow the Countryside, Highway and Water Sports Safety Codes, as appropriate to their mode of travel. All training must be signed off by the team's Supervisor.

Some modes of travel, for example sailing, require participants to complete national governing body competence certificates or awards.

Multiple modes of travel

While the DofE is not against the use of multiple modes of travel, it should be noted that participants must be trained to the required standards in all the modes of travel they use.

They must also still be capable of journeying unaccompanied and being self-sufficient. Minimum adult intervention and the concept of a journey must still be embraced.

Considerations for teams using more than one mode of travel:

Safety: Choosing more than one mode of travel can erode the margins of safety that must be in place for all DofE expeditions as there are more areas of risk and safety for participants to focus on, review and manage.

Training There must be no drop in the level of competence expected for each mode of travel from all participants in the team. Teams will need to complete extra training, increasing their workload and that of their instructor. This can also increase the expedition cost as additional instructors, equipment and expedition support staff may be needed.



9. Mode of travel



Mode of travel continued

Self-reliance Choosing more than one mode of travel can increase participants' dependence on adult support and interference. Teams must still be self-sufficient and this will require them to plan very carefully how the different modes of travel interact and in what order they are used.

Journey The expedition needs to remain as a journey. Using more than one mode of travel can end up with the expedition being contrived and unnatural to the environment.

Team goal To remain in the spirit of the Expedition section, there must be a very clear team goal which explains why more than one mode of travel is needed. These expeditions should still meet all of the Expedition Requirements.

Where might more than one mode of travel be used?

Teams which use multiple modes of travel to fulfil a carefully thought out team goal, and who design an expedition which is sympathetic to the expedition environment, may be able to create a successful DofE expedition.

For example, an expedition where a team paddle into a remote area, climb a Munro and then paddle out again can remain entirely self-sufficient and fulfil all of the Expedition Requirements.

Multiple modes of travel can also work well for some participants who have additional needs and who want to explore a range of environments otherwise inaccessible to them.

Portaging is quite common in some expedition areas and is perfectly acceptable as long as it is not motorised.





9.2 Cycling expeditions

Cycle expeditions are a great and accessible mode of travel for teams at all levels of DofE.

Their age, fitness, equipment, wind strength, project and location, whether the route is on- or off-road or mixed terrain, and the condition or steepness of the trail, will all have an effect.

Depending on the team's expedition team goal and their resources, expeditions can be carried out on road touring bikes using surfaced roads, hand powered bikes on appropriate surfaces or mountain bikes on bridleways or tracks.

Planning the expedition

As with all DofE expeditions the planning begins with the team goal. Once cycling is chosen as the mode of travel all the normal requirements for the investigation and environments apply.



For more information see [chapter 3.1: Progressive challenge](#)

Cycle expeditions over large distances require careful planning and route cards should be practical and succinct. Teams may need to use either or both 1:25 000 and 1:50 000 maps depending on the expedition aim, although 1:50 000 is often sufficient.



Hours of planned activity and distance advice

Working out the speed of travel is key to successful expeditions and this should come from teams undertaking training and practice expeditions together.

The distance covered by a team will vary greatly depending on the factors influencing their speed. Their age, fitness, equipment, wind strength, project and location; whether the route is on or off road, or mixed terrain and the condition or steepness of the trail will all have an effect.

A more complex route may require more stops for map reading. Equally, some team goals will require frequent stops, while others may require fewer but longer stops.

The speed of teams will vary considerably, but an average team might travel between 12-15km per hour or 7-9 mph on surfaced roads or between 6.5-8km per hour or 4-5 mph on tracks and trails.

As a rule of thumb, 1 km/mile travelled on an unsurfaced bridleway or track is roughly the equivalent effort to 2 km/miles on surfaced roads. It is acceptable for cycle teams to climb more than 500m in a single day to achieve their aim.

Distance guide for cycling expeditions

Some teams may travel much further, while others may put more time into their project.

Whatever they do, it must be an appropriate challenge for them.





Cycling expeditions continued

LEVEL	HARD SURFACE	OFF ROAD
Bronze	105 km/65 miles	53 km/33 miles
Silver	177 km/110 miles	89 km/55 miles
Gold	240 km/150 miles	120 km/75 miles

Cycle computers and sports trackers can be a good way to monitor average speeds on practices, to help with the planning for the final expedition. Many can create a mapping file which can be used as evidence for the section.

Training

All the major cycling organisations/bodies aim to support cyclists to have a good standard of competence and enjoy their activity, avoiding injuries or confrontations with others.

Several offer qualifications to Supervisors and participants for both on and off road cycling. Information can be found online.

Participants need to complete three areas of training:

1. The DofE Expedition Training Framework.
2. The three levels of The National Standard for Cycle Training, or an equivalent level of competence, to gain basic skills and cycle maintenance experience.
3. Additional skills specific to the expedition area, especially if outside the UK.

Cycle teams are governed by the Highway Code and must be aware of the Countryside Code and DofE Mountain Bike Code.

Teams must follow all access laws and requirements. It is the responsibility of the team and Supervisor to be aware of relevant access issues which should be investigated at the planning stage.

The DofE Expedition Training Framework and DofE Mountain Bike Code are available at [DofE.org/resourcescentre](https://www.dofe.org/resourcescentre).

Training sessions and day rides give the Supervisor the opportunity to support participants to continue to develop their skills, improve fitness, solve mechanical problems and really enjoy the experience.

Licensed Organisations (LOs) usually require Supervisors and trainers to have recognised outdoor and cycle qualifications to deliver the training standards and give enthusiasm and expertise to their team.

Fitness

Cycling expeditions can be demanding, using muscles not usually used in this way for prolonged periods. A planned fitness programme which becomes progressively more demanding is essential.

It cannot be stressed enough that the best training for long distance cycling is long distance cycling, and it should always be a mix of what the expedition will require; on and off road, hill climbing and load carrying. Participants should choose a selection of 10-25 mile training sessions (or rides), to complete with company or on their own and can complement these with gym fitness sessions.



9. Mode of travel



Cycling expeditions continued

Equipment

Personal and expedition equipment is the same for all expeditions and only some specific additional equipment, which can often be borrowed, is needed for cycle expeditions.

The bicycle

The cycle needs to be the right size and shape for the rider. Cost is usually what dictates which cycle is used, but use the best one that can be bought, hired or borrowed, either new or second hand. Shop around, ask for a discount as a DoFE participant and look for adverts from people giving up the activity. A good quality frame is expensive but it can be worth it as it responds to both the rider and the road.

Participants should research cycle parts to help them understand their equipment and value it. Invest in, and get used to using, a good quality saddle, available for men and women and which are designed to minimise the numbness of prolonged riding.

Tyre liners, which sit between the inner tube and tyre, provide an extra level of protection against sharp objects. Tyres should have puncture guards that deform around penetrating objects and push them out.

Getting the cycle to the expedition area may need some careful planning, particularly at Gold level or if travelling outside of the UK. It is usually easy to borrow cycle carriers for vehicles, if the team does not already have one. If travelling by train, check the booking space and company policy in advance. Remember that cycling to the start of the expedition cannot be included as part of the expedition.

Clothing

To find the right clothing do some research, talk to other cyclists and clubs and visit a cycle shop to see, feel and try the different options.

However, participants don't always need the best kit, particularly at Bronze level. Encourage participants to borrow or use kit and clothes they already have.

Outlined below is some advice on clothing:

- Participants must always wear helmets whilst cycling. Ensure that these are comfortable (so they get used), secure, the right size and conform to safety standards.
- Hats: Specialist under helmet hats are available to help with comfort and warmth.
- Waterproofs: Jackets and trousers need to be close fitting and the jacket needs to be a bright colour/high visibility. Trousers should have a high back and be cut for cycling.
- Windproof jackets, jerseys and base layers: Warmth, flexibility and dryness at body layer are essential.
- Shorts and trousers: Choose items that are very comfortable over long distances and are cut and padded for cycling.
- Gloves: These essential items need to be both wind and waterproof with cushioning or padding.
- A change of clothes: at the camp site will be needed. If possible use this time to dry and air the cycling kit.



9. Mode of travel



Cycling expeditions continued

Footwear

Trail/touring shoes with stiffer soles for power and a recessed cleat for more comfortable walking when required, are ideal for DofE expeditions, particularly on harder surfaces and at Gold level expeditions.

Cleats allow the rider to pull on the pedals as well as push, greatly increasing cycle efficiency.

Multi-sports shoes (or even trainers) are fine for most shorter cycle expeditions. Many have dual density mid-soles for cycling efficiency and the need to do any walking or pushing up steep hills. These can be used with toe clips, but are not recommended for the more challenging, off-road expeditions.

Panniers (waterproofed) and cycle trailers

Food and equipment must be carried in panniers, not on participants' backs. A small day sack may be used for light items on training day rides.

The capacity of panniers may well be less than the average rucksack, so teams will need to think about bulk, size and weight of all food and equipment. Panniers on racks over the rear wheel with a joint capacity of 40 litres should be sufficient for DofE expeditions; others can be added to the handlebars and front wheel.

Panniers need to be securely and correctly fitted to the bike. Check frames and panniers are compatible before spending money.

Ensure that any straps and hooks are in good condition and any equipment attached to the top of the rack, such as tents or sleeping bags, are secure, stable and make a safe load. Ensure that all kit can be kept dry.

Similar to expeditions on foot, the weight of equipment is a handicap and must be reduced

as much as possible. Cycles may need to be lifted over obstacles, pushed up steep hills or through deep mud.

Some teams like to use cycle trailers to increase their load bearing capacity. The same good practice advice for panniers generally applies to cycle trailers, and groups must get used to cycling with them.

General equipment

Make sure the cycle is in a suitable condition and fitted out ready for the expedition. It is disruptive and frustrating to keep stopping for repairs and it can undermine the enjoyment of the expedition. Participants will need the skills and repair kit/parts to be able to maintain their cycles throughout their expedition and remain self sufficient.

Cycle clubs and shops can help with training sessions, but participants may need to be inventive to solve some problems.

A repair kit to carry out running repairs should include:

- Puncture outfit, spare valve, spare inner tube, tyre levers and pump.
- Spare brake blocks and brake cables.
- Spare gear cables.
- A chain tool.
- Two or three spare spokes and a spoke key.
- Spanners, allen keys, pliers and screwdrivers necessary for the above.
- Some rag and a very small plastic container of a liquid detergent.
- A bag of odd nuts, bolts, washers, screws, cable/zip ties, tape and some thin wire.
- It is helpful for Supervisors to carry spare wheels.
- Some items will be team based, e.g. spanner set, whereas others will need to be taken by each participant, e.g. inner tubes.



9. Mode of travel



Cycling expeditions continued

Maintenance

Participants will need to be trained through hands-on experience to maintain their cycle.

All team members need to be able to:

- Keep the bike clean and oiled.
- Mend a puncture including removing and replacing the rear wheel.
- Adjust and replace brake blocks and a worn brake cable.
- Adjust the chain tension and repair a broken chain.
- Adjust derailleur gears.
- Undertake pannier and rack repairs.
- Remove and replace a broken spoke.

Complete a check of the cycle and its parts before departure to identify any areas of wear.

Safety

Through training and practice expeditions every team member must be fully competent in cycling with a fully loaded cycle. The balance of the panniers must be even and the centre of gravity kept low. The rack must be securely fitted and any items securely strapped on so nothing can fall off.

Participants must take care on all roads and tracks for vehicles and other users, particularly on narrow country roads and lanes with blind corners and bends.

Riding in a group is very different to cycling alone. Teams should ride in single file and keep at least two bike lengths apart, extending to 30 metres when descending hills or in difficult terrain.

The experience and thrill of off-road cycling must be set against respecting the surfaces used which can often be unstable with odd cambers, potholes, tyre grooves, mud and gravel. Riders should be aware of, and avoid,

the deep grooves left in tracks by 4×4 and agricultural vehicles.

Training in dealing with and cleaning out cuts and grazes is essential.

Be aware of roaming animals, for example sheep, ponies, cattle and deer, as accidents involving them can have serious consequences. Remember that walkers often have dogs with them.

The weather in the UK is very changeable and teams must be prepared for poor visibility by wearing brightly coloured tops and having reflector strips on their panniers.

Additionally, every bike must have adequate lighting with spares carried.

Responsible cycling and code of behaviour

Cycling, particularly off-road cycling, can conflict with other countryside users and all DofE participants have a responsibility to maintain the good reputation of the DofE, always being courteous and considerate by:

- Approaching other users carefully and letting them know riders are approaching. Slow down and give audible warning while still some distance away. If necessary, stop and dismount.
- Riding slowly on crowded trails.
- Passing others with care and courtesy.
- Sharing the track with others; bikers should give way to walkers and horses.
- Changing the route if the trail is closed or heavily muddy.
- Staying on the route and trying not to create extra width.
- Never having a confrontation with other users or doing any stunts and tricks while cycling. All of these are strictly against DofE safety conditions.



9. Mode of travel



Cycling expeditions continued

Supervision and assessment

Cycle expeditions are supervised and assessed in the same way as all other expeditions.

Due to the long distances involved, both the Assessor and Supervisor need to carefully plan their roles and routes during the expedition.

The Supervisor must be an experienced and appropriately qualified cyclist, approved by the LO and/or Approved Activity Provider (AAP).

The Supervisor must bring not only technical competence but also equipment skills, team management and consideration for the environment, giving confidence to the team and fostering success and enjoyment.

Whilst the Assessor does not have to have cycling experience, it can add positively to the expedition experience for the participants if they do.





9.3 Horseback expeditions

Horseback expeditions are a unique challenge for DofE participants and can provide a sense of adventure unlike any other. It is a mode of travel which requires careful planning to ensure success and to overcome some of the barriers that participants will come across.

Riding expeditions should only be undertaken by participants who are competent in the skills set out in the Training framework for horseback expeditions.

Horses and horse care

Horses are creatures of habit with their own personalities. They do not always like new surroundings, are as affected by weather conditions as much as their riders and, as such, can express their discomfort in forceful ways.

Any horse should be accustomed to the other horses in the group or else there can be problems when being stabled or turned out at the end of the day. Turning horses out to graze in corrals created with electric fencing to separate them is a suitable and safe alternative to stabling, reducing the risk of injury from kicks or bites.

It is often difficult and expensive to hire suitable horses. Many stables are not suitably insured or are reluctant for their horses to be stabled away from their home base and will require participants to provide insurance.

Horses and ponies need to be prepared and conditioned for the demands, fitness and duration of DofE expeditions as thoroughly as their riders. At Bronze level a participant's own horse or pony may need little preparation other than practice in load-carrying. At Silver level, and especially at Gold level, where expeditions are several days long and take place in more remote areas, horses must be very fit, suitable

for, and used to, meeting the demands made by the terrain involved in the long journey.

A fitness and feeding plan will usually be needed to help prepare the horses. Horses should be shod within two weeks before the start of the expedition.

Teams should aim to use the same horse throughout the expedition as this is a partnership between horse and rider. However, with the agreement of the Supervisor and Assessor, substitute horses may be permitted if the original mount sustains an unforeseeable injury/ailment. The replacement will need to have completed appropriate fitness training and preparation.

A person knowledgeable in working with horses should ensure that the horses are fit before the team sets out and after the expedition has ended.

At the beginning and end of each day participants should ensure that their horses are sound and fit enough to continue with the expedition and a daily check by a knowledgeable adult is recommended.

Planning the expedition

As with all expeditions, the planning begins with the team goal. Once horseback is chosen as the mode of travel, all the normal requirements.

As vehicles pose the greatest danger on horseback expeditions, teams should avoid the use of surfaced roads as much as possible and only use open country, bridleways and tracks.





Horseback expeditions continued

Hours of planned activity and distance advice

It takes time to prepare horses for travel, feeding, tacking up and so on. More time is also needed at the end of the day's journey compared with other modes of travel. At Bronze level up to an hour of the minimum planned activity time can be allocated to do this and up to two hours at Silver and Gold levels. The minimum hours of journeying at each level must still be achieved (three at Bronze, three and a half at Silver and four at Gold).

Teams undertaking horseback expeditions should choose a team goal which is achievable without using too much planned activity time during the day, as this will largely be taken up with journeying and caring for the horses.

The speed of teams will vary considerably due to the rider, horse, weather, route, aim and project. As a rough guide for planning, an average team might travel at 4km an hour.

Teams should also plan 15-minute breaks every two hours, plus 30 minutes to one hour for lunch.

Bronze teams may often only average 3kmph. Speed varies greatly from team to team so they should use their practice journeys as a guide to their speed over ground.

Fit horses carrying saddlebags and riders with day-sacks will travel at 4–5kmph on good tracks but will probably only average 3kmph across rough ground and moorland. Most of the route will be completed at walk with occasional trotting. Cantering is discouraged whilst carrying loads.

An average team at each level might travel the distances given below:

LEVEL	DISTANCE
Bronze	24-32km / 15-20 miles
Silver	60-75 km / 37-46 miles
Gold	80km-100km / 50-62 miles

Reconnoitring

A limited amount of reconnoitring may take place to ensure that tracks and bridleways can be negotiated on horseback. If routes are obstructed this can result in lengthy route changes and may force teams onto roads. The local British Horse Society bridleways representative or the local council rights of way officer can often look at the route and warn of any known obstructions. Participants should assess the chosen route before setting out, including risk assessing any small lanes and road or rail crossings.

Camp sites

Careful route planning is needed to identify camp sites and landowners who can provide for both the needs of horses (water, secure pasture or stabling) and participants. Ask if establishments require the horses to be in possession of a current vaccination certificate.

Teams still need to ensure camp sites are sufficiently separated to allow for appropriate hours of journeying. Bivouacking in a hay loft or barn is permitted, but extreme care must be taken while cooking.



9. Mode of travel



Horseback expeditions continued

Training

Participants should regularly ride in rural areas and must complete the following three areas of training.

This should be delivered by an appropriately qualified or experienced person approved by the Licensed Organisation (LO) or Approved Activity provider (AAP):

1. All elements of the DofE Expedition Training Framework.
2. The skills set out in the DofE Training framework for horseback expeditions, approved by the British Horse Society, including training in riding and road safety to a standard the supervisor is satisfied with. The DofE recommends participants complete the BHS Riding and Road Safety test or the Pony Club Road Rider test or are trained to these standards.
3. Additional skills specific to the expedition area and country.

Horseback teams are governed by the Highway Code and must be aware of the Countryside Code.

Teams must follow all access laws and requirements. It is the responsibility of the team and Supervisor to be aware of relevant access issues which should be investigated at the planning stage.



The DofE Expedition Training Framework and the complete DofE training framework for horseback expeditions are all available at [DofE.org/resourcescentre](https://www.dofe.org/resourcescentre)

All participants must be competent in ensuring the wellbeing of the horse for the full duration of the expedition without direct staff

supervision or intervention. All participants must be able to recognise difficult and dangerous going and know the action to be taken in the event of an accident to horse or rider. First aid training must include treatment of an unconscious casualty and head injuries.

Training and practice expeditions

Both rider and animal must be prepared for the challenge of the qualifying expedition. It is likely that groups will complete more than one practice expedition, for example one on foot and one on horseback.

For Bronze level expeditions participants must be adequately trained to safely undertake a remotely supervised expedition on horseback. This helps to ensure that they are competent and confident in the skills needed for the DofE level and the demands of the expedition area.

The need for these practices will depend on the experience of both the participants and the horses. Practices may be in the same area each time.

Equipment

Pre-positioned equipment

Some teams set out to be entirely self-sufficient, using very lightweight and minimal equipment and such efforts should always be commended.

However, horses can only carry so much weight, both rider and equipment. Horseback teams may pre-position some of their equipment which is over the load-bearing capacity of the animal on expedition.

For expeditions in remote areas, or at Gold level, participants should be encouraged to carry as much as they can safely manage. This is an expedition, not a series of day rides with overnight stops.



9. Mode of travel



Horseback expeditions continued

Pre-positioned equipment must be of the same lightweight type that would have been used if travelling on foot. Participant camping equipment and food may be pre-positioned at camp sites, but emergency equipment, food for the day and sleeping bags must always be carried.

Participants' emergency equipment, listed on DofE.org, and items associated with the essential wellbeing of the horse must be carried each day.

These include:

- Numnah, head collar and rope
- Hoof pick
- First aid equipment for the horse which should include antiseptic cream or powder, cotton wool and a leg bandage
- Fly repellent
- Bailer twine to tie up gates, repair bridle etc.
- A penknife or pocket tool. (It is against the law to sell a knife to anyone under the age of 18 (unless it has a manual folding blade less than 3 inches long) and to use any knife in a threatening way).

If within the horses' load-bearing capacity, teams should take a sleeping bag and a lightweight tent as additional emergency equipment.

This equipment should be carried in saddlebags and/or a small, lightweight day-sack. Day sacks can rub and cause sweating and, if used, they must be small so as not to bump on the back of the saddle or impede the rider. Day sacks must be secured with a waistband and not have a frame. A small hip bag is useful for bits and pieces needed during the day.

Arrangements for watering, especially in hot weather, should be made with the Supervisor as suitable drinking troughs/streams may not always be available. A large water container and bucket is easily carried in the back of a car.

Equipment which may be pre-positioned at rest stops and camp sites include:

- Fodder and haynets
- Grooming tools, sponges/towels, sweatsheets, rugs, spare numnahs and girths
- Water and feeding buckets
- Camping equipment. Lightweight equipment to allow teams to cook and camp in the usual two or three person units
- Food for the rest of the expedition
- Corralling equipment and mucking out tools may also be needed.

Any pre-positioning of equipment will require the involvement of the Supervisor, staff or parent but this must not extend beyond the delivery of the equipment and the usual duties of remote supervision.

Clothing and footwear

Every participant must wear a hard hat with a safety strap at all times when riding, approved to the current BSI safety standard. Normal expedition and riding clothing can be used, as long as it is appropriate for the expedition area and conforms to current good practice.

All participants should carry or wear riding gloves. Footwear must be appropriate to ride in. Footwear, the hard hat and clothes should be checked by the team's Supervisor.

Many participants find a sheepskin 'seat-saver' to go over the saddle increases their comfort level.

The usual outdoor good practice of using layers of clothing, which may be removed or added to as weather conditions and body warmth dictate, should be followed.

Waterproof outer clothing such as a cagoule may be worn, but should not impede the vision, hearing or control of the horse, and should not flap in the wind, as this could startle the horse.



9. Mode of travel



Horseback expeditions continued

Safety note

Participants should undo the waistbands and chest harnesses on day sacks when passing under low trees or crossing water.

Nothing solid, such as a Trangia stove or a compressed sleeping bag in a stuff sack, should be carried in the day sack as falling onto it from a height could cause serious injury.

Saddlebags may need to be removed to pass safely through narrow gates.

A mobile phone should be carried within the team, as in the event of a fall of horse or rider serious injuries may be sustained.

Map reading

Using a map while in the saddle can be difficult, especially if the map needs to be spread out. Horses may be startled if they see maps flapping about in their peripheral vision.

As well as the usual route card, horseback teams should create an itinerary allowing them to follow the route without having to dismount to read the full map, which every team must still carry. Software like eDofE Mapping allows A4 route sections to be printed, which can then be laminated.

Supervision and assessment

Horseback expeditions are supervised and assessed in the same way as all other land-based expeditions. The Supervisor must be an appropriately qualified and experienced person approved by the LO or AAP. The Supervisor must bring not only technical competence but also equipment skills, team management and consideration for the environment. They should give confidence to the team and foster success and enjoyment.

Either the Supervisor, or the Supervisor working with another appropriately qualified

and experienced person, must be able to take responsibility for the safety, care and welfare of the horses for the duration of the expedition.

They will also advise on the pre-positioning of equipment if required and assess the horses before and after the expedition.

Supervisors should use normal remote supervision methods, meeting the team at checkpoints en-route.

As part of effective remote supervision, the teams may be more closely supervised for parts of the journey where there are specific hazards such as water crossings or fast or 'blind' road crossings. This close supervision must be kept to a minimum.

When horses are involved, the DofE recommends that adult assistance is on hand at night. B&Bs attached to farms work well, allowing the Supervisor and staff to be out of the way but easily contactable if needed.

A horse box or trailer, placed in a strategic location, may help in recovering a horse if it should go lame, lose a shoe or require veterinary care. Participants should know the location and telephone number of the local vet or blacksmith, as it may be possible for a blacksmith to re-shoe a horse or a vet to treat a minor injury at the camp site.

Whilst the Assessor does not have to have riding experience, it can add positively to the expedition experience for the participants if they do. The Assessor role has no responsibility for the care of the horses.





9.4 Water expeditions – overview and general considerations

Water based expeditions can give an entirely different perspective on journeying, immersing participants into a new environment and experience.

Participants who have experience in watercraft can be ambitious in their team goal and planning, developing these as they progress through the DofE levels. As with all expeditions, teams should create a challenge appropriate to their skills and experience.

It is more in keeping with the outcomes of the Expedition section for teams to travel unaccompanied and be self-sufficient on less demanding water with Supervisor visits. However, the DofE does also recognise the teamwork outcomes of expeditions on larger sail training vessels, where the presence of a Supervisor is mandatory.

Water expeditions provide an opportunity for those with mobility problems or who are less physically able or confident, to participate in a full and demanding expedition.

Water expeditions have the added advantage of causing no pollution or erosion of the river banks – and water does not wear out.

Successful water expeditions

The keys to success in water expeditions are a well-chosen team goal, appropriate water, suitable craft and the right team members. Local access to suitable water and craft is the decisive factor, but there are also many open expeditions available all around the UK and beyond.

Select water within the team's capability

It is in the team's own interests to select water and craft which give an excellent chance of bringing the expedition to a successful conclusion. Select water which is suitable for the craft involved and well within the team's

level of skill, so there is less chance of adverse weather or environmental conditions affecting the journey.

Participants must be able to train and carry out practice expeditions on water of a similar degree of difficulty, to gain experience of successfully dealing with any problems.

More time to plan and prepare

Teams and participants who have little or no experience in the chosen mode of travel and are having to learn new skills from scratch, will require more time to plan, train and prepare than for a normal expedition on foot.

It can help by planning to have the expedition at the end of the participant's DofE programme.

Participants undertaking a new mode of travel from that at their previous DofE level(s) may need to complete extra training or practice journeys.

Incorporate greater flexibility into planning and execution

Weather affects all expeditions on land or water, but the effect on water expeditions is greater and more immediate. The distance travelled by a team will vary depending on a headwind, no wind or a strong current, so it is essential to plan with this in mind.

Alternative camp sites and flexible start and finish times should be included in the expedition plan. Participants should pick a flexible team goal which can be extended if needed to ensure participants make up their required hours of planned activity.

A paddle or rowing expedition on a Grade 1 or 2 river is less likely to be affected by the weather than a sailing expedition on an estuary but rivers are subjected to occasional flood conditions, even during the summer months.



9. Mode of travel



Water expeditions – overview and general considerations continued

Levels of wind may make journeying difficult or impossible for sailing. On exposed water, strong winds create the additional problem of rough water.

Build alternative back-up dates into the planning

Weather or water conditions can bring a premature end to even the most carefully planned and flexible of water based expeditions. This is a reality that has to be accepted by all who engage in outdoor pursuits and particularly by DofE participants nearing their 25th birthday.

At least one back-up date should be arranged for all qualifying expeditions on inland water and multiple dates should be considered for estuaries, coastal waters and the open sea.

Involve experienced, adaptable Supervisors and Assessors

Use Supervisors and Assessors who can accommodate flexibility in distances and back-up dates. Local Supervisor pre-expedition checks are essential, especially where craft are then being tailored to distant locations.

Safety afloat

Water is a very exciting and challenging environment, but also a very demanding one. Water conditions and situations can change with frightening rapidity. Safety must always come first and be the vital consideration for everyone involved.

Particular attention should be paid to basic first aid concerned with:

- Resuscitation – participants must understand the possible need for rapid resuscitation and be able to administer rescue breaths as quickly as possible following a capsize or immersion;

- The ability to recognise and treat hypothermia/hyperthermia. Cold water and wet clothing drain heat from the body quickly and many craft are unsheltered which can lead to sun exposure.

The participants should be water confident and a buoyancy aid or lifejacket, suitable clothing and footwear must be worn.

Supervisors need to be confident in the ability of participants to be able to get to safety in an emergency and follow agreed emergency procedures.

It is the responsibility of the Supervisor and LO/AAP to ensure these procedures and agreed levels of participant training, water confidence and competence are in place.

All participants must wear a buoyancy aid or life-jacket when on or close to the water as the unexpected can happen at any time. Specific exceptions for rowing are set out in the Training framework – boatwork at [DofE.org/resourcescentre](https://www.dofe.org/resourcescentre).

Do not trust anyone else to check the equipment. The Supervisor should test buoyancy aids and life-jackets to ensure they are sound. Buoyancy aids and life-jackets provide high visibility in the event of an emergency; brightly coloured headwear or upper body clothing can add to this visibility.

Suitable dress for a particular activity should be determined by current good practice. Clothing must give protection during the activity and when immersed in water, but not restrict movement. Wet suits are rarely needed as they only work when wet and can lead to participants overheating in normal conditions.

Clothes made from modern synthetic materials can give very good insulation without absorbing as much water as the more traditional materials.



9. Mode of travel

Water expeditions – overview and general considerations continued



It is vital that participants protect their extremities against heat loss:

- **Head:** A thermal hat provides cheap and effective protection for the head, especially if used with a waterproof hood.
- **Hands:** Gloves or paddle mitts protect against blisters and the cold.
- **Feet:** Feet should always be protected; deck shoes, plastic sandals or old trainers are a necessity for all water expeditions to avoid cuts from broken glass, abrasions and the possibility of infection. Wet suit booties are not satisfactory for river expeditions, unless an over-shoe is also worn.
- **Sun protection:** Cover skin and use strong sun block, a sun hat and sunglasses as craft often have little shade. Light is reflected from the water and it is usually difficult to change posture or position, exposing the same area of skin for long periods.

A craft with adequate buoyancy

All craft should have sufficient built-in buoyancy to stay afloat and support all the occupants. If the buoyancy is not built into the craft, then it must be firmly secured. The buoyancy of all borrowed or hired craft should always be tested by the users. In the event of a capsize, the golden rule is 'always stay with the boat', it is much more visible than a head bobbing up and down in the water.

A practised and predictable response to sudden immersion

Sudden immersion in cold water is very possible, so all training must take place with this in mind to prepare participants and help them overcome any fear of this.

As well as individuals being prepared for the shock of sudden immersion in cold water, the team must also be trained to give a practiced response in rescuing the participants and all of the kit, in the least possible time. Suitable clothing may go a considerable way to reducing this shock.

Proficiency in capsize and recovery drills

Complete an intensive period of capsize and recovery drill, including outdoor swimming with and without a buoyancy aid. Participants are often reluctant to get into the, usually cold, UK water – so drills are best learned at the end of the training session, so participants don't stay wet and cold.

Capsize should always bring about a predictable, automatic, reflex response to sudden immersion through drill practice, ensuring that participants are not overcome by panic. Capsize must be followed by recovery. Rescue and recovery techniques vary and participants must have the appropriate training and experience, including a 'man overboard' drill for vessels in open water.



9. Mode of travel



Water expeditions – overview and general considerations continued

Have the relevant water-based qualifications or equivalent competence or experience

The Royal Yachting Association has qualifications and syllabuses for sailing and British Canoeing has qualifications and syllabuses for canoeing that might be undertaken by participants. Qualifications for canoeing are not necessary but all participants must have completed the Training framework – core paddling skills. For rowing expeditions, where there is no appropriate national qualification, participants must complete the Training framework – boatwork.



All DofE Expedition Training Framework documents are available online at [DofE.org/resourcescentre](https://www.dofe.org/resourcescentre)

The Sea Cadets, The Scout Association, Girlguiding UK and some LOs have their own courses of instruction.

Training must be supported by experience. It is important that regular practice is spread over a period of time. It is all too easy for participants to give the appearance of competence and respond in the correct manner, yet still lack the depth of experience and confidence to cope with an emergency.

Being able to assist each other when in difficulty

The Expedition section is all about a team working together. Participants will have to depend on each other to succeed and develop the skills needed to be able to help other team members. As part of wider training, participants need to have the ability to use a throwline accurately, right an upturned boat and administer resuscitation.

The skills related to the activity and to survival are vital, but they need to be supported by having a confidence in each other, developed through shared training and practices as a team.

Train for an expedition – not just the technical skills

Training should focus on the completion of a journey on water, not just mastering technical skills for handling a particular craft. Developing an awareness of the environment, surroundings, likely threats and unexpected hazards is a must.

Participants need to be aware of dangers including Weil's disease (leptospirosis), blue-green algae and water pollution.

As good practice, all participants should ensure that any open cuts are protected by adhesive waterproof dressings and wash their hands before eating. Participants who have been properly trained by knowledgeable and experienced instructors are in no greater danger than those engaged in land expeditions.

Participants canoeing, sailing and rowing on rivers and canals should use the standard approach to navigation. Only when tidal waters, estuaries and coastal waters are being used is it necessary to use charts and change to marine navigation.

Mobile phones

Mobile phones can provide 'ship to shore' communication between participants and supervisors. Equipment should be tested in the area of the expedition prior to the qualifying expedition and be protected from immersion in the water.





9.5 Paddle and rowing expeditions

Paddle and rowing expeditions are an increasingly popular alternative to walking. They offer a wide range of varying environments and craft where participants can develop their skills, both personally and as a member of a team.

The expedition could be as wide-ranging as a journey along the local canal network, or down one of the rivers such as the Severn, Wye or Thames, to a remote expedition on a Scottish loch or abroad. A paddle or rowing expedition gives an entirely new perspective on journeying. The subsequent development of new skills and experiences frequently leads young people into an activity which may last a lifetime. One of the elements that may attract participants to undertake a paddle expedition is that they do not have to carry a rucksack on their back.

Participants can gain the levels of paddle or rowing skills and experience needed as they undertake the rest of their DofE programme, undertaking their expedition as one of the last activities.

Paddle or rowing expeditions lend themselves well to exploring and provide an opportunity to engage in fresh areas of study in stimulating surroundings. They also offer an exciting form of travel, which can lead to new interests and awareness of oneself and the environment.



The craft

Open canoe

The open canoe, with its origins in the Canadian canoes of the North American Indians and the Voyageurs, is an ideal craft for expeditions. It is an excellent vehicle for carrying equipment. It allows for companionship, usually carrying two or three people, and is safe insofar as if young people fall into the water, they fall clear of the vessel. Rafted open canoes or similar craft that can accommodate the whole team can be used as they provide a very stable platform.

Sea kayaks and touring kayaks

The sea kayak is an excellent craft in which to undertake a camping expedition. With their length and keel they are easy to paddle in a straight line and there is ample room for camping equipment. Though designed for the sea, they are suitable for use on the type of river involved in DofE expeditions, and paddlers who camp and travel long distances prefer them.

Purpose-built touring kayaks are ideal for DofE expeditions as they are able to carry sufficient camping gear and food to enable self-sufficiency.

The low volume white water kayak, though being very common and great for sport, is not a very suitable craft in which to carry out a journey and should only be used for training or the Physical section. Their small size does not enable self-sufficiency and many young people find them difficult and tiresome to paddle in a straight line for hours at a stretch.



9. Mode of travel



Paddle and rowing expeditions continued

Rowing

A rowing expedition in a gig or whaler epitomises the concept of teamwork where a team has to work in harmony to ensure their success.

There are many thousands of rowing boats of all shapes and sizes, ranging from those capable of carrying pairs of participants and their gear, to gigs, whalers and ex-ship lifeboats which can carry a group of seven on rivers, canals and sheltered estuaries.

Rowing expeditions must take place in a boat which has been designed for rowing. The broad beam of sailing dinghies, their design and lightness make them extremely frustrating and tiresome to row over an extended period of time.

It should be remembered that rowing boats cannot be carried for any distance and it is essential that there are locks at all weirs and sluices in addition to slipways for launching and recovery.

Using a lock may take up to 20-30 minutes and, if there is a lock keeper, use may be restricted to the working day, frequently with a break for lunch; all this detail needs to be determined beforehand and built into the planning.

Team composition

As with all expeditions, the minimum number of participants in any expedition team must be four. For tandem canoes/kayaks or craft designed for multiple occupancy, the maximum team size is eight; otherwise seven as for other modes of travel.

The number of craft in the team must be agreed with the Licensed Organisation (LO)/Approved Activity Provider (AAP) after an appropriate risk assessment has been completed.

Water

Access to canals is easy in the UK. Many young people will start their DofE canoeing experience in this type of environment. Even in large urban areas canals can offer good opportunities for training. Access to rivers in the United Kingdom is often difficult, except for where they have been turned into navigations or there is a tradition of access.

Navigations usually involve the lower reaches of rivers, which in many cases are still used for commerce and recreational boating.

They include many local canals and rivers, such as the Wye, the Severn, the Yorkshire Ouse, the Great Ouse, the Thames and the Trent.

Paddlers and rowers require licences for all English and Scottish canals and some canalised rivers. British Canoeing has negotiated a special arrangement with the Canals and Rivers Trust/Thames Licence whereby their waters are included in the British Canoeing Licence, which is included as part of the British Canoeing membership.

Separate licences are required for many of the larger rivers, such as the Great Ouse. The relevant details may be obtained from the local British Canoeing Access Officers. It is the responsibility of the team and the Supervisor to ensure the correct permissions and licences are in place.

In Europe there are thousands of miles of suitable rivers used by tens of thousands of touring paddlers on a scale difficult to imagine in Britain. Most have their source in the Alps or the Massif Central. Their upper reaches have a limited place in the Expedition section and their lower reaches are frequently polluted and highly commercialised. However, the middle sections, often extending for hundreds of miles, are ideal for DofE paddlers and rowers.





Paddle and rowing expeditions continued

The Dordogne, the Ardèche, the Rhine, the Rhône and the Danube are typical examples and provide wonderful, stimulating environments for paddle expeditions. Some rivers have been canalised with locks, and licences may be required.

Planning the expedition

Where to do the expedition

Participants should choose water which is suitable for their team goal, the type of craft and, above all else, that is well within their competence and experience.

A principal requirement of the Expedition section is that all expeditions must be unaccompanied and self-sufficient, providing a sense of isolation and remoteness.

The choice of where an expedition is carried out will depend to a large extent on the team goal, but referring to guides or asking those with experience will help inform the choice. Guides provide detailed advice on rivers as well as details of access and rights of passage. British Canoeing will also be able to give advice on many of the overseas waterways, or advise where the information is available.

Participants teams may reconnoitre parts of the route beforehand from the bank. It is essential that access to the water, launching and recovery points, mooring sites and camp sites are identified before the expedition.

Like all expeditions, the weight and bulk of camping gear and food should be kept to a minimum when paddling or rowing.

Do not be tempted to take additional or non-essential equipment. Portages are not only at the beginning and end of the day but frequently during the journey itself around weirs, locks and some rapids. The Canal & River Trust (formerly British Waterways), unlike the Environment Agency, Thames Region, does not allow certain craft to use locks.

Supervisors and participants will need to check with the relevant agency/authorities with regard to whether locks can be accessed, or whether they have to be portaged.

Portage can be a strenuous activity, especially for younger participants, and frequently involves several trips between the place of disembarkation and re-embarkation.

It is important for health and safety reasons, to train all participants in effective lifting procedures.

As with other modes of transport, it's important that as you progress through the levels the environment becomes progressively more challenging. With paddling and rowing expeditions the challenge can be increased by progressing to water that is unfamiliar to the participants. It can also be increased by the type of water e.g. canals, rivers, estuaries and coastal waters. It should be remembered that the challenge should be appropriate to group and the conditions will be related to the age, level and amount of experience of the participants.



9. Mode of travel



Paddle and rowing expeditions continued

Hours of planned activity and distance advice

Every team is different and the nature of their team goal and personal situation means that it is hard to give estimates of common distances covered during the hours of planned activity. This is particularly hard for paddle and rowing expeditions as they are so highly affected by factors such as the number of locks, the amount of head winds and the strength of the current.

To help Supervisors, it is estimated that an average team, with appropriate breaks and project investigations, will normally achieve total distances of around those stated in the table below.

Some teams may travel much further, while others may put more time into their project. Whatever they do, it must be an appropriate challenge for them.

Training

There are training requirements which are split into four sections:

- The Expedition Training Framework, which is compulsory for all expeditions.
- Training framework – core paddling skills, which is compulsory for all paddling expeditions, or the Training framework – boatwork, which is compulsory for all rowing expeditions.
- Learning of skills that are specific to the environment.
- Any additional LO/AAP requirements.



All training documents are available at DofE.org/resourcescentre

Bronze	A team could realistically cover around 16-20km (10-12.5 miles) on each day, resulting in a journey of around 32-40km (20-25 miles) over the two days.
Silver	A team could realistically cover around 22km (13.5 miles) a day, resulting in a journey of around 65 kilometres (40 miles) over the three days.
Gold	A team could realistically cover around 32 kilometres (20 miles) a day according to the wind, current or tide, resulting in a journey of around 128 kilometres (80 miles) over the four days.





Paddle and rowing expeditions continued

Many LOs/AAPs will require appropriately qualified coaches, such as those holding British Canoeing qualifications, to deliver this training.

The DofE has developed a set of guidelines to assist coaches/trainers of paddle or rowing expeditions in developing their own training programmes to meet the team goal and the needs of the participants. A number of these key elements have been taken directly from the British Canoeing awards that are appropriate to the expedition being undertaken.

The training requirements programme has been developed to identify the additional training required to ensure that participants can expedition safely with remote supervision in their chosen environment. Trainers will need to select the appropriate training elements specific to the environment in which the expedition will take place and that they feel will fulfil the Expedition Requirements.

There is no substitute for experience and teams should spend enough time on the water so that the craft becomes an extension of the user, or until they are at home in the environment.

When the basic skills have been acquired, it is essential that experience be built up using the same kind of water that is to be used for the qualifying expedition.

Minimum training requirements

Expedition Training Framework documents and paddle/rowing training programmes are available at [DofE.org/resourcescentre](https://www.dofe.org/resourcescentre). All participants undertaking a paddle or rowing expedition must:

- Observe the Countryside Code when using inland waters.
- Know the Water Sports Safety Code, the basic rules of the water – priorities, the sound signals used on water and distress signals.
- Know the rules of conduct for the water on which they are journeying, including the courtesies, customs and etiquette associated with boating and sailing.
- Be adequately trained to:
 - Ensure they meet the Expedition Requirements.
 - Satisfy the Supervisor that they have completed the required training and reached the necessary level of competence for the conditions and environment of their expedition. If the Assessor is not satisfied with the level of competence or evidence then they may withdraw their services.
- Satisfy the Supervisor that their craft, equipment and clothing is suitable for the expedition.
- Demonstrate that their equipment is waterproofed and watertight.



9. Mode of travel



Paddle and rowing expeditions continued

Equipment

All craft must be sound, suitable, fitted out for the conditions in which they are to be used and approved by the Supervisor for use.

They must have integrated buoyancy, or buoyancy which is securely attached to the boat.

Boats must have bow and stern toggles, loops or buoyant painters fore and aft, which are properly secured.

Personal and expedition equipment



Personal, emergency and expedition equipment is the same for all expeditions and can be found at [DofE.org/resourcescentre](https://www.dofe.org/resourcescentre)

The list below is intended as a starting point when considering additional equipment for paddling and rowing expeditions:

- Buoyancy aid or life-jacket as appropriate, with whistle attached.
- Repair kit.
- Waterproof or water-resistant watch.
- Knife (It is against the law to sell a knife to anyone under the age of 18 (unless it has a manual folding blade less than 3 inches long) and to use any knife in a threatening way).
- Maps/charts in or with water resistant protection.
- Matches in a waterproof container.
- Throw line/towline and a spare.
- Water-resistant torch with a spare bulb and batteries.
- Spare paddle (per boat).
- A bailer and large sponge.
- Flares (if relevant to the environment).

- Helmets should be considered where relevant to the environment.
- For rowing expeditions, crutches must be tied to the boat, a spare oar and crutch should be carried and the repair kit should also include canoe tape and very thick flexible plastic sheeting.

Clothing

The list of personal equipment for all expeditions will provide a basis for the kit list for paddling expeditions. This equipment can be supplemented with appropriate specialised clothing.

Considerations must be made for the environment that the participants will be working in. Shade is often unavailable and therefore protection for the head, hands and feet is particularly important.

Feet must be protected at all times, old trainers may be used. The ability to carry and keep a complete change of dry clothing is essential.

Personal and team camping equipment

This equipment list is the same for land and water expeditions, although paddlers are often able to carry more equipment for some extra comfort. Craft, paddling and portaging (if required) must be considered when equipment is selected.

Food and drink

Paddle expeditions offer the opportunity for a wide and varied menu. This can include fresh produce and tinned food, which could not be carried on a foot expedition. Teams are also able to take water filtration units for wilderness expeditions. Expeditions on salt water will need to ensure they carry sufficient drinking water and have access to fresh drinking water at camp sites.



9. Mode of travel



Paddle and rowing expeditions continued

Waterproofing equipment

All clothing, plus most of the camping gear and food, will need to be protected in effective waterproof containers or dry bags. Large plastic drums with an efficient seal are popular with open canoeists. Waterproof bags inside rucksacks are an alternative, being particularly useful at portages and adjusting the trim of the craft.

Spare clothing and sleeping bags should be given the additional protection of being individually sealed by whatever waterproofing method is chosen.

In all craft the storage of equipment affects the trim and stability. Equipment should be stored to ensure that the craft is appropriately trimmed for the prevailing conditions, and that heavy items are stored as low as possible to increase stability.

Supervision

The Supervisor is the person responsible for the safety and welfare of the participant whilst on their expedition and must be approved by the LO or AAP. They must be familiar with their role and responsibilities.

For Bronze level expeditions only, the Supervisor can also act as the Assessor if they are accredited.

Supervisors must have considerable experience of water similar to that being used by the expedition team and must also be competent in assessing water and weather conditions. For all paddle expeditions the Supervisor must be in the area of the expedition.

British Canoeing offer appropriate qualifications for paddlesport coaches to operate in the environment of the expedition, but these should be supported by experience which should also be seen as a valuable asset.



9. Mode of travel



Rivers and canals

The sense of isolation and solitude experienced during an expedition is one of the essential experiences to meet the outcomes for the section. Accordingly, it should not usually be necessary for Supervisors to shadow teams on the water.

If the Supervisor feels that this is necessary then it may be that the team is not sufficiently well trained for the chosen environment. Supervisors can shadow the team on the water where specific, hazardous areas are unavoidable.

In this environment it is usual to supervise teams by meeting them at checkpoints during the day, in a similar way to expeditions on land.

Sheltered coastal waters and estuaries

For teams in sheltered estuaries or sheltered coastal waters, Supervisors must provide safety cover afloat.

Contact should not be made with the team during the expedition except for the usual needs of supervision.

The safety cover must be sufficiently remote from the participants to avoid destroying the team's sense of remoteness and self-sufficiency and yet be able to render assistance in an emergency within a reasonable amount of time.

The safety cover may consist of the Supervisor and the Assessor shadowing the team at an appropriate distance.

Where a safety boat is used it must be sufficiently seaworthy and fitted out to cope with any water conditions which may arise in the sea area being used.

It is desirable that all craft used on open water should be highly visible.

Assessors

Paddle and rowing expeditions are assessed in the same way as all other expeditions.

Whilst the Assessor does not have to have paddle or rowing experience, it can add positively to the expedition experience for the participants if they do. If they need to assess on water then the LO or AAP must approve their competence and experience to do so.

It may be difficult to find an Accredited Assessor with competence and experience on water in the mode of travel. In these cases it may be appropriate to use an Assessor who works alongside another adult with the specific mode of travel skills – this might be the Supervisor.

Holding a British Canoeing coaching qualification does not give the automatic right to assess DofE expeditions.





9.6 Sailing expeditions

Sailing expeditions provide an outstanding way to undertake a DofE expedition. From sailing dinghies and keelboats to yachts and sail training vessels, these expeditions can be the beginning of a new interest or the culmination of many years experience.

There is a vast range of environments where these can take place and DofE participants often sail around lakes and estuaries all over the UK as well as longer expeditions around the world.

Choosing sailing as a new mode of travel

A sailing expedition gives an entirely new perspective on journeying and the DofE encourages participants to undertake a challenge in this mode of travel.

One of the elements that may attract participants to undertake a sailing expedition is that they do not have to carry a rucksack on their back.

Participants can gain the levels of sailing skills and experience needed as part of other sections of their DofE programme, and then undertake their expedition as one of the last activities.



For young people, learning the skills to undertake this as a new mode of travel is part of the challenge of the Expedition section. While their expedition will challenge them, it might not cover the same distances or be as technically demanding as those who have more sailing experience.

The boat

It is essential participants choose their mode of travel at the start of their Expedition section when they develop their team goal as this will determine their choice of boat, appropriate water and all their preparations and training.

There are several very different kinds of boats participants can choose to use for their sailing expedition.

Dinghies and open keelboats

Sailing dinghies, such as a Wayfarer and an open 'day-sailing' keelboat, enable participants to journey in the boat and then set up camp each evening. Some participants, using open keelboats, might choose to put up a tarpaulin bivouac and sleep on bottom boards. Dinghies and open keelboats are readily available all over the UK in outdoor centres and clubs allowing regular access to build up experience. These boats are cheap and easy to maintain and can be easily transported by trailer to suitable water. They are excellent boats for expeditions on rivers, sheltered estuaries, lochs and lakes.

There would usually be a minimum of two boats per expedition to provide mutual support and, where appropriate, these boats should be swamp tested.



9. Mode of travel



Sailing expeditions continued

Yacht and multihull vessels

Yachts are excellent for expeditions in estuaries, coastal waters or for passage out into open sea. To be able to handle a yacht competently is a very satisfying and rewarding experience and, for many sailors, represents the fulfilment of their aspirations.

Yachts have built-in sleeping accommodation so participants live and sleep aboard the vessel for the duration of the expedition, operating, navigating and crewing the yacht as a team.

It is these aspects which makes such adventures unique and enjoyable.

Sail training vessels

Sail training vessels are an excellent way for participants to undertake a sailing expedition in coastal waters and the open sea. They also provide good access and support for participants who are new to sailing or who have additional needs. Such vessels also allow for excellent expeditions with a project focus as they can carry much more investigation equipment, allowing teams to extend the scale and scope of expedition aims and projects.

There are a number of vessels and organisations around the UK which support DofE expeditions in sail training vessels.

Sail training vessels may require more than seven people to sail them safely.

In these cases up to 12 young people can be organised into 'watches' (nautical term for a working shift).

Each watch operates independently from each other except in the case of an emergency or an exceptional task on board that requires more hands than one watch can provide. This system maintains the spirit of the Expedition section, but allows these vessels to be used.

Watch patterns normally allow for two four-hour watches a day meaning that participants at any DofE level complete eight hours of planned activity.

The size of sail training vessels can mean that participants might specialise their skills through a structured training programme. This allows team members to play to their strengths while also developing other specific areas where they are less confident.

Planning the expedition

Where to carry out the expedition

Participants should choose water which is suitable for the team goal, the type of craft and, above all else, that is well within their competence and experience.

Select water which is suitable for the craft involved and well within the team's level of skill so there is less chance of adverse weather or environmental conditions affecting the journey.

The choice of where an expedition is carried out will depend to a large extent on the team goal, but referring to guides, clubs or asking those with experience will help inform participants' choice

It is the responsibility of the team and the Supervisor to ensure the correct permissions and licences are in place.

Recommended environments for sailing expeditions

For sailing expeditions the conditions teams choose to go out in can be more important than the area of water.

Often the same area of water can be completely altered during different weather conditions. It can therefore be used for both practice and qualifying expeditions if required.



9. Mode of travel



Sailing expeditions continued

Teams may reconnoitre parts of the route beforehand from the bank as appropriate. It is essential that access to the water, launching and recovery points, mooring sites and camp sites are identified before the expedition.

As with other modes of transport, it's important that as you progress through the levels the environment becomes progressively more challenging. With sailing expeditions the challenge can be increased by progressing to water that is unfamiliar to the participants. It can also be increased by the type of water e.g. inland waters, sheltered estuaries and coastal waters. It should be remembered that the challenge should be appropriate to group and the conditions will be related to the age, level and amount of experience of the participants. All expedition routes and expedition areas must present an appropriate challenge for the DofE team.

Ideally, practice and qualifying expeditions should take place in different areas. Where this is not practical, different routes over the same area can be used.

Condensed programmes for expeditions in coastal areas and the open sea

Some programmes will undertake the qualifying expedition immediately after the training (Bronze level) or practice expedition (Silver and Gold level). This ensures knowledge is retained by participants and removes the need for an additional acclimatisation day. In these cases the DofE recommends that time is made, usually at least one night in port, to distinguish between the training /practice and qualifying expedition and to enable the expedition team to reflect on what they have learnt.

If this approach is being considered, Supervisors must be prepared to add in additional days to the practice expedition, if required, to ensure participants are ready to take appropriate control of the vessel for their qualifying expedition.



Planning flexible routes and hours of planned activity

As highlighted in the general advice on water-based expeditions, teams need to build a greater amount of flexibility into expedition planning and execution.

The distance travelled by teams may vary greatly depending on the weather, so alternative camp sites and flexible start and finish times should be included in the expedition plan.

Sailing expeditions on the open sea can be particularly affected by the weather, so teams should focus on the number of hours of planned activity each day rather than set routes and distances.

Some general considerations:

- An acclimatisation day is recommended for all expeditions using coastal waters and open seas so participants can get used to the motion of the vessel.
- All sailing must be planned for completion during daylight hours, as far more training is required for night sailing.
- It is common for groups sailing in open water to complete the DofE expedition as part of a longer passage or period of sailing from one port to another.



9. Mode of travel



Sailing expeditions continued

Weather or water conditions can bring a premature end to even the most carefully planned and flexible of water-based expeditions. This is a reality that has to be accepted by all who engage in outdoor pursuits and particularly by DofE participants nearing their 25th birthday. At least one back-up date should be arranged for all qualifying expeditions on inland water and multiple dates should be considered for estuaries, coastal waters and the open sea. Use Supervisors and Assessors who can accommodate flexibility in distances and back-up dates.

Local Supervisor pre-expedition checks are essential at all levels, especially where craft are then being trailered to distant locations.

Flexibilities to the Expedition Requirements for sailing expeditions

Sailing expeditions need to follow normal DofE Expedition Requirements. However, there is a wide variety of vessels participants can use and numerous flexibilities allowed for these modes of travel.

Planning Participants must be able to demonstrate the ability to passage plan their expedition. However, dynamic planning will always be a feature of all sailing expeditions.

Group size Groups of up to 12 are acceptable on sail training vessels where watch teams of up to six are used to ensure that team dynamics remain within the spirit of the Expedition section.

Supervisor The Supervisor must have appropriate qualifications, relevant to environment and the mode of travel. If the Supervisor is an Accredited Assessor, then they may be both the Assessor and Supervisor, thus minimising adult intervention.

Environments Where expeditions take place in inland waters, lakes, lochs and sheltered estuaries, the Supervisor should, where safe and practical, accompany the expedition in another vessel. For expeditions on sheltered coastal waters and open sea areas the Assessor should be aboard the vessel and hold relevant qualifications. Where Accredited Assessors hold the relevant qualifications and are approved by the LO, then the Assessor may also be the Supervisor. Ideally the Assessor should still meet the appropriate level of independence from the team, particularly at Gold level.

Time of year It should be noted that towards the end of the season, particularly in higher latitudes, daylight hours are reduced so consideration should be given to ensuring that groups are not benighted.

Mode of travel When completing an expedition with dinghies, no outboard motors to be used. However, when completing an expedition on a yacht/sail training vessel, motors may be used when appropriate including in harbours, berths and when good seamanship and safety dictates. Motors may also be used when there is a lack of wind in order to maintain the spirit of adventure and personal development of the expedition.

Supervision When completing an expedition with dinghies, the team may be accompanied by a safety boat and staff should not be aboard the participant's vessels. However, when completing an expedition on a yacht/sail training vessel, staff may be aboard the vessel. The Supervisor and Assessor should not be involved in the skippering, crewing, navigation, control or management of the boat, except in an emergency for reasons of safety.



9. Mode of travel

Sailing expeditions continued



Supervisors may control larger vessels to safely see them in and out of port. However, passage planning should be completed in such a way to ensure that participants can be in control of the vessel as much as possible to reduce adult intervention. However, passage planning should be completed in such a way to ensure that participants can be in control of the vessel as much as possible to reduce adult intervention – for example, through use of anchoring in quiet bays.

Training

The DofE sets out core training requirements that participants must know. Additionally LOs and AAPs will usually recommend the appropriate levels of competence required with reference to the Royal Yachting Association (RYA) training framework. Trainers will need to select the appropriate training elements specific to the environment in which the expedition will take place and that they feel will fulfil the Expedition Requirements.

There is no substitute for experience and teams should spend enough time on the water so that the craft becomes an extension of the user, or until they are at home in the environment. When the basic skills have been acquired, it is essential that experience be built up using the same kind of areas of water that are to be used for the qualifying expedition.

There are training requirements which are split into four sections:

1. The Expedition Training Framework, which is compulsory for all expeditions.
2. Training framework – boatwork, which sets out DofE requirements and recommendations.
3. Learning of skills that are specific to the environment.
4. Any additional LO/AAP requirements.



All training documents are available at [DofE.org/resourcescentre](https://www.dofe.org/resourcescentre)

All participants undertaking a sailing expedition must:

- Observe the Countryside Code when using inland waters.
- Know the Water Sports Safety Code (see [DofE.org/resourcescentre](https://www.dofe.org/resourcescentre)), the basic rules of the water – priorities, the sound signals used on water and distress signals.
- Know the rules of conduct for the water on which they are journeying, including the courtesies, customs and etiquette associated with boating and sailing.

Be adequately trained to:

- Ensure they meet the Expedition Requirements.
- Satisfy the Supervisor that they have completed the required training and reached the necessary level of competence for the conditions and environment of their expedition. If the Assessor is not satisfied with the level of competence or evidence then they may withdraw their services.
- Satisfy the Supervisor that their craft, equipment and clothing are suitable for the expedition.
- Demonstrate that their equipment is waterproofed/watertight.



9. Mode of travel



Sailing expeditions continued

Many Licensed Organisations (LOs)/ Approved Activity Providers (AAPs) will require appropriately qualified instructors, such as those holding RYA Yachtmaster/Senior Dinghy Instructor certificates of competence, to deliver this training.

Safety

The participants should be water confident and a buoyancy aid or lifejacket, suitable clothing and footwear must be worn.

All expeditions must follow their LO or AAP safety policies.

Equipment

All boats and equipment must be approved for use by the Supervisor and follow any LO requirements, particularly concerning wearing appropriate personal flotation devices.

As with all expeditions, participants need to be self-sufficient, so Supervisors cannot carry additional equipment, other than drinking water, in a safety boat to give to teams.

Boats

Regardless of the type of sailing boat used, it must be sound, suitable and fitted out for the conditions in which it will be used. Sailing dinghies and keelboats must be fitted with adequate buoyancy, securely attached to the boat.

The buoyancy must be tested. It is expected that sailing dinghies and keelboats will be stowed, moored or securely anchored overnight. Yachts and sail training vessels must be in a sound condition and equipped to modern good standards of custom and

practice, with suitable life-saving and emergency equipment. They should also comply with the appropriate and current RYA recommendations for the type of vessel.

Crew equipment

The crew of each boat should carry a range of general equipment for their vessel. The list below is only intended as a starting point when considering additional equipment for DofE sailing expeditions:

- Anchor and warp
- Throwing/tow line
- Painters and/or spare line
- Bucket, bailer/bilge pump and sponge
- Charts/maps in water resistant protection
- Compass(es)*
- Repair kit
- Buoyant knife
- Powerful water-resistant torch*
- Flares, air horn*
- Emergency water supply*

*These may not be necessary for all inland/ river sailing locations.

Clothing

In addition to the standard clothing needed for all DofE expeditions, each participant should ensure they have suitable clothing for their sailing expedition, including:

- Protection for their head, hands and feet.
- A complete change of clothing in a waterproof container.
- Appropriate footwear, such as dinghy or wetsuit boots or deck shoes.



9. Mode of travel



Sailing expeditions continued

Personal equipment

Every participant must have the necessary personal and emergency equipment for the expedition mode of travel.

The list below is intended only as a starting point of some important items for sailing expeditions:

- Life-jacket or buoyancy aid with attached whistle. It is essential to have a suitable personal flotation device (buoyancy aid or lifejacket) which must conform to current standards and be appropriate for the area that the expedition is conducted in
- Bivvy bag (poly-bag)
- Waterproof or water-resistant watch.
- Sailor's knife with blade, tin-opener and spike
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Personal first aid kit
- Emergency rations
- Small water-resistant pocket torch with spare bulb and alkaline batteries
- Waterproof notebook and pencil
- Mobile phone (in a sealed waterproof bag)
- Coins/phonecard for a landline
- VHF radio.

Camping equipment

If participants are camping at the end of each day, they will need the same personal and team equipment as expeditions on land. However, all items should be stored in waterproof containers rather than in a rucksack.

Like all expeditions, the weight and bulk of camping gear and food should be kept to a minimum when sailing.

Do not be tempted to take additional or non-essential equipment.

Yachts and sail training vessels will allow participants to live and sleep aboard the vessel for the duration of the expedition.

The style of catering and menu choices should be adapted accordingly.

Supervising and assessing sailing expeditions

Sailing expedition Supervisors must have considerable experience of the water that is being used and be competent in assessing water safety in all weather conditions. All Supervisors and Assessors must be approved by the LO/AAP.

Whilst the Assessor does not have to have sailing experience, it can add positively to the expedition experience for the participants if they do. If they need to assess on water then the LO or AAP must approve their competence and experience to do so.

It may be difficult to find an Accredited Assessor with competence and experience on water in the mode of travel. In these cases it may be appropriate to use an Assessor who works alongside another adult with the specific mode of travel skills – this might be the Supervisor. Alternatively, to help reduce the level of adult intervention and enhance self-reliance, an appropriately experienced individual may act as both the Assessor and the Supervisor or an expedition support staff member.

Holding an RYA Yachtmaster certificate of competence does not give the automatic right to assess DofE expeditions.





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