

DofE Expedition Responsibility Matrix

The DofE Expedition Responsibility Matrix outlines the key roles and responsibilities involved in the planning, training, delivery, supervision, and assessment of DofE expeditions. It's designed to clarify the areas of responsibility for each role to ensure expeditions are delivered safely, effectively, and in line with DofE requirements.

We'll review the Expedition Responsibility Matrix every year to make sure it stays accurate. We'll communicate any updates clearly so everyone understands how changes may affect tasks or responsibilities.

Roles and responsibilities

This matrix assigns specific responsibilities to roles directly involved in the delivery of DofE programmes, with responsibilities allocated across the following roles:

- The Duke of Edinburgh's Award – Responsible for setting and maintaining the Expedition Requirements, and for providing guidance, resources, and training to support safe and high-quality expedition delivery.
- Expedition Supervisor – Responsible for planning, supervising, and safely delivering expeditions, holding the legal responsibility for the safety and welfare of young people throughout, and ensuring all required expedition approvals are in place.
- Expedition Assessor – Responsible for assessing expeditions and confirming they meet the Expedition Requirements.
- Expedition support staff – May assist in various aspects of expedition delivery, depending on how they are deployed by the Licensed Organisation (LO) or Approved Activity Provider (AAP).
- DofE Manager or AAP Manager – Responsible for managing DofE within a LO or AAP, in line with the terms and conditions of the licence agreement. This includes supporting Leaders, ensuring all adults working with young people are appropriately checked and approved, and overseeing the submission of all required expedition documentation.

The licence holder is not included within this matrix but holds overall accountability for ensuring adherence to the terms of the DofE licence agreement. They have full authority to enforce compliance across their organisation.

Expedition delivery across licence types

While practical delivery may vary across licence types, the DofE Manager's responsibility for programme quality, safety, and compliance is the same across all licence types. Under both Operating Authority and Multi-Site Licences, the DofE Manager must appoint a DofE Co-ordinator for each centre, ensure they understand programme requirements, and maintain systems that monitor compliance with licence conditions.

Although Co-ordinators often take on many operational tasks, including planning, training, and supporting the day-to-day running of expeditions, responsibility for all aspects of programme delivery across every centre remains with the DofE Manager. This is why the DofE Co-ordinator does not appear within the Expedition Responsibility Matrix. The matrix identifies where responsibility sits, not who may complete delegated tasks.

Many LOs choose to formalise delegated responsibilities through a Memorandum of Understanding or Service Level Agreement. These documents can outline which tasks a DofE Co-ordinator completes while keeping responsibility with the DofE Manager.

For larger or more complex organisations, DofE Managers within Operating Authorities may need to delegate elements of their workload to a DofE Co-ordinator. In these situations, the matrix helps LOs establish clear expectations and supports the training and recruitment of Co-ordinators by outlining tasks. Even when many tasks are delivered by Co-ordinators, responsibility remains with the DofE Manager.

Responsibility key

The matrix uses the following indicators to specify responsibility:

✓ **(Yes):** This role is responsible for the task.

✗ **(No):** This role is **not** responsible for the task.

? **(Maybe/shared responsibility):** This role may be involved in the task, depending on how Expedition support staff are deployed or how an AAP is used to deliver or support an expedition. Responsibilities may be shared, delegated, or vary based on the LO structure, arrangements made with an AAP, and the nature of the expedition. For example, support staff may assist with supervision or training if appropriately qualified and briefed, while AAPs may take on full responsibility for planning, delivery, and assessment if contracted to do so. Further guidance on the role of Expedition support staff is available in [chapter 2.1](#) of the Expedition Guide, and information on how AAPs can be involved is outlined in [chapter 2.2](#).



Expedition Responsibility Matrix

Theme	Task	The Duke of Edinburgh's Award	DofE Manager or AAP Manager	Expedition Supervisor	Expedition Assessor	Expedition support staff
Standards and Compliance	Define the DofE Expedition Requirements .	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
	Create and manage the DofE Expedition Guide and support resources.	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
	Regularly review and improve UK-wide DofE guidance , safety practices, and communications based on feedback and lessons learned from across the network.	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
	Ensure the organisation has an offsite visits policy (or equivalent) that includes staff qualification checks, outlines staff-to-participant ratios, and specifies the technical qualifications or experience required to supervise groups. See more in chapter 6.1 of the Expedition Guide .	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗
	Ensure the organisation maintains appropriate public liability cover insurance that fully protects participants, staff and the delivery of all DofE expedition activities.	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗
	Review and improve organisational expedition safety practices by applying national guidance (including from the DofE charity and relevant external bodies) and learning from local incidents, feedback, and lessons learned. See more in chapter 6.1 of the Expedition Guide .	✗	✓	✗	✗	?
	Recruit Expedition Supervisors and support staff with the necessary qualifications and experience. See more in chapter 6.1 of the Expedition Guide .	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗
	Ensure Leaders and volunteers are appropriately trained in risk assessment, first aid, and emergency response, and are competent in the mode of transport used during expeditions. See more in Chapter 6.1 of the Expedition Guide .	✗	✓	✗	✗	?



Theme	Task	The Duke of Edinburgh's Award	DofE Manager or AAP Manager	Expedition Supervisor	Expedition Assessor	Expedition support staff
Participant Preparation	Ensure expeditions are planned to be inclusive and accessible for all participants, in line with the DofE Guiding Principles. See more in chapter 8 of the Expedition Guide .	X	X	✓	X	?
	Ensure participants are supported to plan their expedition in a way that meets the DofE's Expedition Requirements .	X	X	✓	✓	✓
	Ensure all participants have the necessary equipment, clothing, and provisions for a safe expedition. See more in chapter 5.1 of the Expedition Guide .	X	X	✓	X	?
	Develop and maintain the DofE Expedition Training Framework .	✓	X	X	X	X
	Provide training to participants on navigation, campcraft, emergency procedures, and expedition skills in accordance with the DofE Expedition Training Framework .	X	X	✓	X	?
	Verify participant competence and confirm that a practice expedition is completed at Silver and Gold level before the qualifying expedition, ensuring they meet the required standard for the planned expedition. See more in chapter 4.2 of the Expedition Guide .	X	X	✓	X	X
Expedition Planning and Risk Management	Support expedition groups to create and complete route cards, ensuring they meet the DofE Expedition Requirements. See more in chapter 4.4 of the Expedition Guide .	X	X	✓	X	✓
	Check and confirm route cards submitted by expedition groups, ensuring they are complete, realistic, and meet the DofE Expedition Requirements. See more in chapter 4.4 of the Expedition Guide .	X	X	X	✓	X



Theme	Task	The Duke of Edinburgh's Award	DofE Manager or AAP Manager	Expedition Supervisor	Expedition Assessor	Expedition support staff
	Ensure each expedition is risk assessed, including terrain, weather, and environmental risks, and that the risk assessment is approved through an appropriate sign-off process. See more in chapter 6.1 of the Expedition Guide .	X	X	✓	X	X
	Develop and implement emergency plans for unforeseen events or weather. See more in chapter 6.2 of the Expedition Guide .	X	X	✓	X	X
	Ensure appropriate leader-to-participant ratios. See more in chapter 6.1 of the Expedition Guide .	X	X	✓	X	X
	Ensure appropriate communication and emergency contact procedures are in place throughout the expedition. See more in chapter 6.1 of the Expedition Guide .	X	X	✓	X	X
	Ensure each expedition is approved through an appropriate sign-off process. See more in chapter 6.1 of the Expedition Guide .	X	X	✓	X	X
Expedition Delivery and Supervision	Conduct a pre-expedition check to ensure the expedition meets the DofE Expedition Requirements and is appropriate for the level. See more in chapter 2.5 of the Expedition Guide .	X	X	X	✓	X
	Monitor and adjust risk assessments during the expedition. See more in chapter 6.1 of the Expedition Guide .	X	X	✓	X	?
	Ensure appropriate supervision of participants. See more in chapter 2.4 of the Expedition Guide .	X	X	✓	X	✓



Theme	Task	The Duke of Edinburgh's Award	DofE Manager or AAP Manager	Expedition Supervisor	Expedition Assessor	Expedition support staff
	Meet the team en route to observe expedition group progress, offering encouragement, and confirm that the expedition is being carried out in line with the agreed plan. See more in chapter 2.5 of the Expedition Guide .	X	X	✓	✓	✓
	Ensure participants behave responsibly and adhere to relevant access and conduct codes. See more in chapter 6.4 and chapter 6.5 of the Expedition Guide.	X	X	✓	✓	✓
Incident Management	Define reportable incidents and near misses, and the process for reporting them, through the DofE charity's incident reporting policy and guidance .	✓	X	X	X	X
	Develop and implement an organisational process for managing incidents during expeditions and recording all incidents and near misses. See more in chapter 6.1 of the Expedition Guide .	X	✓	X	X	X
	Manage incidents during the expedition, ensuring appropriate response and support. See more in chapter 6.1 of the Expedition Guide .	X	X	✓	X	?
	Report incidents and near misses in line with procedures. See more at DofE.org/incidents	X	X	✓	X	?
	Agree an appropriate strategy for managing publicity and press communications in the event of a serious incident, accident, or injury, as required by the terms of the DofE licence agreement. See more in chapter 6.1 of the Expedition Guide .	✓	✓	X	X	X
Document and review all incidents and near misses on DofE expeditions, including the response taken, to inform future improvements and ensure learning is embedded, via the incident report form on DofE.org/incidents .	X	✓	X	X	X	



Theme	Task	The Duke of Edinburgh's Award	DofE Manager or AAP Manager	Expedition Supervisor	Expedition Assessor	Expedition support staff
	Share an annual summary of reported incidents and near misses, highlighting key themes and learning, to support continuous improvement across Licensed Organisations, on DofE.org/incidents .	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
Safeguarding	Maintain and promote UK-wide safeguarding guidance, ensuring there is a clear and direct reporting route for safeguarding concerns raised by Licensed Organisations and Approved Activity Providers, on DofE.org/keeping-young-people-safe .	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
	Define what constitutes a safeguarding concern on DofE.org/keeping-young-people-safe .	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
	Work with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to implement and maintain safeguarding policies within a Licensed Organisation or Approved Activity Provider.	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗
	Ensure Expedition Supervisors, Assessors and support staff have a relevant disclosure check.	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗
	Maintain and promote organisational safeguarding guidance.	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗
	Ensure appropriate referrals are made when necessary and that safeguarding concerns are reported to the DofE charity via DofE.org/keeping-young-people-safe .	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓



Theme	Task	The Duke of Edinburgh's Award	DofE Manager or AAP Manager	Expedition Supervisor	Expedition Assessor	Expedition support staff
	Ensure all staff and volunteers are trained in safeguarding procedures, including how to report concerns internally and to the DofE charity via DofE.org/keeping-young-people-safe .	X	✓	X	X	X
	Document and review all safeguarding concerns on DofE expeditions, including the response taken, to inform future improvements and ensure learning is embedded.	X	✓	X	X	X
Assessment and Completion	Lead the expedition debrief, giving participants the opportunity to reflect on their experience and discuss what they learned. See more in chapter 7.1 of the Expedition Guide .	X	X	X	✓	X
	Ensure the expedition group delivers their presentation after completing the qualifying expedition at Silver and Gold, and that at all levels participants have opportunities to celebrate their achievements. See more in chapter 7.1 of the Expedition Guide .	X	X	✓	✓	✓
	Ensure that all expeditions are assessed by an Accredited Assessor and that Assessor Reports are completed and submitted via eDofE. See more in chapter 2.5 of the Expedition Guide .	X	✓	X	X	X
	Provide an Assessor's Report via eDofE, confirming that the team has met the Expedition Requirements. See more in chapter 2.5 of the Expedition Guide .	X	X	X	✓	X