THE DofE LEADERS' HANDBOOK



YOUTH WITHOUT LIMITS

10th EDITION

OUR MISSION

We help young people build lifelong belief in themselves, supporting them to take on their own challenges, follow their passions and discover talents they never knew they had. Because when you prove to yourself that you're ready for anything, nothing can hold you back.

The Handbook for DofE Leaders, 10th Edition: November 2026

This 10th edition replaces all former editions of the Handbook.

Please note: the images in this handbook reflect how The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is run in a variety of settings. They are illustrative of the ways DofE can be adapted depending on the needs of participants. Please ensure that you follow the specific guidance, requirements, and operating procedures applicable to your own Licensed Organisation.

Photography: Shutterstock, Unsplash plus DofE groups and Leaders around the UK, to whom we are most grateful.

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is a Registered Charity No: 1072490 and a Royal Charter Corporation No: RC000806

Published by: The Award Scheme Ltd.

© The Duke of Edinburgh's Award

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award, 9 Greyfriars Road, Reading, Berkshire RG1 1NU

DofE.org

The DofE Leaders' Handbook

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) is the world's leading youth development programme. Founded by HRH Prince Philip in 1956, it has been integral to British national life for seven decades and is now delivered all over the world. Addressing the unique needs of young people as they navigate the road to adulthood, DofE programmes give young people the chance to prove to themselves just what they are capable of, cultivating resilience, confidence, civic responsibility and integral skills for life and work.

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award acts as an essential bridge between adolescence and adulthood, between education and employment. A modern day rite-of-passage, DofE is open to all young people aged between 14-24 and today you'll find the Award in thousands of schools, colleges, hospitals, young offender institutions, as well as youth and sports clubs, across the UK.

The Awards are structured into three levels – Bronze, Silver and Gold – that increase in challenge and duration, and participants build their own unique programme, choosing bespoke activities and a cause for which to volunteer.

With over seven million alumni, more than 545,000 participants annually, and 40,000 dedicated adult volunteers, the DofE is a transformative force for good. Boosting social mobility, protecting mental wellbeing and building resilience, generation after generation.

In Northern Ireland, The Duke of Edinburgh's Award has a Joint Agreement with Gaisce – The President's Award – which enables young people who meet the conditions of the DofE to have a choice of Award certification. They can choose a Duke of Edinburgh's Award, a Gaisce – The President's Award, or a Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Certificate. For more information on the Joint Award Initiative and a wide range of Leader and participant resources, see theawardni.org.

CONTENTS

1. Introducing The Duke of Edinburgh's Award

DofE programmes 6
Our guiding principles 7
The benefits 8
Our structure 9
Your Licensed Organisation (LO) 11

2. Starting and leading a DofE group

What makes a DofE Leader? 14
Your role and responsibilities 14
Getting your group started 19
Parents and carers 20
Participation fees 21
eDofE 22
Welcome Packs 23
Making participation affordable 23
Helpers 24
Assessors 25
Supervisors 27

3. DofE programmes

What is a DofE programme? 30
Programme structure 31
Time and age requirements 32
When and how young people can do their DofE 36
Choosing activities 37
Setting a challenging programme ... 39
Activities undertaken prior to entry 40
Taking a break 40
The process for a DofE programme 40
Changing activities 43
Authorisation of Awards 43
Starting the next level 43





4. The sections in detail

Your responsibilities as participants do their sections 46
The right choices for the right sections..... 47
Timescales and dates 47
Volunteering 48
Physical 56
Skills..... 64
Expedition 72
Residential (Gold level only) 90

5. Completion, recognition and progression

Helping participants complete their DofE 104
Sectional certificates..... 109
Achieving an Award..... 110
Progression..... 110
Certificates, badges and Award presentations 111
Lost certificates and badges 112
Staying involved..... 112

6. Other important information and sources of support

Empowering young people..... 116
Support from your Licensed Organisation 117
Support from the DofE charity 118
Complaints, feedback and enquiries..... 120
The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Foundation 121
Links with other programmes 121
Approved Activity Providers..... 121
Marketing Partnerships..... 122
Environmental impact policy 122

Appendices

Glossary of roles and terminology..... 126
DofE contact details 129

1. INTRODUCING
The Duke of Edinburgh's Award





This Handbook will provide you with all the information you need to be a DofE Leader and run DofE programmes with your group. Read on and you'll discover how the DofE works, what your responsibilities are as a Leader, and how we can support you in your work.

Please do take the time to familiarise yourself with its contents as it's essential that everyone involved in the delivery of DofE programmes offers consistently high levels of service and support. This ensures that all participants receive a high quality, enjoyable and safe DofE experience that is personal to them.

Thank you for offering your time to be a Leader; it means so much to both our participants and The Duke of Edinburgh's Award charity. Your commitment and efforts are greatly appreciated.

DofE programmes 6

Our guiding principles 7

The benefits 8

Our structure 9

Your Licensed Organisation (LO) 11

DofE programmes

The concept of the DofE is simple – anyone aged between 14 and 24 can do a programme at one of three progressive levels which, when successfully completed, lead to a Bronze, Silver or Gold Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

There are four sections at Bronze and Silver level and five at Gold. With your assistance, participants select and set their own overall timescales and programme objectives in each of the following areas:

Volunteering
Supporting individuals or giving back to the community.

Physical
Improving in an area of sport, dance, or fitness.

Skills
Developing practical and social skills and personal interests.

Expedition
Planning, training for and completing an adventurous journey.

Residential (Gold only)
Doing a shared activity away from home.

Each section must be done for a minimum period of time. It must be monitored and then assessed by someone with knowledge of that particular activity to achieve an Award.

Each progressive level demands more time and commitment from participants.



Our guiding principles

All our programmes are driven by the following *10* guiding principles, which are at the heart of everything we do.

1. Non-competitive

A DofE programme is designed to be a personal challenge rather than a competition against others. The focus is on individual growth, personal development, and self-improvement.

2. Achievable by all

A Duke of Edinburgh's Award is achievable by any young person who chooses to take up its challenge, regardless of ability, gender, background or location.

3. Voluntary

Whilst DofE programmes may be offered within school, college, work time, custody or extra-curricular activity, young people choose to do a programme and commit some of their free time to do their activities.

4. Personal development

A DofE programme inspires personal and social development. The value to young people is dependent on personal commitment, the learning process, and the quality of the experience.

5. Personalised

Young people design their own programme, which can be tailored to suit their personal circumstances, choices and local provision. They start at whichever level suits them best and they can take as long as they wish (within the age limits) to achieve an Award.

6. Balanced

Our aim is to ensure that participants experience development of the whole person – mind, body and soul. By undertaking activities focusing on at least four different aspects of development, young people complete a balanced and wide-ranging programme.

7. Progressive

At each level of engagement, a DofE programme demands progressively more time, commitment and responsibility from the participant.

8. Achievement-focused

Before starting an activity, young people are encouraged to set their own challenging goals. If they aim for these goals and show improvement, they will achieve a Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

9. Requires commitment

A DofE programme demands persistence and commitment and cannot be completed with a short burst of enthusiasm. Participants are encouraged to continue with activities and to maintain their interest beyond their programme requirements.

10. Enjoyable

Young people and Leaders should find participation enjoyable, fulfilling and rewarding. It's the chance to have fun with friends in an environment that isn't the home or school.



The benefits

The DofE programme offers numerous rewards for young people who participate and achieve an Award. Its comprehensive activities foster personal growth in every aspect—intellectual, physical, and emotional—within a setting that promotes social interaction and teamwork.

As doing their DofE involves developing a personal programme of challenging activities, participants will enjoy unique experiences and rewards. In addition, the skills and personal attributes developed through participation are recognised by employers, colleges and universities.

Feedback from Award holders consistently shows that they develop:

- Self-belief
- Self-confidence
- A sense of identity
- Independence of thought and action
- Respect and understanding of people from different backgrounds, cultures and walks of life
- A sense of responsibility
- An awareness of their potential
- New talents and abilities
- An understanding of strengths and weaknesses
- The ability to plan and use time effectively
- The ability to learn from and give to others in the community
- New relationships
- Skills including problem solving, presentation and communication
- The ability to lead and work as part of a team.

There are plenty of benefits for you too. You'll have the satisfaction of knowing you have made a difference to someone's life.

You'll see that glow and sense of pride participants have when they realise they've just done something they never imagined they could do.

And, of course, you'll play a pivotal role in helping a young person to develop the skills and attitudes they need to succeed in life. Ask any DofE Leader and they'll tell you that gives them an unbeatable sense of achievement.

Our structure

A wide range of organisations run DofE programmes. After satisfying a number of conditions, they are granted a licence to do so. Accordingly, the term for them is Licensed Organisation (LO). The different types of Licensed Organisation are as follows:

LICENSED ORGANISATIONS

Directly Licensed Centre (DLC)

A Directly Licensed Centre (DLC) is a type of Licensed Organisation which holds a licence to deliver DofE programmes to young people on its own premises.

Directly Licensed Centres can include, for example, schools, academies, colleges, community and voluntary organisations and young offender institutions which do not run their DofE provision under a licence provided by an Operating Authority.

Operating Authority (OA)

An Operating Authority (OA) is a type of Licensed Organisation which holds the licence to deliver DofE programmes in a specified geographic area (though there may be other Licensed Organisations within this area).

Operating Authority licences are often held by local authorities which offer DofE programmes through their youth services and which support a range of DofE centres in their area.

A National Operating Authority (NOA) is an organisation that holds a licence to deliver DofE programmes to the young people with whom they work in one or more of the UK's nations.

Examples include St John Ambulance, The Scout Association and the RAF Air Cadets.

Multi-Site Organisation (MS)

A Multi-Site Organisation (MS) is a type of Licensed Organisation which holds the licence to deliver DofE programmes across the organisation's many sites. These sites may be located across a wide geographical area. Multi-Site Organisation Licences are often held by Further / Higher Education organisations which offer DofE programmes across their campuses.

DofE Workplace Partner

A DofE Workplace Partner is a type of Licensed Organisation which offers a DofE programme to a number of its employees.

The chart below outlines how the DofE is structured. Please familiarise yourself with this as we will refer to these roles throughout this Handbook.

ORGANISATION

The DofE charity

UK-wide and Country Teams deal with overall policy and central administration. A Board of Trustees governs the DofE charity. It determines the criteria and maintains the integrity and quality of The Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

Licensed Organisation (LO)

The Licensed Organisation holds the licence to manage the delivery of DofE programmes and verify Awards.

DofE centre

The location where the DofE is run, for example, a school, community organisation, young offender institution. There may be one or more groups at a centre depending on the size of the centre/number of participants. This may be different for a uniformed group like the Scouts or Cadets.

DofE group

A group of ideally 15-20 young people who are working on their DofE programmes together with one DofE Leader. In a large DofE centre they may be grouped by peer groups, ages or levels (i.e., Bronze, Silver, Gold). Groups may be split into teams for certain activities, i.e., volunteering or their expedition.

PERSON

DofE Manager

The person who develops, supports and promotes the delivery of the DofE within the remit of their Licensed Organisation. There will often be other assistants and staff involved e.g., Verifiers.

DofE Licence holder

DofE Licence holder has overall responsibility for the licence, delivery and quality within a Licensed Organisation.

DofE Co-ordinator

This person sets up and manages the DofE in a centre. They support Leaders and oversee the groups.

DofE Leader

The adult responsible for a DofE group. They lead, guide and encourage young people, agree their programme choices and sign off evidence and sections in eDofE (our online programme management system). They may have other adults (helpers) and Young Leaders who assist them.

Please note, these roles are not mutually exclusive. For example:

- In a small centre there may only be one group and therefore, as a Leader, you may also assume the Co-ordinator role
- A school that holds its own licence will be both the LO and the DofE centre. In this case, the DofE Manager and Co-ordinator is likely to be the same person, with other DofE Leaders involved with groups.

In the UK there are over 4,700 Licensed Organisations.

DofE programmes are run in a variety of DofE centres including: community and voluntary organisations, academies, secondary, independent and special schools, colleges and universities, prisons and young offender institutions, pupil referral units, housing associations, open DofE groups and businesses.



Your Licensed Organisation (LO)

Every centre and group must be authorised by a Licensed Organisation (LO) and the DofE Manager will be your main contact and source of support.

To get a licence, LOs must satisfy us that they understand the full implications of running DofE programmes.

They must:

- Be able to safeguard young people
- Maintain the DofE's aims and standards
- Have relevant insurance, policies and procedures in place
- Have an administrative framework to function correctly and ensure continuity.

Licensed Organisations (LOs) monitor quality levels in the delivery of the DofE within their authorised centres/groups.

Evidencing a high quality experience for young people is necessary to support this process. Further information about possible methods of monitoring and evaluating performance can be obtained from your DofE Manager.

Please see chapter six for full details of your Licensed Organisation's responsibilities and the support it can give you.

2. STARTING AND LEADING





From the skills you need to be a Leader through to your ongoing responsibilities, this chapter takes you through the basics of starting and leading a DofE group.

What makes a DofE Leader? 14
Your role and responsibilities 14
Getting your group started 19
Parents and carers 20
Participation fees 21
eDofE 22
Welcome Packs 23
Making participation affordable 23
Helpers 24
Assessors 25
Supervisors 27

What makes a DofE Leader?

Almost anyone with the desire to help young people develop can be a DofE Leader. You don't need to have lots of previous experience relating specifically to DofE activities, as you will be given practical training, detailed guidance, useful resources and ongoing support. If you do have a particular talent, we see that as a bonus.

The most important thing we look for is whether you really get a buzz out of helping young people improve themselves, along with an understanding of the importance of including all young people and keeping them safe at all times.

Licensed Organisations have safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures that include vetting the suitability of Co-ordinators, Leaders and any other adult helpers as part of the recruitment process.

Your LO or DofE Co-ordinator will explain this and help you complete the relevant checks before you become involved.

> "I love working with young people and the fact that it gives them so much. It is a wonderful programme for them and I think so much of it."
>
> **Sue, DofE Leader**

Your role and responsibilities

As a DofE Leader you play a crucial role in the success of your DofE group and participants' programmes.

You are its focus and manager. Success will be made easier with the support of other adult helpers. You and/or your DofE Co-ordinator will need to recruit and train them, encourage teamwork and delegate responsibility.

The welfare and safety of everyone you come into contact with during the course of your activities should be paramount at all times. Safeguarding should be at the heart of all you do. Setting standards for your behaviour and making sure you conduct yourself within professional boundaries is key to building a safeguarding culture and putting it into practice.

Your Licensed Organisation will have safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures that you must adhere to. However, any safeguarding concerns should also be reported to DofE via **DofE.org/safeguarding.**

Given the scope and breadth of DofE programmes, participants may do activities not directly managed or organised by your group, centre or LO.

In such cases, parents and carers of those under 18 must be informed that it is their responsibility (not yours) to ensure the activity is appropriately managed and insured.



Make it enjoyable and successful

Your role is to encourage and inspire young people at every stage of their adventure. From getting their interest in the first place and helping them choose activities to helping them to get started on eDofE, you'll play a key role in their development.

Alongside inspiring participants you'll also need to keep a close eye on their progress, assist with any issues through regular meetings and chats and help them to complete their DofE programme.

Recognise and reward achievement

The DofE is all about personal achievement, which is why it's important to recognise every single success of a participant's journey.

As well as verbal encouragement, you may choose to use sectional certificates, which let them know they're a significant step closer to reaching their goals.

See chapter five for more information on sectional certificates.

And, of course, when a participant does achieve their Award, it's essential that their efforts are acknowledged. You and/or your centre may hold presentations and your LO can help you organise high-profile Award presentations to give your participants the recognition they deserve.

If a young person achieves their Gold Award, they will be invited to celebrate their amazing achievement at a Royal Palace.



> "Dave was a great Leader – he was part of the team really and was always there to give us any help we needed. He inspired me to think about becoming a teacher when I leave college."
>
> **Stephanie, DofE participant**

Keep in touch

As a DofE Leader, it's important to be aware of how participants are getting on with their programme. If someone isn't attending as regularly as they normally would, or has stopped using eDofE, get in touch to find out why.

They might just need a gentle nudge to get back on track. It's important to think about how they might respond best – a text or email may be far more effective than a phone call or letter! When contacting young people, always follow your LO's procedures.

If a participant moves to a new area, help them make contact with a local DofE centre via an LO so they can complete their programme and achieve their Award.

Contact the relevant DofE Country Office for contact details of the LOs in their new area.

Encourage completion

When young people sign up to do their DofE they do so with an expectation that they will complete it.

Whilst we accept that a small number of participants will not see their programme through to the end, it is essential that as many as possible achieve their Award so that they can fully benefit from the experience. It is your responsibility as their DofE Leader to help them achieve this.

Maintaining regular contact with your participants will ensure that you pick up if they are straying from their goals and enable you to give them some additional encouragement. Use eDofE and regular meetings to check on how your participants are doing.

See chapter five for hints and tips on how to achieve higher completion rates.

Encourage progression

When a participant has completed one level of their programme and achieved an Award, it's important that you remind them about the next level and actively encourage them to get started on it. Use the recruitment presentations and resources that are available on **DofE.org/run.**



Maintain standards and keep in touch with developments

As a DofE Leader, you'll enjoy a high degree of autonomy but it's crucial that whatever you do meets our national standards. So please make sure that everything your group does is in accordance with the DofE's, your LO's and your centre's requirements, policies and procedures.

Your Licensed Organisation will have its own health and safety policies and procedures in place so make sure you understand and meet these too.

Through regular contact, news on eDofE, newsletters etc., your centre Co-ordinator and LO's DofE Manager will keep you informed of all relevant matters. You can also find key information in the DofE's online Resources Centre at **DofE.org/resourcescentre.**

As a DofE Leader with an eDofE account you will automatically receive regular emails containing important programme-related information and announcements from the DofE charity. You can update your preferences and contact details on eDofE.

Insurance

The DofE provides a minimal Personal Accident cover to participants/ Leaders. Public Liability insurance cover should be provided by the Licensed Organisation, which will provide an indemnity in respect of their legal liability (and that of participants and adult helpers) for bodily injury or damage to property arising in connection with a DofE activity.



For more information, visit **DofE.org/insurance.**

Keep a firm handle on your group's resources and activities

Maintaining a tight grip on your group's finances is vital for delivering services efficiently. Please stick to your LO's and/or centre's policies and procedures in these matters.

The processing and maintenance of procedures, records and details is vital too. Keep copies of your group's enrolment forms, parental consent forms and activity sheets.

One of your key tasks is to make sure your participants are progressing through their programme and, to help them to do this, you need to use eDofE to keep in touch.

Make sure that Programme Planners and evidence are approved, sections are signed off and approved Awards are put forward to your Licensed Organisation in good time.

Remember that, in many cases, you can approve lots of things quickly online.



Stay in touch with your community

Keep an eye out for activities that your group and participants could become involved with around your community. This will be made easier by promoting The Duke of Edinburgh's Award locally and publicising any newsworthy activities and participant achievements. By raising your profile organisations and individuals may start contacting you with offers of help.

Actively seeking sponsors and partners could help your group/centre in its work. This could take the form of equipment donations, event sponsorship, use of facilities, providing additional activities, general support and volunteering opportunities.

Again, raising your group's profile can help you in this area.

See chapter six for more ideas on how to get your activities noticed.

Maintain and improve services

We are committed to constantly maintaining and improving our services. To monitor and improve the quality of DofE programmes please find out what your participants think of their own programmes.

Encourage them to express their opinions on their Assessor's Reports and other pieces of eDofE evidence, peer reviews, one-to-one sessions, group discussions, self-evaluations, and other appropriate methods.

Getting your group started

There are different ways to set up your DofE group and each one has unique considerations. Depending on your situation you'll need to do things slightly differently:

In an existing DofE centre, where there is a need for another group to meet demand from participants.
Your DofE centre will already be authorised to run the DofE – please talk to your DofE Manager or DofE Co-ordinator who will explain how the DofE works, who your LO is, and help you set up your group and ensure that all checks are undertaken.

A centre where young people already meet, when you want to introduce the DofE to them.
If this is the case, please contact your DofE Country Office to discuss becoming licensed to deliver the DofE Award.

If you have any issues or concerns, or are unsure who your Licensed Organisation is, please contact your DofE Country Office or use the form at **DofE.org/contact.**

Getting the right location is vital

Your group must be based somewhere easily accessible for all participants, e.g., a school, youth centre, commercial premises or sports centre. Wherever possible, it should be somewhere that young people would like to meet.

It must also be in a safe environment – both the meeting place, as well as its immediate surroundings.

While it's not necessary to have access to a full IT suite, the internet will give you instant access to the information you need. Use of any device that can connect to the internet can go a long way.

Getting participants involved

Unless you have a ready-made group you're taking over or lots of young people waiting for someone to lead them, you'll need to get young people interested. You can do this in many ways, depending on your situation.

For example, you can organise taster evenings, events and presentations, put up posters, announce it over the school loudspeaker system or intranet, or on your youth group's blog or on social media.

Existing Award holders are often happy to give first-hand accounts of their experiences – it's a very successful way of attracting new young people.

It's also well worth encouraging local businesses to talk about how achieving an Award can enhance a young person's CV. You can also use local media to promote your DofE group.

See chapter six for more ideas on generating publicity.

Don't forget – the DofE is open to any young person aged 14-24, regardless of background, location or ability.

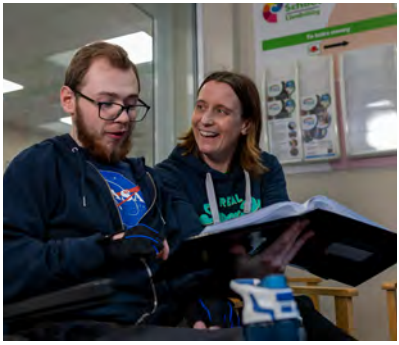
Parents and carers

Parental consent

You'll need parental consent if participants under 18 want to join your group. Your Licensed Organisation will have its own procedures for enrolling participants which may include the completion of an enrolment or registration form.

Participants need to provide an email address on registration so that information can be sent to them to set up their eDofE account.

As the DofE Leader, you must ensure that parents and carers are always kept fully informed regarding their child's DofE activities.



How parents and carers can make a difference

The support of parents and carers can make a big difference to a young person's experience of their programme. It's important that they encourage their children and acknowledge their achievements at every stage.



As it opens the door to unique experiences, achieving an Award often brings young people and their parents, carers and guardians closer together.

So be sure to encourage involvement in their children's activities – be it by simply voicing their approval, helping them get to their activities, or encouraging them to keep going.

Parents and carers can also be a great help to your DofE group/centre. From assisting with admin or driving minibuses to training or fundraising, there's so much they could do.

As their children are involved it's quite likely that they'd be interested in lending a hand, so encourage them to volunteer in any way they can.



Participation fees

To take part in the DofE, participants pay a nominal fee. This fee is their contribution towards the charity's costs in running their DofE programme and represents a personal commitment, adding value to their involvement. The fee represents a very small proportion of the overall cost which is supported by the funds raised by the DofE charity.

Included in the cost, participants receive:

- A Welcome Pack
- An eDofE account, which can also be used to login to the free DofE app
- Limited personal accident insurance
- Information on how to get a DofE Card, and access to discounts and offers from DofE partners
- A certificate and badge upon approved achievement of their Award
- Invitation to a national Gold Award celebration (Gold level only).

The current charge for participation can be seen at **DofE.org/costs**.

Your LO and/or centre may add an additional amount to the participant fee to cover administration, or even the costs of providing activities such as the expedition. If so, they must explain this clearly to participants.

If you also choose to levy a fee or charge a subscription, you too must make it clear to the young person and their parent/carer how much has been added and what it is for.

As the DofE Leader, it is your responsibility to collect and pass each participant's fee to your DofE Manager/LO. In some centres, the Co-ordinator may handle this for all groups.

eDofE

The next step is for you or someone in your Licensed Organisation to set up the participants' eDofE accounts.

The participant should provide their email address so that they can be sent their eDofE sign-in details. They will then receive a welcome email with information on how to get started.

Some of the information that eDofE captures is mandatory, such as a participant's personal details or the start and finish dates for each section.

Whilst photos and other evidence are not a compulsory element to achieve an Award, a participant's eDofE record does need an Assessor's Report before the section can be approved by you as being completed.

As their Leader you should encourage them to upload photographs and other evidence (although they don't have to) as it could be valuable in evidencing to others what they did to achieve their Award.

This Assessor's Report is an important mark of quality in a DofE programme. It is a written statement from an independent person that shows what a young person has achieved. Please see page 26 for more information.

When a participant has completed all sections for their current level, you simply use eDofE to submit the Award for approval by your Licensed Organisation.

If at first a participant doesn't complete a particular section, the Assessor should discuss the reasons with them. They should only complete their Assessor's Report once the young person has successfully completed the section.

You can also encourage participants to access and update eDofE from any device via our DofE app, available for free from Google Play and the App Store.

There are a number of resources available to help get you and your groups started on eDofE. Check out **DofE.org/resourcescentre** for more information.

"Helping out with DofE participants is such a rewarding thing to do. It's great to watch their progression and see their confidence grow. Often, when they start out, they know nothing of the skill and aren't confident in their abilities but when they complete their finished pieces you can see the sense of pride in what they've achieved."

Rob, DofE Assessor





Welcome Packs

Once a participant has paid their fee and added their address onto eDofE, they will receive a DofE Welcome Pack containing information and advice about the DofE and their programme. There is also information for parents and carers to help them support their child's DofE journey.

In Northern Ireland, tri-branded Joint Award Initiative and Irish language Welcome Packs are available.

In Wales, Welsh language Welcome Packs are also available.

Making participation affordable

It is usually programme activities, rather than the cost of enrolment, that can make the greatest financial demands on participants.

Encouraging them to devise a programme that matches their resources is all part of the challenge. However, more costly activities can be attainable and many participants organise fundraising events for special activities.

Some grant-giving bodies will provide funds and many companies sponsor young people's activities.

Additionally, participants may have access to certain equipment through your centre or LO. So if they do have ambitious plans there's still every chance of realising them, they'll just need to be resourceful!

Helpers

Building your team of voluntary helpers

Groups do what they do thanks to their team of helpers. As a DofE Leader you may also be in charge of recruitment, training, and management of the team.

It's important that you take a hands-on role in this area. Always look for individuals who share your interest in helping young people. It's important that all necessary checks are carried out to ensure they are appropriate to work with young people, and that they have a passion for our work and know how to connect with current and potential participants.

Get to know a helper's individual skills. Then you'll be more able to give them roles that best fit their talents and the needs of your group. From minibus drivers and admin support to activity leaders and Assessors, there are countless ways for people to get involved. It's definitely a case of "the more the merrier".

Some helpers might be particularly interested in supporting one area of DofE programmes and may choose to purely focus their efforts on that section. This is a great way to recruit enthusiastic helpers who can support participants in completing their sections.

Don't forget the people who can't commit to turning up every week. They could help in many other ways. For example, fundraising for your group's/centre's activities, making the tea on an open day or running a presentation skills training session for your group before their expedition. Just think creatively!

Beyond recruitment and management of helpers, you'll also build relationships with key supporters – from senior staff in your centre to funders and your community. To maintain these relationships, keep them informed about the developments and requirements of your group.



More specialist support

As a DofE Leader you can't be there every minute of every day for every participant throughout the entirety of their programme. That's why, when participants select an activity, they need to ensure that they have a suitable Assessor in place, plus potentially a Supervisor as well.

These are not mutually exclusive roles. One person can do one or all of them. And, in certain situations and sections, you may find that you are best placed to take on all of these roles.

Before working with your group, anyone involved in supervising and assessing participants must be checked and approved by your LO as suitably experienced or qualified.

Remember, if the participant is arranging their own activity, then their parents/carers are responsible for checking safeguarding arrangements. You, as their Leader or your centre's Co-ordinator, should check the Assessor's experience/qualifications.

Furthermore, prior to helping your participants, it's crucial that helpers are fully briefed regarding their roles and responsibilities. Make sure they understand the details of participants' programmes.

You may need to organise extra training to bring helpers up to speed.

Our website contains information on each section for Leaders and helpers, which is also useful for someone who's only going to be helping with just one section.

Assessors

An Assessor checks on a young person's progress and agrees the completion of a section of their programme. They will produce or sign off the relevant Assessor's Report for that section, which is uploaded onto eDofE.

An Assessor can be anyone who is at least 18 and interested in helping a young person to achieve, has some knowledge of the activity they are doing, and can be available over the time they're doing it.

A diverse range of individuals can serve as Assessors for the Volunteering, Physical, Skills, and Residential sections, including but not limited to local football club coaches, charity shop managers, neighbours with expertise in web design, and conservation experts leading residential weeks.

However, to maintain the integrity and value of a Duke of Edinburgh's Award, they must be independent. Therefore, they cannot be a family member of a participant.

Because of the nature of expeditions, there are extra rules in place for Expedition Assessors in addition to the above – *please see chapter 4: Expeditions for more details.*

If you are struggling to find Assessors, talk to your centre's DofE Co-ordinator and/or Licensed Organisation's (LO) DofE Manager – many of whom will have contacts and lists of people that have been an Assessor before.



The Assessor should have knowledge of the activity being done and be aware of the young person's objectives.

They should also be available at key stages throughout the experience in order to assess the participant's contribution and development.

Once a section is complete, the Assessor will meet with the young person to discuss their performance, their experiences and achievements.

The Assessor will also decide whether the participant has met the DofE requirements – that they've demonstrated effort, perseverance, improvement and made progress towards their section goals. This information, along with comments from the Assessor, should be recorded on the Assessor's Report.

Assessor's Reports

Assessor's Reports can be submitted via:

1. Assessor's Report card

An Assessor can fill in the Assessor's Report card which the participant received in their *Welcome Pack*.

2. Assessor's Report portal

Assessors can submit an Assessor's Report via the Assessor's portal at **DofE.org/Assessor.**

Assessor's Reports can also be submitted in other formats (e.g., photo upload or email), but in every case, they must include the participant's name, eDofE ID number, DofE level, start and finish dates of the activity and the section they have assessed.

All Assessor's Reports must include how long the participant has been undertaking the activity and how frequently, while describing their achievements as they undertook this section. It must say how they met their goals, what skills they have developed, and mention any memorable things that they accomplished.

At the end of each section, as the DofE Leader, you should spend some time with your participant discussing their sectional achievements and helping them to reflect and identify the skills they have learned and how they can help them in the future.

Supervisors

These are people with a good understanding of a participant's chosen activities.

A Supervisor is essential for the Expedition section as they are responsible for supervising and supporting a team of participants to ensure their safety and wellbeing whilst they are doing their expedition.

In the case of the Volunteering or Residential sections, a Supervisor will most likely be connected with the organisation/activity the participant intends to work with.

They will help set goals and regularly meet with the young person to check on their progress, address any potential issues, and adjust goals.

Please see pages 86 and 87 for the more detailed roles Supervisors and Assessors have in the Expedition section.

You can also read about these roles in more detail in the **DofE Expedition Guide.**

So now you have a venue, lots of participants eager to start, helpers keen to support you and the go-ahead from your Licensed Organisation.

Over the next two chapters we'll cover DofE programmes in detail, so you're ready to give your participants all the support and encouragement they need.



3. DofE PROGRAMMES





So what is a DofE programme? How old do participants need to be before they start? What do they need to bear in mind when choosing activities? This chapter will tell you all about the programmes, what they involve and how the process works.

What is a DofE programme? 30
Programme structure 31
Time and age requirements 32
When and how young people can do their DofE 36
Choosing activities 37
Setting a challenging programme 39
Activities undertaken prior to entry 40
Taking a break 40
The process for a DofE programme 40
Changing activities 43
Authorisation of Awards 43
Starting the next level 43

What is a DofE programme?

A DofE programme is the series of activities covering different categories that participants select and do to achieve their Bronze, Silver or Gold Duke of Edinburgh's Award. The programme is all about self-development.

It's not about being first. It's non-competitive and focuses on helping young people to improve existing skills or gain new talents, abilities, or perspectives.

Individual programmes for individual people

Developing initiative is a key part of a participant's involvement. At the start, participants take responsibility for the selection of their own activities.

They should consider costs, venue choices, travel requirements and the availability of a suitable Assessor and/or Supervisor. Whilst it is important that participants use their own initiative, you will still need to provide support and advice, especially when they're devising their programme and setting objectives.

> "The DofE helps young people get organised in life and help themselves. This can help them become well-balanced, healthy individuals with a feeling that they can play an active role in their community."
>
> **Caleb, parent**

Remember, though, that you should still allow them a level of flexibility to ensure that their programme remains personal to them.

The DofE is open and accessible to all young people, and the way programmes are planned, delivered and undertaken can and should be adapted to suit the individual circumstances and needs of the young people taking part. A young person with additional needs may require more time or flexibility to complete their section, or additional support or training. As their Leader, it's your responsibility to understand their needs, though they may not wish and are not obliged to share this with the wider DofE group, and to support them to achieve their Award. Remember, this is about young people achieving their own personal goals and overcoming their own personal challenges.

Though their programmes are an individual challenge, there are times when participants will be required to work as a team. In these situations you should provide guidance and ensure that everyone is involved at a level that is appropriate for their development.

With regards to participants' DofE programmes, the conditions detailed in this Handbook must be met, although it is possible to agree variations because of a young person's abilities or location.

At all levels any proposed variations should be discussed with and approved by your centre and LO. At Gold level the appropriate DofE Country Office must be involved in the consultative process to ensure that participants receive effective guidance based on examples of good practice.

Programme structure

Levels

There are three separate, progressive levels of programmes, which lead to a Bronze, Silver or Gold Duke of Edinburgh's Award. The main differences between them are the minimum length of time required to complete them, the degree of challenge, and the minimum age at which young people can start to do them.

Bronze, Silver and Gold levels have been created to encourage young people to develop their abilities and progress towards achievement of a Gold Award at a pace roughly commensurate with their age. The required time commitments and progress to be made at each level increases through Bronze and Silver to Gold.

Consideration should be given to the abilities of young people as well as their age when introducing them to the DofE. For example, some 17/18 year olds may find it a challenge to achieve a Bronze Award in six months. As their DofE Leader, you need to bear in mind that each level can be a personal challenge for an individual, whatever their age.

Sections

Why do DofE programmes have sections? Each section focuses on developing a core aspect of a young person in a fun yet challenging manner.

They have very specific aims and purposes. By doing them all, young people will help their community, develop new skills, confidence, talents and gain a greater appreciation of the world.

Achieving an Award really does enrich the mind, body and soul. What's more, every step is an exciting and unique adventure.

Each DofE level has four sections:



Volunteering
Supporting individuals or giving back to the community.



Physical
Improving in an area of sport, dance or fitness.



Skills
Developing practical and social skills and personal interests.



Expedition
Planning, training for and completing an adventurous journey.



Residential (Gold only)
Doing a shared activity away from home.

Time and age requirements

Overall requirements

The DofE aims to help young people develop into adulthood. We have therefore established a focus for our activities on young people between the ages of 14 and 25.

Within these ages a participant is free to take as long as they wish on their programme, so long as they are under 25 years old when they complete all their activities.

They are free to work at a pace that they're comfortable with and can achieve their Award.

Our only stipulation is that participants spend the following minimum time doing their programmes.

Note: now in weeks too

Please note that, whilst timescales are expressed in months, participants need to give a regular commitment averaging at least an hour a week during this time. For example, a three-month timescale would typically equate to approximately 13 weeks of activity.

This is because, to achieve an Award, young people must show persistence, commitment and personal development over a period of time.

It's not something that can be achieved through a short burst of enthusiasm over one weekend!

If activities are only undertaken during term time and no adaptations can be made to continue during the holidays, participants will need to extend the amount of time that they are working towards the section in order to fulfil the minimum number of weeks required.

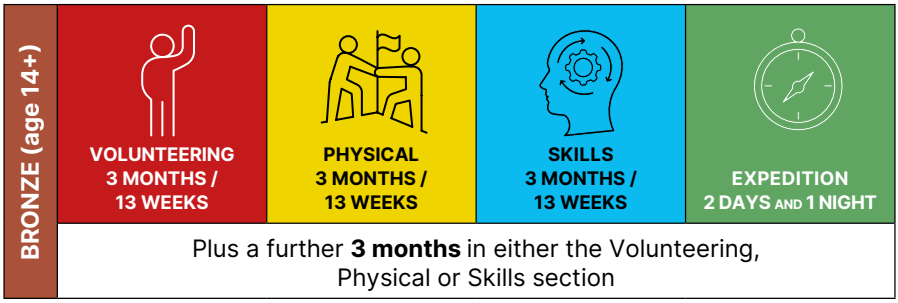
TIMESCALES

Level	Age they can start	Length of time	Minimum length of time if they have achieved the previous level
BRONZE	14 years*	6 months / 26 weeks	n/a
SILVER	15 years**	12 months / 52 weeks	6 months / 26 weeks
GOLD	16 years	18 months / 78 weeks	12 months / 52 weeks

During their programme they'll need to do each activity for an average of at least an hour a week over this time. They have until their 25th birthday to complete any programme and achieve an Award.

* Those who aren't 14 yet, but are in the school year in which their peer group turn 14, may be able to start a Bronze DofE programme.

**Those who aren't 15 yet, but are in the school year in which their peer group turn 15, may be able to start a Silver DofE programme.



Condensed hours

For longer sections at Silver and Gold it can be useful to do an activity for longer but less often.

This can be good for the Volunteering section in particular, so you can take on more interesting and challenging activities. For example, in a Gold programme lasting 12 or 18 months, you could do one 4–6-hour session of volunteering per month.

You cannot condense an activity to less than one session per month, and you cannot complete more than six hours in a month. If a participant only does their activity during term time and if no activity takes place during school holidays, the participant must extend their end date by at least the number of weeks missed. Condensing hours does not eliminate the need to extend the timeframe if the activity is not continuous throughout the year.

Bronze Award

Three parts of the programme, Volunteering, Physical and Skills, each require a minimum of three months to complete, whilst the Expedition section involves planning, training for and undertaking a two-day (one-night) expedition.

Participants must also decide whether to spend a further three months on the Volunteering, Physical or Skills section. The decision is entirely theirs. It must be made at the start but can be reviewed later.

It is possible to allow a young person to start their Bronze programme if they are not yet 14 but are in the school year in which their peer group turn 14. This often happens when friends or a school year group decide to embark on their adventures together.

However, for this to be allowed, you must be sure that the young person is mature enough to do their programme and also gain approval from your Licensed Organisation.



SILVER (AGE 15+)				
	VOLUNTEERING 6 MONTHS / 26 WEEKS	PHYSICAL 6 OR 3 MONTHS / 26 OR 13 WEEKS	SKILLS 6 OR 3 MONTHS / 26 OR 13 WEEKS	EXPEDITION 3 DAYS AND 2 NIGHTS
	Physical and Skills sections: one section for **6 months** and the other section for **3 months**			
	If the young person didn't do Bronze, they must do a further **6 months** in either the Volunteering or the longer of the Physical or Skills sections.			

Silver Award

Participants spend a minimum of six months volunteering. For the Physical and Skills sections, they must spend a minimum of six months on one and three on the other. The Expedition section involves planning, training for and undertaking a three-day (two-night) expedition.

The decision on which section to do for the longest time is totally theirs.

If they have jumped straight into their Silver programme they'll need to do a further six months either volunteering or doing whichever of the physical or skills activity they spent more time on. This decision must be made at the start but can be reviewed later.

Organisations may allow a young person who is not yet 15, but is in the same school year as their peers who are turning 15, to begin their Silver programme. However, in such situations you must consult with your centre and LO before agreeing anything.





GOLD (Age 16+)					
	VOLUNTEERING 12 MONTHS / 52 WEEKS	PHYSICAL 12 OR 6 MONTHS / 52 OR 26 WEEKS	SKILLS 12 OR 6 MONTHS / 52 OR 26 WEEKS	EXPEDITION 4 DAYS AND 3 NIGHTS	RESIDENTIAL 5 DAYS AND 4 NIGHTS
	Physical and Skills sections: one section for **12 months** and the other section for **6 months**				
	If the young person didn't do Silver, they must do a further **6 months** in either the Volunteering or the longer of the Physical or Skills sections.				

Gold Award

Participants must be at least 16 years of age to start their DofE programme at Gold level. No activities can count until their 16th birthday.

Participants spend a minimum of 12 months volunteering. For their Physical and Skills sections they must spend a minimum of 12 months on one and six on the other. Again, they decide which section to do for the longer time. They'll plan, train for and complete a four-day (three-night) expedition.

The biggest difference at Gold is that participants must do an additional fifth section – the Residential. This is an activity away from home for five days and four nights with people they do not already know.

Direct entrants must spend a further six months either volunteering or doing whichever of the skills or physical activities they spent the most time on. This decision must be made at the start but can be reviewed later.

To achieve their Award, participants must have completed their programme successfully and be at least 17 years old if they already have their Silver Award. Direct entrants must be at least 17½ when they complete their programme.

You should encourage your participants to continue activities beyond the minimum time requirements of their programme in order to meet their personal ambitions.



Maximum age

The upper age limit for the completion of all programmes is a young person's 25th birthday.

Extensions to the upper age limit can only be considered when illness, accident or unavoidable circumstances make it impossible to complete a programme by the age of 25. In such situations, your LO must send a written request to your DofE Country Office. If the application is successful, extra time will be allowed. This must not be exceeded.

When and how young people can do their DofE

A DofE programme is all about personal choice and responsibility. Participants do their activities either in their own personal time, partly as one of a range of options in supported/core time, or as an after-school programme.

Activities may even take place during school hours or working hours, but participants must be able to prove that their activities still require a substantial contribution of personal time and voluntary effort.



The amount of personal time required may need to be reduced when necessary, for example, for young people with additional support needs or where access to the facilities for an activity is constrained (e.g., by availability times or access).

They should not do activities that are entirely curriculum subjects with no extra personal effort. For example, essay writing purely based on A-level assignments is not acceptable, but a programme that includes entering a school writing competition could meet the requirements.

Using programme activities as a framework to support or create an alternative curriculum or education programme, e.g., for young people at risk of exclusion, is also allowed, even if it is done in a school environment and entirely in scheduled lesson time.

Choosing activities

There is a massive choice of activities that count towards DofE programmes. Participants can select practically any activity they wish – as long as it's legal and morally acceptable. It could be something that they're currently into or a completely new area.

However, this much choice can be overwhelming, so you need to help participants select activities that they'll really enjoy and set achievable but challenging objectives.

As their Leader, if you're in doubt about any of your participants' activity choices, look at the sectional outcomes and discuss it with your LO before giving your approval for the young person to start their programme.

Achieving a Bronze, Silver or Gold Award is all about personal development and that requires taking responsibility and initiative. From the start, participants must take ownership of their programmes by choosing the activities they wish to pursue in each section.

Activities are placed in specific sections for a reason. When participants are making their choices it's essential that you're on hand to advise them and support them in their decisions.

This is to ensure that any choices meet section aims, principles and benefits, as well as the requirements of any DofE programme (*see chapter four*).

You'll also need to make sure that their choice is available locally (Expedition and Residential sections aside).



Don't panic, we're not expecting you to be an expert in every section! Chapter four will give you more guidance in this area. You do, however, need to be aware of the aims and requirements for each section so you can advise your participants and recruit Assessors and Supervisors for any activity.

As a DofE Leader it's important that you ensure all participants get the most out of their programmes. The best way of doing this is by helping them choose a balanced range of activities.

Encourage participants to spread their wings with their choices – they shouldn't just focus on one area of interest across all the sections. For instance it's great if a participant is playing football and wishes to do this for their Physical section.

However, selecting activities for every section except their expedition that focus on football is not a good move for most young people. After all, the aim is to broaden horizons and try new experiences.

Ultimately participants need to choose activities that they are going to enjoy. It could be something that they are already doing or perhaps something they've always wanted to try. There is such a wide choice that whatever they would like to do, the odds are they can.

If you're unsure about a certain activity – whether it's okay to do or simply which section it belongs in – contact your LO who will advise you.

The key when choosing activities is to ignite a participant's imagination.

Get them really thinking about things they'd love to try or do. But equally keep their feet firmly planted in the real world.

Make sure participants take into consideration their personal circumstances, local availability and potential costs when choosing.

Don't forget that LOs have overall responsibility for monitoring the quality of participants' experiences and safety. They will have additional guidelines relating to particular activities, which you will need to be familiar with and ensure are met.

Chapter four contains more information about the detailed requirements for each section and examples of programmes for each section. More inspiring ideas can also be found at **DofE.org**.





> I feel like every young person should volunteer at least once in their life.
>
> **Wajihah, Bronze Award holder**

Setting a challenging programme

When advising on a programme and objectives, always bear in mind what level of expertise the young person already has, their maturity, and level of confidence. The goals they set need to be challenging but achievable.

If it is too unrealistic, it may in fact damage a young person's confidence and self-belief. Remember, our aim is to help young people develop themselves. This will only occur if they set realistic challenges.

Once a participant has decided upon their programme, you need to review it before they start, while they're doing it, and once they've finished.

This is to check they are happy with their progress, the activities selected and that their objectives are challenging enough.

If required, these can always be reset to make them more challenging or achievable.

eDofE is a useful tool to help you to do this. However, it should never replace the face-to-face interaction between a Leader and a participant.

Activities undertaken prior to entry

One activity done before a young person starts their DofE programme could count towards the achievement of an Award, if it was done during the preceding three months.

All activities must have been done in accordance with DofE programme principles, conditions, and age requirements.

Taking a break

Although they should ideally progress from Bronze to Silver and then Gold, it's totally up to a participant as to when and what order they do each section within each level. As long as they complete their programme and achieve their Award before their 25th birthday, they are free to take a break for holidays, exams or if they just feel they need a rest.

The process for a DofE programme

Like most things in life, young people get out of a DofE programme what they put in. So to ensure participants get the maximum benefit out of their activities and achieve their Awards, we've devised the following process.

The process has 4 key stages that apply to all sections and activities:

1. Preparation
2. Training
3. Activity
4. Assessment

Preparation

Participants need to think about and research what they would like to do for each section. They may talk to friends and family about their ideas. It's quite likely your participants will want to talk to you too. Your role during this stage is to support and, if necessary, advise them on their choices.

Once the participant has made their decisions, arrange a meeting with them. Alternatively ask one of your group's helpers to do this and report back to you. During the meeting, discuss the participant's choices and the commitments required. Establish that they have thoroughly researched their selection, are happy with their decisions and cover the following areas:

- **Aim:** What do they want to do/ achieve? Discuss the aim and benefits of the section and how that is reflected in the young person's own programme choice
- **Activity:** Do the activities fit their personal objectives and the requirements of the DofE?



- **Details:** Think about/suggest final objectives as well as interim goals and milestones. Establish, agree and write down personal goals in the section Programme Planner in eDofE that are practical, measurable, achievable, exciting and have realistic timings
- **First steps:** Is any training required? What about any safety or legal requirements?
- **Recording their journey:** Establish a system for how the young person will record their efforts, what evidence you would like to see in eDofE and when you will conduct regular progress reviews
- Remind them **how their Award is authorised** and the type of celebration they can expect when they finally achieve it (*see chapter five*).

With these items discussed and agreed, your participant can design an individual programme that takes into account their needs along with the principles and requirements of a DofE programme.

In addition to eDofE, Programme Planners are available to help participants create their programme from **DofE.org** – there is one for each section.

Training

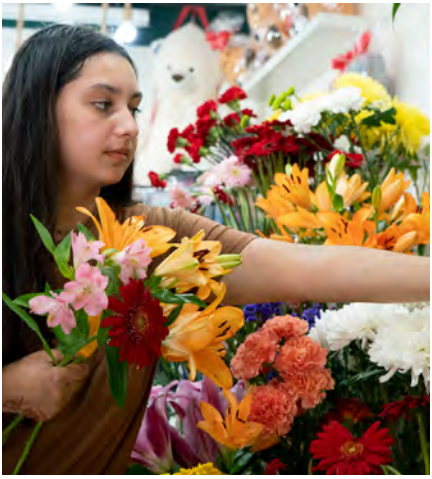
There will regularly be times when a participant's choice of activity requires them to take a course, simple introduction, or structured training before starting their activity. This should be understood and agreed by both the young person and yourself. Participants should be fully aware of the time, resources and equipment that may be required to do their training.

In the Physical and Skills sections the activity may be training to achieve their goal, for example, to gain a qualification such as a sports award or music grade.

In the Volunteering section, training can count towards the time requirements as long as it is in proportion and the aim of the section is clearly achieved. Volunteering must be based around practical help to the community, not just training in a skill that may help the community in the future.

See the sectional information in chapter four for more clarification.





Activity

This is often the most important and enjoyable part of any section – the actual doing bit! As a DofE Leader you need to be constantly supporting and encouraging your participants.

Meet with them regularly to talk about how they're getting on, help them to add evidence to eDofE and sort out any problems they may be facing. These discussions will enable you to adjust programmes or goals and address any additional training or general needs that could assist their progress.

Assessment

To complete a DofE programme every activity undertaken must be successfully completed and assessed. So when the time comes to review your participant's efforts with their Assessor (which may be you), you as their Leader or one of your helpers must meet them to discuss:

- The goals that were set and what the participant actually achieved
- What challenges were faced and how they were overcome
- The overall experience and what they enjoyed.

The meeting also provides the perfect opportunity to celebrate the young person's achievements. It is also the ideal time to encourage them to complete their other sections, achieve their Award and progress to the next level.

Remember to ensure that the Assessor, you and your participants have completed the relevant Assessor's Report and that this has been uploaded into eDofE.

These key stages are covered in more detail in chapter four, including the differences between each section.

Changing activities

If absolutely necessary, activities may be changed once in each section at each level. However, we would not encourage this as participants will not gain the full benefit of developing their skills and knowledge of their activities.

If a participant does need to change then they must restart the preparation, training, activity and assessment process.

The timescale for the second activity will be shorter, as the two activities together will need to add up to the minimum overall time requirements for that section/level. When this occurs both activities must be recorded in their eDofE account but you as their Leader must authorise this.

Authorisation of Awards

A participant has achieved a Bronze or Silver Award when the Licensed Organisation confirms that all relevant conditions have been met, based on the information recorded in the participant's eDofE account.

At Gold, the DofE Country Office will check and approve the Award.

Starting the next level

Participants should be encouraged to complete their entire programme to achieve their Award before embarking on the next level. However, they may start on a section of the next level prior to completing the previous one if they:

- Have reached the age of entry for the next level
- Have completed the same section of the previous Award and had it approved by the Leader
- Are not working on all three levels at the same time.

eDofE is a powerful tool to help you monitor your participants' progression and encourage completion.

Please refer to chapter five for more information on completion, recognition and progression.





4. THE SECTIONS



This chapter will take you through the sections of a DofE programme in greater detail. From selecting activities, to training, doing and successful completion, this chapter gives you the information you need to deliver a fulfilling and exciting experience for all your participants.

Your responsibilities as participants do their sections 46

The right choices for the right sections 47

Timescales and dates 47

Volunteering 48

Physical 56

Skills 64

Expedition 72

Residential (Gold level only) 90

Your responsibilities as participants do their sections

As a DofE Leader, you will be expected to:

- Inspire young people to achieve their full potential
- Help young people choose activities based on their interests, the needs of the community and personal circumstances
- Ensure that your participants' programmes remain personal to them
- Motivate them to either create their own or take part in existing activities



- Inspire young people to complete their programme and achieve their Duke of Edinburgh's Award
- Help them to stay safe
- Give them the knowledge, understanding or training needed to participate and get the most from their DofE programme
- Help young people to complete their DofE programme using eDofE
- Help them find a suitable Assessor and/or Supervisor as required to help them during their activities. The person(s) selected must have a full understanding of the activity the participant is pursuing and a desire to help young people achieve
- Help them set appropriate and challenging personal goals for each activity
- Make sure they put any training into practice
- Encourage full commitment throughout their DofE programme
- Encourage them to move on to the next level.



The right choices for the right sections

As a DofE Leader, it is important that you ensure participants select the right activities for the right sections. This can be confusing and the differences may seem marginal, but making the wrong selection will ultimately mean that a young person cannot complete their programme and achieve their Award.

For instance, learning first aid is a skill, but spending time as a first aider is a volunteering activity as it involves helping others. Equally, dance is a physical activity but dance appreciation would be classed as a skills activity because it is about learning theory rather than physical performance.

As their Leader, you are responsible for checking that young people's choices count towards the correct sections.

All activities must fit into one of the sections. Guidance notes are available at **DofE.org/run.**

If at any time you are unsure about an activity, please consult your Licensed Organisation (LO).

Timescales and dates

The minimum time requirements for every section at each level can be found in chapter three.

The start date for each section should be the date of your first preparation meeting, and the finish date is when the activity has been completed, assessed and recorded on the participant's eDofE account.



VOLUNTEERING

Volunteering section

Aim

To inspire young people to make a meaningful contribution within their communities, influence change, and shape the world they want to live in.

Principles

Volunteering can transform society. This section seeks to connect young people with opportunities to make a meaningful difference on issues they care about and have a positive social impact.

We believe that regular volunteering over a period of time embeds in young people a lifelong commitment to helping others and themselves.

Outcomes

Through volunteering, participants can:

- Increase community cohesion through a cause or social action
- Support the wellbeing of members of their community and themselves
- Feel empowered to lead change
- Build empathy and make a positive impact on others
- Further understand their own goals by evaluating their progress and building confidence and self-esteem
- Increase their employability chances and skills for life by developing teamwork and leadership abilities
- Build confidence by being around people they may be unfamiliar with.

What is required?

Volunteering is about giving time to do something meaningful, motivated by making a difference rather than making money. Participants should look for impactful opportunities around them – this can be in person or online. Meaningful volunteering is different for everyone.

There are many people and organisations that are willing to provide participants with opportunities for volunteering. An opportunity could be found within your community, at social enterprises, charities, not-for-profit organisations, and Volunteering Approved Activity Providers (see chapter 6). Young people can also volunteer for social action causes, campaigns and within their Licensed Organisation (e.g., their school or youth group). Some commercial organisations can be considered, providing they can demonstrate that they offer volunteering opportunities in line with our outcomes and not as a financial benefit to themselves. Further guidance on commercial volunteering can be found in our FAQs on **DofE.org**.

For some young people, there may be personal circumstances preventing them from being able to access these opportunities.

These participants may be able to volunteer at home or for a family member, provided they still meet the outcomes of the section. This must be in agreement with their DofE Leader/ Licensed Organisation.



This flowchart gives a simple overview of the steps involved for a young person to complete their Volunteering section. Each step is explained in more detail on the following pages.

Preparation

Young people plan their volunteering experience and set their objectives on eDofE. This includes who/what they will help, what they will do, where they will do it and how long for.

Training

Participants undergo any training necessary to allow them to do their practical volunteering activities (no more than a quarter of the overall time).

Activity

Participants do their practical volunteering activity regularly, averaging at least an hour a week, for the planned time.

Assessment

The young person meets with their Assessor to discuss and record their experiences, how they developed and reached their goals and updates their eDofE account.

TIMESCALES – VOLUNTEERING		
Level	**Minimum time**	**Notes**
BRONZE	3 or 6 months (13 or 26 weeks)	Young people must do one of their Volunteering, Physical or Skills sections for 6 months, the others for 3.
SILVER	6 or 12 months (26 or 52 weeks)	Young people who haven't achieved Bronze must extend their Volunteering or the longer of their Physical or Skills sections to 12 months.
GOLD	12 or 18 months (52 or 78 weeks)	Young people who haven't achieved Silver must extend their Volunteering or the longer of their Physical or Skills sections to 18 months.

Remember, young people must commit to regular activities averaging at least an hour a week during this time.





Team volunteering

We know the benefits of doing an activity in a team are significant for young people. So, why not encourage young people to identify a local need, plan how to meet it and then do their volunteering together?

Team volunteering may also be ideal for young people who cannot find an appropriate individual opportunity, especially if they are under 16.

An example of this could be a youth group that is concerned that their local playground is covered in graffiti and litter. Together they could develop an action plan.

Doing it will see them dealing with their local council and police as well as talking to local businesses about sponsoring the play equipment and bins.

They can then clean up the playground with the appropriate tools and celebrate the changes and their achievements in the local paper.

The 4 steps to completing the Volunteering section

1. Preparation is everything

Before starting their volunteering activity participants must thoroughly research the charity, organisation or people they are helping and have an Assessor willing to support them. Their Assessor will usually be an adult in the organisation with whom the young person is volunteering, often their named contact. For team volunteering this is likely to be you.

A participant's research and understanding of who they're helping will enable them to develop goals that are achievable yet challenging.

As DofE Leader, you, or a nominated helper, should make sure that they set them with their activity Assessor and that their achievements lead to some form of personal development.

Ensure a participant's activity is focused on skills and experience, as well as meeting the needs of others or the environment. Their volunteering activity could be individual, team or DofE group based.

2. Training may be required

The young person may require some training before starting their activity and some organisations have training courses that must be done before volunteering can start.

If possible, any training undertaken should result in accreditation or a qualification.

It should also take place towards the beginning of the time period and take up no more than a quarter of the overall time.



For example, a first aid course lasting three months would not be a suitable volunteering activity for a Bronze programme (this would be a skill).

However, it is in proportion and acceptable for a Gold participant who then volunteers for St John Ambulance for another nine months.

Volunteering must be based around practical help to the community, not just training in a skill that may benefit the community in the future.

Remember, many training courses that don't count for the Volunteering section may well be acceptable as a Skills section activity if a participant wants to do it.

3. Activity – time to start volunteering!

With the research done, goals set, and any required training successfully completed, your participant is ready to begin their volunteering activity.

They will need to commit their personal time to doing unpaid work which benefits the environment, a community, organisation or individual.

The bulk of their time should be spent actually doing the work required, such as digging out the canal, leading skateboarding at an after-school club, community leadership by taking an active role in a local youth council or assisting with the local shopmobility scheme. They may also need to attend relevant meetings, prepare resources or help to organise an event.

Assessment – completing the section

At this stage, the participant meets their Assessor to discuss and record their experiences, how they developed and reached their goals.

As their DofE Leader you should help to organise this meeting or you may be doing this role yourself.

Additional areas that will need discussing and recording in the participant's eDofE profile are:

- Positive experiences and adventures they had along the way
- How they felt at the beginning and the end
- What they gained from it personally (think soft skills like teamwork, communication, planning)
- Any difficulties they faced and how they overcame them
- What impact they feel they had on their communities.

Don't forget that an Assessor's Report must be uploaded to the participant's eDofE account to prove they have successfully completed this part of their programme.

At the end of each section, as the DofE Leader, you should spend some time with your participant discussing their achievements and helping them to reflect and identify the skills, knowledge and understanding they have acquired whilst completing this section.

What can young people volunteer to do?

The list of types of volunteering and examples of activities shown here should help you to point participants in the right direction when they're selecting their volunteering activity.

Remember, activities can be done on an individual or group basis.

Guidance notes are available from **DofE.org/do** and the **Resources Centre.**

Volunteering section ideas

For this section, participants should identify a need which they wish to help with and then see which of the categories below it fits into. They then need to plan what they can do to help and create their programme to meet this need.

Listed in each category are examples of activities that participants could do. They can find opportunities near to them on the Opportunity Finder (**DofE.org/opportunity-finder**).





Helping people
Examples:

- Supporting a local primary school with their reading scheme
- Being a weekly visitor to an older person
- Being a Listener for the Samaritans in a prison
- Helping at an after-school club for children with additional needs.

Community action and raising awareness
Examples:

- Running a crime prevention project in their school with the local police
- Being an active member of a youth council or forum
- Running a campaign in their local faith group reminding people to register as an organ donor.

Coaching, teaching and leadership
Examples:

- Being a DofE Young Leader
- Being a uniformed youth group leader
- Being a football coach.

Working with the environment or animals
Examples:

- Helping with a local canal conservation project
- Doing a litter picking project for a local housing estate or park
- Helping at a local animal shelter
- Running a campaign to stop people wasting energy.

Helping a charity or community organisation
Examples:

- Raising money for a cancer charity by organising a fashion show
- Working in a charity shop
- Being a trustee for a local charity
- Helping with religious education classes.



PHYSICAL

Physical section

Aim

To inspire young people to achieve greater physical fitness and a healthy lifestyle through participation and improvement in physical activity. From hockey to dance, rock climbing to swimming, wheelchair basketball to yoga – almost any dance, sport or fitness activity can count.

Principles

- Involvement in some form of enjoyable physical activity is essential for young people's physical health
- Maintaining physical health is important to mental and emotional wellbeing
- A lasting sense of achievement and satisfaction is derived from meeting a physical challenge
- Physical activities are enjoyable in themselves and can lead to the establishment of a lasting, active lifestyle.

Outcomes

Through doing physical activities, young people will:

- Have fun keeping fit by choosing an activity which they enjoy
- Discover new abilities
- Improve fitness by taking part in a physical activity on a regular basis
- Raise self-esteem through improvement of performance
- Extend personal goals by involvement and sustained interest
- Set and respond to a challenge by extending physical fitness and performance
- Experience a sense of achievement from meeting a physical challenge.

What is a required?

In short, anything that requires a sustained level of physical energy and involves doing an activity. For example, playing a sport regularly and showing personal improvement would count. However, learning to become a coach in the same sport would be a Skills section activity, whilst being a volunteer coach counts for the Volunteering section.

Participants must choose a physical activity and with your help set an appropriate challenge. They can choose one they are currently doing or go for something new. The key is to show progression and sustained interest over time. Ultimately, participants must prove that they have broadened their understanding and increased their expertise in their chosen activity.

If your participant is unsure which category an activity falls into, or whether it's acceptable, they must get approval from you, your DofE Co-ordinator and your LO before starting. Generally this will be relatively straightforward if the activity has a national governing body or if it is recognised by UK Sport, The Sport and Recreation Alliance or Sport England, Sportscotland, Sport Wales or Sport NI.



This flowchart gives a simple overview of the steps involved for a young person to complete their Physical section. Each step is explained in more detail on the following pages.

Preparation

Young people plan their physical activity and set their objectives on eDofE. This includes what sport, dance or fitness activity they want to do, where they'll do it and for how long.

Training

Participants undergo any training or briefing necessary to allow them to do their physical activities. Training may form part of the activity.

Activity

Participants do their physical activity regularly, averaging at least an hour a week, for the planned time.

Assessment

The young person meets with their Assessor, to discuss and record their experiences, including their effort, perseverance and achievement and updates their eDofE account.

TIMESCALES – PHYSICAL		
Level	**Minimum time**	**Notes**
BRONZE	3 or 6 months (13 or 26 weeks)	Young people must do one of their Volunteering, Physical or Skills sections for 6 months, the others for 3.
SILVER	3, 6 or 12 months (13, 26 or 52 weeks)	Either the Physical or Skills section must be done for 6 months, the other for 3. Young people who haven't achieved Bronze must extend their Volunteering or the longer of their Physical or Skills sections to 12 months.
GOLD	6, 12 or 18 months (26, 52 or 78 weeks)	Either the Physical or Skills section must be done for 12 months, the other for 6. Young people who haven't achieved Silver must extend their Volunteering or the longer of their Physical or Skills sections to 18 months.

Remember, young people must commit to regular activities averaging at least an hour a week during this time.

Helping young people to make the right choice

Participants don't need to be an Olympic athlete, pro-footballer or prima ballerina to achieve in the Physical section.

The key here is to have fun and become better and fitter.

From a wheelchair user who has learnt to scuba dive, to a shy young person who has joined an aerobics class. From participants at a youth club who've set up their own football team and league, to young people in prison who have built their self-esteem through gym work - achievement is possible for all young people doing their DofE.

As a DofE Leader you must ensure that a participant's choice:

- Focuses on one specific theme or activity
- Enables Assessors to easily measure progression over a period of time
- Is undertaken in accordance with appropriate safe working practices and legal requirements
- Is usually done in their own time
- Reflects their individual interests, talents and capabilities.

Participants are free to do this section independently or as part of a team.

To help set a "benchmark" for monitoring and assessing progress, encourage them to go for a national governing body standard or award where appropriate.

The 4 steps to completing the Physical section

1. Preparation is everything

During their first meeting with you, or a nominated helper, the young person must agree their activity and set objectives. These should be tailored to their level of experience in the activity. This meeting must cover:

- What they plan to do, i.e., the practical activity, commitment required and its benefits
- The starting point for the participant, recognising their current knowledge and personal ability
- The agreed programme, incorporating individual goals and ambitions
- Any necessary safety or legal requirements
- Whether they require support or training related to health and safety, skills and awareness
- The process for evaluation and assessment (see step 4)
- The dates and times of meetings
- How progress is to be recorded and the format of the final review.

They then complete their Programme Planner on eDofE.

2. Training to develop their talents

In order to complete this section, a participant may have to do some form of training or briefing, prior to starting or even during their activity. It could be one of their sectional objectives or, equally a health and safety requirement.

3. Activity, enabling physical talents to bloom

With the goals set, participants can get going with their chosen activity.

On a regular basis they should meet with you, their Supervisor and/or their Assessor to:

- Discuss progress
- Obtain clarification and guidance
- Reflect on progress and learn from experience
- Seek help to resolve any problems
- Reaffirm or set new goals and discuss expectations for the next phase
- If necessary, review their choice of activity.





Assessment - completing the section

A participant's effort, perseverance and achievement should be regularly assessed throughout their time on this section. If applicable, their contribution to the planning, execution and completion of their team's activities and performance must also be examined.

Participants have completed this section when their Assessor is happy that:

- The minimum time requirements have been met
- Genuine effort and individual progress have been made within the young person's capability.

Your participant, together with their Assessor, will discuss and record their experiences in eDofE, along with:

- How they developed and achieved their goals
- The difficulties they faced and how they overcame them
- Their contribution to their team or group.

Other areas that should be considered and recorded in the participant's eDofE profile during this final review are:

- Effort
- Application
- Technique
- Skill
- Tactics
- Improvement in fitness and achievement
- Knowledge of the relevant rules and safety regulations
- Quality of experience.

Don't forget an Assessor's Report must be uploaded to the participant's eDofE account to prove they have successfully completed their programme.

At the end of each section, as the DofE Leader, you should spend some time with your participant discussing their achievements and helping them to reflect and identify the skills, knowledge and understanding they have acquired whilst completing this section.

Guidance notes are available from **Dofe.org/resourcescentre.**

Physical section ideas

For this section, participants need to identify a physical activity that they want to get involved in, or improve at, from any of the categories below. They then need to set themselves objectives and create their programme to meet them. Listed in each category are examples of activities that participants can do.

They can find opportunities near to them on the Opportunity Finder (**DofE.org/opportunity-finder**).

Team sports

Examples:

- Joining a local football team and playing in matches regularly
- Taking part in after-school hockey lessons
- Playing Gaelic Athletic Association sports such as hurling, camogie, gaelic football, handball or rounders
- Joining a netball team and playing in their league.

Individual sports

Examples:

- Joining a local athletics club and competing for their area
- Setting regular dates to go bowling with a group of friends
- Learning to horse ride at the local stables.

Water sports

Examples:

- Learning to windsurf at a local lake
- Joining a local dragon boat racing team and competing at a regatta
- Going swimming every week at the local pool.

Racquet sports

Examples:

- Learning to play tennis in their lunchtime club at school
- Playing badminton every week with friends
- Playing table tennis regularly at their youth club.





Dance

Examples:

- Learning bhangra at a local dance studio
- Creating a street dance routine with friends and performing at a show
- Improving their ballet skills and gaining the next grade.

Fitness

Examples:

- Going to their local gym every week and improving cardiovascular fitness
- Jogging or walking every week with friends
- Doing an activity class, e.g., aerobics, pilates, yoga, at their local sports centre.



Extreme sports

Examples:

- Mountain biking with friends and learning how to do jumps
- Skateboarding regularly at their local skatepark
- Improving their climbing ability at the local climbing wall.



Martial arts

Examples:

- Improving their karate skills and gaining the next belt
- Taking part in self-defence lessons at an after-school club
- Joining tai-chi classes in their local park.



SKILLS

Skills section

Aim

To inspire young people to develop practical and social skills and personal interests. From podcasting to playing a musical instrument, fine art to website design, cookery to learning to drive, the sky's the limit!

Principles

By choosing to develop a particular skill, young people realise their unique potential and gain greater self-esteem.

Everyone has the ability to learn. Young people should have the opportunity to develop skills.

All young people have unique potential and should value themselves. Developing a skill will help them realise this.

Outcomes

By learning a skill, participants will:

- Develop a new talent
- Improve self-esteem and confidence
- Develop practical and social skills by working alongside enthusiastic individuals who share their skills and knowledge
- Develop better organisational and time management skills
- Sharpen research skills by using libraries, the internet and the local community
- Learn how to set and rise to a challenge.

Something old or something new – selecting a skill

Participants must choose an activity and, with your help, set an appropriate challenge. They can choose to develop a new skill or improve an existing one. The key is to show progression and sustained interest over time.

Ultimately, participants must be able to prove that they have broadened their understanding and increased their expertise of their chosen skill. Activities can be undertaken on either an individual or group basis.

Most DofE groups/centres are only able to offer a small selection of activities that count as a skill. If a young person wishes to try something else they can organise it themselves and check the details with you for approval. This must be done before they start.

While all sports require skill to play, this does not mean that they can be used for the Skills section. Participants should be learning and developing practical and social skills and broadening their personal interests and skill set in a non-physical manner.



Some participants may like to focus on the skills theory and the history of a sport for their Skills section. However, as this is often part of a Physical section programme anyway, their skills activity must be carefully constructed to meet the outcomes of the Skills section and agreed in advance with you.

This flowchart gives a simple overview of the steps involved for a young person to complete their Skills section. Each step is explained in more detail on the following pages.

Preparation

Young people choose to improve an existing skill or develop a new one. They research their choice, plan what to do, how long for and set their objectives on eDofE.

Training

Participants undergo any training necessary to allow them to do their skills activity. The skill chosen could be a course, in which case training will be the full activity.

Activity

Participants do their skills activity regularly, averaging at least an hour a week, for the planned time.

Assessment

The young person meets with their Assessor to discuss their experiences, what they learned and how they met their goals and records it all on eDofE.

Helping young people to make the right choice

As a DofE Leader you must ensure that a participant's choice:

- Focuses on one theme or activity
- Enables their Assessor to easily measure progression over a period of time
- Is undertaken in accordance with appropriate safe working practices and legal requirements
- Is normally done in their own time
- Reflects their individual interests, talents and capabilities.



TIMESCALES – SKILLS		
Level	**Minimum time**	**Notes**
BRONZE	3 or 6 months (13 or 26 weeks)	Young people must do one of their Volunteering, Physical or Skills sections for 6 months, the others for 3.
SILVER	3, 6 or 12 months (13, 26 or 52 weeks)	Either the Physical or Skills section must be done for 6 months, the other for 3. Young people who haven't achieved Bronze must extend their Volunteering or the longer of their Physical or Skills sections to 12 months.
GOLD	6, 12 or 18 months (26, 52 or 78 weeks)	Either the Physical or Skills section must be done for 12 months, the other for 6. Young people who haven't achieved Silver must extend their Volunteering or the longer of their Physical or Skills sections to 18 months.

Remember, young people must commit to regular activities averaging at least an hour a week during this time.



The 4 steps to completing the Skills section

1. Preparation is everything

It's vital that the participant researches their chosen activity thoroughly prior to meeting with you to discuss their choice. This will enable them to discuss constructively what personal goals should be set.

During the meeting you must cover:

- The process for evaluation and assessment
- The activity to be pursued i.e., the practical task, commitment required and the benefits to the participant
- The starting point for the participant, recognising their current knowledge and personal ability
- Any necessary safety or legal requirements
- The agreed programme incorporating individual goals and ambitions
- Support or training related to health and safety, skills and awareness
- How progress is to be recorded and the format of the final review
- The dates and times of meetings.

The start date for this section is your meeting and the finish date will be when the skill has been fully assessed and recorded on eDofE.

2. Training to develop their talents

Development of a skill is often a combination of training and practical activity.

For some activities, initial training may be required so that young people are safe to do the work, whereas for others, the skill chosen could be a course and it will be the full activity. If this is the case, it is likely that the adult doing their training will also be their Assessor.

3. Activity, enabling talents to bloom

Participants learn by doing their programme. Therefore ongoing support through meetings with you, their Assessor and/or Supervisor is crucial.

During these meetings it is important to:

- Discuss progress
- Clarify and provide guidance
- Help to resolve any problems

– Reflect on progress and learn from experience
– Reaffirm or set new goals and discuss expectations for the next phase
– If necessary, review the choice of activity.

Assessment – completing the section

All participants should be regularly assessed to check their effort, perseverance and achievement. Their contribution to the planning, execution and completion of group activities will also fall under the spotlight.

Participants have completed this section when their Assessor is happy that:

– The skill has been regularly followed for the required time
– Genuine effort and individual progress have been made within the young person's capability.

Your participant, together with their Assessor, will discuss and record their experiences in eDofE, along with:

– How they developed and their progress towards achieving the objectives they set
– Difficulties faced and how they overcame them.

Don't forget that an Assessor's Report must be uploaded to the participant's eDofE account to prove they have successfully completed this part of their programme.

At the end of each section, as the DofE Leader, you should spend some time with your participant discussing their achievements and helping them to reflect and identify the skills, knowledge and understanding they have acquired whilst undertaking this section.

Guidance notes are available at **DofE.org/resourcescentre.**



Skills section ideas

For this section, participants need to identify a skills activity that they want to learn, or improve at, from any of the categories below. They then need to set themselves objectives and create their programme to meet them. Listed in each category are examples of activities that participants can do.

They can find opportunities near to them on the Opportunity Finder (**DofE.org/opportunity-finder**).

Creative arts

Examples:

- Researching and learning a variety of interior design techniques and putting them into practice
- Doing art classes at a local centre and taking part in an exhibition
- Developing woodworking skills and learning how to build benches for their local public space.

Performance arts

Examples:

- Going to speech and drama classes at a local club
- Singing in a school musical
- Learning a variety of circus skills including juggling and magic tricks.

Science and technology

Examples:

- Designing and building a free app for a smartphone
- Teaching themselves to create and manage their own website
- Designing and building elastic band-powered aircraft.

Care of animals

Examples:

- Mucking out horses and learning how to care for them
- Learning about and keeping tropical fish
- Taking their dog to obedience classes.



Music

Examples:

- Learning to DJ and playing at friends' parties
- Taking piano lessons and gaining a higher grade
- Joining the school choir
- Studying a particular music genre and attending concerts.

Life skills

Examples:

- Learning how to cook food from different countries at their local youth group
- Undertaking a first aid course
- Learning how to drive and being able to demonstrate basic car maintenance
- Learning about interview and CV-writing techniques with a local business.



Learning and collecting

Examples:

- Learning about their family tree and giving a presentation to their youth group
- Studying geology and collecting different rock types
- Compiling a book on the fashion and style icons of the last decade.

Media and communication

Examples:

- Learning about today's digital lifestyle, creating a video clip and posting it online
- Learning British Sign Language
- Producing and distributing a newsletter for their youth group.

Natural world

Examples:

- Maintaining a pond in their garden and studying pond life
- Growing fruit and vegetables and preparing a recipe with them
- Learning about conservation and environmental work through after-school classes.

Games and recreation

Examples:

- Joining a local snooker club and playing in the league
- Taking part in an after-school chess club
- Being taught how to fish on a local river by a family friend
- Joining an organised esports group, at a school or college enrichment club.





EXPEDITION

Expedition section

Aim

To inspire young people to develop initiative and a spirit of adventure and discovery by planning, training for and completing an adventurous self-sufficient journey as part of a team.

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

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.

What is involved?

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

All participants must plan their expedition and agree on a team goal, have the appropriate training, complete a qualifying expedition (the one that is assessed) and take part in an expedition debrief in order to complete the section.

At Silver and Gold levels, participants must also do at least one practice expedition in the UK, and deliver a presentation.

Expeditions must be completed by the participants' own physical efforts with minimal external intervention and without motorised assistance.

This Handbook sets out the rules and conditions of the Expedition section. Leaders must refer to the *Expedition Guide* at **DofE.org/resourcescentre** for further information.



This flowchart gives a simple overview of the steps involved for a young person to complete their Expedition section. Each step is explained in more detail on the following pages.

Preparation

Participants plan an expedition. This includes team members, its aim, how they will travel and the environment they intend to travel through. Expeditions may be done by foot, bicycle, sailing boat, canoe, kayak, wheelchair or on horseback.

Training

Participants undergo training in expedition skills and their chosen mode of travel to ensure they are adequately trained to safely do a remotely supervised expedition in the environment in which they will be operating.

Practice expedition

At Silver and Gold level, participants must complete at least one Practice expedition in the UK (or within ROI for LOs and AAPs within Northern Ireland).

Qualifying expedition, debrief and presentation

Once prepared, participants do their expedition, which will be observed by their Accredited Assessor. On completion they will be debriefed by their Assessor. At Silver and Gold level, participants will then prepare and give a presentation, in any medium, of their expedition which covers their team goal, experiences and outcomes.

Assessment

The Accredited Assessor should provide their report for eDofE following the qualifying expedition and reports should also be provided by a person who saw their presentation.

The 5 steps to completing the Expedition section

1. Preparation

First, participants should decide on their expedition team. There must be between four and seven young people in a team (eight for modes of travel which can be used by two people at once e.g., tandem bikes, open canoes). Participants must be within the qualifying age of the programme level and at the same Award level i.e., not have completed the same or higher level of expedition.

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

With teams in place, young people need to decide on the nature of the expedition that they wish to do. They must first consider what they want their team goal to be, then the location and how they will complete their journey.

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



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

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

The team must plan and organise the expedition; all members of the team should be able to describe the role they played in planning.

2. Training to develop knowledge

Safety is paramount when it comes to the expedition. Therefore, it is essential that participants complete the DofE Expedition Training Framework. If walking is not the chosen method of travel, additional training frameworks are available at **DofE.org/resourcescentre.**

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

- First aid and emergency procedures
- An awareness of risk, hazard perception and health and safety issues
- Responsibility towards their team members, Leaders, the public, and animals
- Navigation and route planning, appropriate to the choice of location e.g., 1:25 000 or 1:50 000 Ordnance Survey maps, orienteering maps, street maps and mapping software
- Campcraft and booking suitable camp sites/basic self-catered accommodation
- Equipment
- Food, cooking and hygiene
- Countryside, Highway and Water Sports Codes
- Observation and recording
- Team building
- Budgeting
- Proficiency in the journey type
- Mobile phone/electronic equipment usage.

3. Practice expedition

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.

4. Activity, qualifying expedition and debrief

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

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

BRONZE – two consecutive days and one night; six hours of planned activity each day

SILVER – three consecutive days and two nights; seven hours of planned activity each day

GOLD – four consecutive days and three nights; eight hours of planned activity each day.



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

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

All expeditions must be unaccompanied and self-sufficient. The team must be properly equipped, and supervision must be carried out remotely. Again, all expeditions must be supervised by an adult (the Expedition Supervisor) who is able to accept responsibility for the safety of the team. Assessment must be by an Accredited Assessor. At Bronze level only, the Assessor may also be the Expedition Supervisor.

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

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

Recommended environments

The team goal will guide participants' choice of an appropriate environment in which to do their expedition. The environment could be rural or urban and, where appropriate, may include time spent at a fixed site (restricted space). The environment



should become progressively more challenging as participants progress through the levels. At Gold level, the Leader should consider the expedition the group completed at Bronze and Silver or their level of experience and training and decide how to increase this challenge at Gold. Most Gold level expeditions will be remotely supervised in remote and unfamiliar outdoor environments to demonstrate the progressive challenge between levels. Expeditions can be made more challenging by choosing a location that is unfamiliar, more remote, and more challenging to navigate. If choosing to run an expedition in a restricted space, Leaders should consider how their planned activity can be progressively more challenging at each level.

Examples of progressive challenges across expedition environments could include:

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

Equipment

Teams should carry all their equipment to enable them to operate in a self-sufficient way. In some circumstances where it may be inappropriate for a participant or team to carry full camping and cooking equipment, each individual must carry appropriate personal emergency equipment. Equipment should be checked by the Supervisor for its suitability before the start of the expedition.

More guidance on equipment and clothing can be found in the *Expedition Guide*.

Food

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

Accommodation

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

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

It may be necessary for some participants to return home to sleep each night, due to specific needs which may otherwise stop them from taking part in an expedition altogether. Participants must still plan and cook their meals as a team and take part in any evening activities before returning home to sleep.

5. Assessment and evidence

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

Whilst the team will be excited and very tired, make sure the Assessor conducts a full debrief immediately after the expedition is completed (on the final day). During this meeting, everyone in the team should participate in reviewing the outcomes of the expedition.

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

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



eDofE 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.

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



TIMESCALES FOR QUALIFYING EXPEDITIONS

Level	Duration	Minimum hours of planned activity each day
BRONZE	2 days and 1 night	At least 6 hours during the daytime (at least 3 of which must be spent journeying)
SILVER	3 days and 2 nights	At least 7 hours during the daytime (at least 3½ of which must be spent journeying)
GOLD	4 days and 3 nights	At least 8 hours during the daytime (at least 4 of which must be spent journeying)

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

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 must 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.

The DofE *Expedition Guide* sets out some examples of how you might showcase progressive challenge through the levels of a DofE Award based on a theme – although you may blend multiple themes together as well! Some may not be appropriately challenging for the young people within your Licensed Organisation, 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, refer to the *Expedition Guide* at **DofE.org/resourcescentre.**

Direct entrants

If expedition teams have direct entrants (participants who have not completed the previous Award level), 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 which is an appropriate challenge for those individuals and has parity with others completing this level of Award. Most Gold level expeditions will be remotely supervised in remote and unfamiliar outdoor environments; Supervisors can speak to their DofE Operations Officer for advice.

Expedition requirements

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 2 days, 2 nights.	GOLD: Teams must complete the required training and a practice expedition of a minimum of 2 days and 2 nights.

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.

Inclusion

The expedition should always be centred on a participant's abilities and not in relation to their additional needs.

The overriding objective when planning and completing an expedition is to ensure participants recognise that they have achieved the same standard as all other participants. The personal and non-competitive nature of the DofE means that participants from different and diverse starting points can be equally proud of achieving this section based on their personal challenge and journey.

Additional needs

The **DofE Expedition Guide** sets out a range of options available to DofE Leaders and Supervisors to enable all participants with additional needs to complete their expedition whatever the mix of abilities and needs in the group.





Multiple teams

Many DofE centres may have several expedition teams being assessed in the same area at the same time. The DofE strongly discourages multiple teams using the same expedition route as teams should plan their own journey.

Multiple teams must always operate independently and discretely.

Where the use of the same route is absolutely unavoidable, usually due to the expedition environment rather than the availability of Supervisors, then the teams must be staggered in their departure time at the beginning of the day and after checkpoints.

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 canoeing, kayaking, horseback riding, and sailing including dinghies, yachts or multihull and sail training vessels. However, groups have also completed expeditions by other modes including camel riding, dog sledding and skiing.

Expeditions must be completed by the participants' own physical efforts with minimal external intervention and no motorised assistance. Participants must be properly prepared and competent in their chosen expedition mode of travel, to allow them to safely complete their planned journey.

Specific, detailed advice on different modes of travel can be found in the **DofE Expedition Guide**.

Approved Activity Providers

We appreciate that not all DofE Leaders want, or are able, to lead expeditions.

We approve some organisations to deliver training, practice and qualifying expeditions to help groups complete their Expedition section.

Any organisation wishing to deliver the Expedition section on behalf of a Licensed Organisation must be an AAP.

More information about AAPs can be found in chapter 6. For further information visit **DofE.org/AAP**.

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.

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.

Expedition Supervisors

All expeditions, including practice expeditions, must be supervised by a suitably experienced adult who is competent in the chosen mode of travel and who will be based in the area where the expedition takes place.

Additionally, Supervisors should be familiar with the team, their individual strengths and weaknesses and their knowledge of the chosen route. An understanding of the aims, principles and requirements of the Expedition section is also essential.

Supervisors accept responsibility for the safety and welfare of the team on behalf of the LO or AAP. They must be satisfied that participants are capable of undertaking the planned expedition. Supervisors must understand the operating procedures of their Licensed Organisation/ AAP, including the notification and emergency procedures.

Advice on supervising DofE expeditions and the role of the Expedition Supervisor can be found in the **DofE Expedition Guide**.

Expedition Assessors

Qualifying expeditions must be assessed by an Accredited Assessor who has completed The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Expedition Assessor and Supervisor Pathway. For details, visit **DofE.org/training.** 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.

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.

Assessors are the guardians of the DofE's high standards. Their role is to:

- Ensure that the aim of the Expedition section is met
- Ensure that the Expedition Requirements are fulfilled
- Protect the interests of the DofE
- Be a fair, impartial and positive person who adds to the expedition experience, supports the team and sees a successful outcome
- Provide, as appropriate, local expedition area information to teams to help them decide how to meet the Expedition Requirements.

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 or Approved Activity Provider, which has the legal responsibility for their safety and wellbeing.

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**.

Supporting publications and materials

Our website (**DofE.org/run**) contains information including details of the Expedition Training Framework for each level of DofE programme.

Participants, Supervisors and Assessors should use the **DofE Expedition Guide** as a basis for their training programmes.

Other important information is produced by government departments, national governing bodies and many environmental and conservation organisations.

Expedition section ideas

For this section, participants need to identify their expedition team goal, mode of travel and location. Listed in each category are examples of expeditions that participants could do. They can find opportunities for "open expeditions" around the UK and overseas on the Opportunity Finder **DofE.org/opportunity-finder**.



By foot

Examples:

- Exploring team dynamics and skills with a different team leader each day as they explore the Cairngorms
- Conducting a study of insects on the South Downs
- Planning a route in the Lake District to visit areas that inspired three of Wordsworth's poems
- Following a series of footpaths in the Mourne Mountains, taking photographs to illustrate the Countryside Code to other DofE participants.

By bicycle

Examples:

- Investigating features and uses of the Thames along the Thames Cycle Path
- Following part of Gerald of Wales's route of 1188 through Pembrokeshire
- Exploring "Constable Country" in Suffolk, visiting places where Constable painted and taking photographs of the current landscape to compare the scenes with the paintings.

By boat

Examples:

- Exploring and photographing the Norfolk Broads using sailing dinghies
- On their expedition, using simple mapping techniques to produce their own map of a local estuary and comparing it with a professional map when they return
- Planning and completing a Bronze sailing expedition on Ullswater in the Lake District and producing a video diary of the journey.





By canoe or kayak

Examples:

- Recording the wildlife found on the Strangford Lough canoe trail
- Taking a series of photos to produce a guide to a section of the Kennet and Avon canal
- Making a study of the locks and lochs on the Caledonian canal.

By wheelchair

Examples:

- Following a disused railway track noting the current use of previous railway buildings
- Producing an illustrated guide to a stretch of canal. Researching the history and then travelling along the tow path using the expedition to gather photographs and sketches to illustrate the guide
- Planning a route in Cropton Forest and taking a series of landscape photographs to use in a calendar.

On horseback

Examples:

- Planning and completing an expedition on horseback across the Marlborough downs investigating Neolithic sites
- Planning and completing an expedition with sea views in Devon, taking photos along the way so that they can paint a picture of their favourite scene when they return
- Exploring accessibility and bridle paths in the Brecon Beacons.





RESIDENTIAL

Residential section

Aim

To inspire participants through a concentrated involvement with people they don't know, who are usually from different backgrounds, and bring alternative views to the challenges they will face. The Residential section broadens their experiences by empowering them to make a difference in a team-based residential setting.

The powerful positive impact on a young person of a well-structured residential experience is widely acknowledged.

For the DofE this is a fundamental element of Gold DofE programmes, often providing a transformational experience for those involved.

Participants could base their experience around an existing interest, for example taking part in a sailing course, developing their photography skills or working on a conservation project. Alternatively they could try something completely new – like volunteering at a kids' summer camp, helping on a residential conservation project, or going on a cookery or sports course.

Principles

Residential experiences take young people outside their normal environment and enable them to separate themselves from their daily routine.

It is a chance to step outside their comfort zone, gain new skills for life, enjoy new experiences and have fun.

By finding opportunities that interest them away from their usual group of friends, they will develop initiative and planning skills.

By taking part in a residential, young people will broaden their horizons and develop maturity and independence.

Interaction with people from different walks of life, ages and backgrounds promotes respect and understanding.

Completion of shared objectives will develop social and teamworking skills and better prepare them for adulthood.

Outcomes

Through completing the Residential section, young people will:

- Meet new and different people
- Develop the confidence to thrive in an unfamiliar environment
- Build new relationships and show concern for others
- Work as part of a team towards shared goals
- Accept responsibility for themselves and others
- Develop communication skills and effective coping mechanisms
- Develop respect and understanding for others

– Show initiative
– Develop the skills and attitudes to live and work with others.

What is required?

Participants do a shared activity or specific course with people they don't know in a residential setting away from home and in an unfamiliar environment. Evenings are often as much a part of the experience as the daytime activities.

In order to give participants every chance of contributing to activities and gaining real benefit, they will usually require briefing or training prior to starting their residential activity.

How long for?

The residential activity should take place over at least five consecutive days with a minimum of four nights spent away. If taking place over a minimum of five days, the activity should start by noon on the first day and finish at the earliest mid-afternoon on the last day. This commitment can be split in two weekends. However, it must involve at least four nights away within a 12-month period, during which the same activity is pursued.

Who they can do it with

This section offers a high degree of flexibility, but it must be done with an organised group, registered charity or Approved Activity Provider. In most cases, school trips are not eligible for this section. Exceptions may be made for participants with additional needs or those based within a Secure Provision. Participants can be of any age, but all must be sharing the same activity. The evening activities, meals and accommodation should be shared with the group.

Participants generally select a project or activity that will see them stay at an activity centre, with a charity, at a youth hostel or camp, but it could be completely different, for example on a tall ship, boat or barge. Staying with friends or relatives is not acceptable.

There are no age restrictions on the people they can do their residential activity with. For example, conservation projects can attract volunteers of all ages from all over the UK, and your participant may be the only one under 25 or doing their DofE.

As their DofE Leader, you and their chosen activity provider should agree in advance that the opportunity meets the section requirements, unless delivered by a Residential AAP. If your participant is under 18, you need to ensure that safeguarding principles are paramount.

The activity should provide opportunities for broadening interests and experiences. It is ideal for trying something new, or it can be related to existing interests or activities followed in other sections of a programme. For example, a participant may run

an after-school club for children with disabilities for their Volunteering section, and then choose to work on a charity's summer camp for children with disabilities.

Alternatively, for their Skills section, they may develop a promotional film for their youth club following a residential videography course.

Practice and qualifying expeditions are not acceptable for the Residential section.



This flowchart gives a simple overview of the steps involved for a young person to complete their Residential section. Each step is explained in more detail on the following pages.

Preparation

Young people identify a residential activity they're interested in doing, where it's taking place and who they'll do it with. They'll set themselves personal goals on eDofE and let the activity provider know they want their participation to count for their DofE programme.

Training

Participants undergo any training/preparation necessary to allow them to take part in the residential.

Activity

Participants join their residential and take part in the activities for a minimum of five days and four nights.

Assessment

At the end of the residential activity, the young person meets with their Assessor to discuss, record and review the quality of their experience. The Assessor provides feedback that can be used in eDofE.

The 4 steps to completing the Residential section:

1. Preparation is everything

It's vital that the participant thoroughly researches their chosen activity prior to meeting you to discuss their choice. They will then be able to discuss constructively what personal goals should be set.

During the meeting you must also cover:

- What the main purpose of the residential is
- How it will facilitate their self-improvement
- Whether the residential meets the requirements and conditions of the DofE



- Any necessary safety or legal requirements
- Support or training related to health and safety, skills and awareness
- The process for evaluation and assessment
- How the activity and their progress is to be recorded in eDofE and the format of the final review

Once you are satisfied that the activity and choice of Assessor meets all requirements, you must gain your LO's approval. With this in place, the participant must tell the relevant organisation that they would like their time with them to count towards their DofE programme.

The Assessor should maintain regular contact with the young person and be aware of what they are trying to achieve.

The Assessor should be briefed about the requirements and aims of the Residential section and be given the relevant Assessor's Report card from the participant's Welcome Pack.

2. Training to make a difference

Initial training may be required so that young people are safe to take part.

3. Activity, the residential

On arrival at the activity/venue, the participant should remind the course leader that the project will form part of their Gold DofE programme.



Meetings should be arranged with the Assessor at the beginning, during and end of the activity to review progress and discuss issues relating to the experience.

Assessment – completing the section

The Assessor must remain in regular contact with the participant throughout their residential activity. Once complete, the participant must discuss their experiences with their Assessor who will provide a report which can be used in eDofE.

Participants should be encouraged to add their own comments and other evidence of their experience into eDofE.

Participants should also record:

- How they developed and their progress towards achieving their goals
- The difficulties they faced and how they overcame them.

Participants will be assessed on:

- Personal standards
- Relationships with others
- Responsibility
- Initiative
- Development of skills
- Knowledge and general progress.

Participants should also have the opportunity to review the quality of experience with their Assessor and enter that report into eDofE, which will then be completed by the Assessor.

If you are not the Assessor then organise a meeting with the participant to review and discuss their experiences when they return.

Guidance notes are available from the Resources Centre at **DofE.org/resourcescentre.**





The Residential Requirements

It's your responsibility as their DofE Leader to approve participants Residential activities prior to them attending. We do not expect the AAP or organisation to request evidence of this approval, but awareness of the requirement will encourage participants to ensure this has occurred. There are ways the requirements can be flexed to suit individual needs, so as their DofE Leader, you should provide opportunities for these flexibilities to be discussed.

Residential Requirements	Further explanation
1. Participants must be away from home for a minimum of five days and four nights. These should be consecutive but can be split into two blocks within 12 months.	– For five-day residentials, participants should start before noon on the first day and finish after 3pm on the final day. It would be acceptable for these timings to be moved to accommodate different travel options or when beneficial to the programme. – Offering a two-block split could be a popular choice for those in employment. Instead of prescribing specific timings for a two-block split, it's beneficial for the provider to determine what works best for their programme. A traditional residential is at least 100 hours and this should be split into two roughly equal parts. Each period should involve at least two nights to ensure a meaningful experience. This doesn't have to be confined to weekends; it can be scheduled over any two periods, such as Saturday to Monday during bank holidays. The goal is to provide a valuable and fulfilling residential experience by allowing flexibility in how the hours are distributed, creating a programme that best supports participants' development and growth.
2. Participants should be in an unfamiliar residential setting.	– Participants should complete their residential away from their home or other locations where they have already undertaken their DofE activities.

3. Participants must stay in shared accommodation with their group for the entire residential. This should not include staying with friends or relatives.	– Safeguarding procedures on shared sleeping arrangements must be included, taking into consideration:
	  – Mixed sex groups
	  – Those attending who are under 18
	  – Those attending who are over 18
	  – Those who don't identify as the gender they were assigned at birth.
	– Organisations should be providing separate accommodation for under and over 18s unless it's practically not possible.

Residential Requirements	Further explanation

	– Individual needs should be discussed in advance so they can be accommodated. Examples include:
	  – Accessible toilet and bedroom
	  – Space for quiet time.
	– We strongly advise against homestays, particularly for under-18s or vulnerable adults, due to the safeguarding and wellbeing risks involved. However, it's the young person (or parent/carer), along with the organisation, who are responsible for checking the safety and suitability of sleeping arrangements. We've included some safety tips in our participant information and expect organisations to include comprehensive information on accommodation.
	– It's important that consent is gained from parents/carers/guardians if participants are under 18 or for vulnerable groups who are over 18.

4. **Shared activities should take place during the day and the evening and must be purposeful, group-based, and unpaid. These may include training courses, environment and conservation projects, volunteering or be activity-based.**	– Shared purposeful activities should be more than just the replicated activities of a paid staff member. Organisations should consider how the outcomes of the section can be met through a meaningful shared activity. – Organisations should consider the purposeful activities they can provide during both the day and evening. A clear timetable should be shared with the participant in advance. The timescales should be guided around the specific activity and individual needs of those on the residential. – Participants must not receive payment for completing their residential; however, they may receive money for expenses. Expenses include costs directly related to participating in the residential experience. These could cover accommodation, meals, travel, activity fees and specialist equipment required to participate in the residential. This doesn't include wages or bonuses based on performance or other criteria. – Residentials based around work experience or internships may be acceptable providing they are planned to meet all the Residential Requirements. Participants should not be replacing a paid staff member and should not receive payment. – If splitting a residential into two blocks, there should be a consistent theme and consistent activities across both blocks.

5. **The majority of participants should be unknown to each other.**	– It's acceptable to know up to 50% of participants, but providers should feel empowered to plan their group composition in a way they feel best meets the outcomes of the section and provides a good residential experience for all attending. This percentage is included to increase access to the section, particularly for those who experience marginalisation, ensuring providers can offer low-cost opportunities without having to restrict numbers. – This percentage should not be treated as a target. Strictly adhering to it could risk some participants failing to meet their outcomes if others drop out after registration. While some situations will inevitably be beyond an organisation's control, processes should be built into registration to minimise these risks – for instance, requesting the details of participants' DofE centres in advance. – Splitting participants into different subgroups can allow for better mixing with new people and enable residentials to better meet the outcomes of the section. – Organisers would be expected to create opportunities for all participants to experience an element of shared and purposeful activity with people they don't know.
6. **Groups should have at least five people, including the participant.**	– Participants can do different activities at points in the residential, providing they have a shared goal or theme. The activities must be linked in some way and allow them to interact as a group in a way that still meets the outcomes of the section.
7. **The majority of staff should be unknown to participants.**	– Splitting participants into subgroups away from known staff members allows for better mixing with new people and enables residentials to better meet the outcomes of the section.
8. **Participants should research suitable activities, discuss their interests with their DofE Leader, and follow any pre-activity instructions.**	– Organisations should provide full details of the residential to participants in advance, including training, costs and any other information to be aware of. – Organisations that offer funding (such as bursaries or discounts) should share this information with the participant before booking. – It's acceptable for participants to meet through training opportunities prior to the residential.

9. **The Licensed Organisation must approve the planned residential and the named Assessor in advance.**	– Someone within the organisation could act as an Assessor, providing they meet the requirements. – The Assessor's Report should be personalised and contain enough detail that confirms the residential meets the Residential Requirements and the participant achieved their personal goals. – Assessors' Reports should be submitted in a timely manner, ideally within a few weeks. – If splitting a residential into two, there should be a consistent Assessor across both blocks who can support a participant through the whole section, or two Assessors' Reports should be uploaded.
10. **Flexibilities are available to ensure that participants with specific individual needs can access a residential.** **These include:** **– Participants can request downtime away from activities** **– Carers are allowed** **– Participants with specific individual needs can attend with their Leaders.**	– The flexibilities should reflect a participant's individual needs and should be discussed and agreed before approval. Any flexibilities should also be in keeping with the **aim, principles and outcomes** of the Residential section. – Leaders can approve a participant's request for reasonable adjustments, but they will still need to ensure that the participant's chosen provider can accommodate these. – Residential providers shouldn't make judgements on any pre-approved adjustments for this section, unless it affects their ability to provide a safe residential for the participant. The assumption should always be that this adjustment has been approved as a way for individuals to access the section. – Where an individual needs to be given downtime away from shared activities, care should be taken to ensure this can be accommodated. Ideally this adjustment should be agreed in advance, but there may be occasions where a participant needs to request downtime at short notice. If an individual has taken time away from shared activities, this time will not be considered in any way when measuring their overall participation. – Participants with additional needs can attend as a group and may be accompanied by staff or carers if necessary. Staff or carers can be included in the group numbers if they also plan to participate in the activities. – Participants attending in a group are still expected to meet the outcomes of the section, e.g., meeting new people, developing the confidence to thrive in an unfamiliar environment. Leaders need to plan how they can achieve these outcomes if participants are attending with a known group.

	– Organisations should ask that any adjustments have been approved by their Leader and Licensed Organisation. – Participants completing their Awards within Secure Estates can complete their residential as a group with their Leaders. The crucial aspect is ensuring an element of unfamiliarity, which might come from the staff involved, the activities undertaken, the location chosen, or the people they interact with during the residential. – For some young people, staying overnight is a barrier they are unable to overcome. In this circumstance, DofE Operations Officers can support you to explore all potential flexibilities before looking at the option of the participant returning home to sleep.

Residential section ideas

For this section, participants need to identify an activity that they want to learn, or improve at, from any of the categories below, and do this away from home.

Participants then need to set themselves objectives and create their programme to meet them. There are always lots of opportunities for residentials listed on the Opportunity Finder (**DofE.org/opportunity-finder**).

Environment and conservation

Examples:

– Joining a tree planting project with a woodland conservation group
– Monitoring the bat population
– Helping the preservation team of a narrow gauge railway.

Activity based

Examples:

– Joining an historical re-enactment
– Undertaking a week-long course to improve their kayaking skills
– Becoming a rescue diver.



Learning

Examples:

– Undertaking a cookery course
– Improving their Spanish language skills on a course
– Taking part in a multi-faith residential, studying different religions and how they interact with each other.

Service to others

Examples:

– Aiding deafblind young people and adults to enjoy a holiday
– Rebuilding a school roof
– Being an assistant to support an eco-friendly waste project at an outdoor education centre.



5. COMPLETION



In this chapter you'll find tips and suggestions to help participants complete their programmes and reignite their interest if they're flagging. You can also read about how you can celebrate their achievements and what participants can do after achieving their Gold Award.

Helping participants complete their DofE 102

Sectional certificates..... 107

Achieving an Award..... 108

Progression..... 108

Certificates, badges and Award celebrations 109

Lost certificates and badges 110

Staying involved..... 110

Helping participants complete their DofE

When young people start their DofE programme, they do so with the expectation that they will complete it and achieve an Award. In fact, it's important to make it clear to them that the expectation is that, because they've started, they'll finish. Whilst we accept that a small number of participants will not see their programme through to the end, it is important that as many as possible do complete it. It is your responsibility as their DofE Leader to help them achieve this. Below, you'll find a list of potential reasons why a participant's attendance may waver, along with tips on how to address each situation.

Low motivation

As time progresses, participants can lose heart or feel less energised about achieving their Award. To counteract this, regularly talk with them. Find out how they feel, any problems they may be facing and how they could be solved. Celebrate every achievement when you meet them through sectional presentations, progress charts, information on noticeboards and high profile Award presentations. You can monitor progress through eDofE and follow up with participants who are not making the expected progress.

Access to activities

Activities are key to all programmes. A young person's interest may decline if they can't do the activities they want or have problems getting to them. Take time at the beginning to help them choose and record their choices in eDofE. By taking the time to talk to participants at the beginning, you can manage their expectations about what is available.

Talk to them about their interests and help them to choose activities that they're genuinely interested in and will be motivated to do.



One way to reignite a participant's interest is by organising group activities that encourage a team spirit, e.g., fundraising in the Volunteering section. It's also worth trying taster sessions so that they can get a feel for activities they might not normally have considered.

Wrong choice of activity

To avoid this situation arising, make sure you are aware of all the programme guidelines, are up to date with all developments within the DofE and, of course, the manner in which activities are organised.

You can do this by visiting our website, reading our Leaders' emails, and regularly communicating with your Operations Officer. It's also worth staying in close contact with your centre's Co-ordinator, your Licensed Organisation (LO), and other Leaders in your area.

Remember, if you are in doubt about anything, check with your LO. If a participant feels that they've selected the wrong activity (though it fits the section), don't forget they can change once in each section at each level. Both activities will need to be recorded in eDofE.

Only interested in the Expedition section

When you talk with young people about their programme, it's important to impress upon them that all the sections offer fun, excitement and adventure – not just the Expedition section.



Fear of the Expedition section

At the other end of the scale, some young people may be put off by the thought of an expedition. They may be getting pressure from their peers to do it, be unsure about going to places that are outside their comfort zone, or simply feel it's going to be far too tough to do.

You can help by talking to them and reassuring them. Remind them that by planning their own route and deciding how they want to travel, they'll be in control and can ensure that what they're doing is achievable. Talk them through the training they'll be doing and explain how this will prepare them for their expedition. If it's a fear of the unknown, show them photos of the area and get them to look online. You can also arrange a presentation from some older groups who may have experienced the same fears but still completed their expedition.



Not doing or finishing the qualifying expedition

If participants miss their qualifying expedition or cannot complete it for any reason, you can help them to find an alternative. If you are not planning another expedition there are often places available with other groups or with Approved Activity Providers (AAPS). Talk to your DofE Co-ordinator or DofE Manager to find out what is available or check out **DofE.org/opportunity-finder.**

Lack of kit/equipment

If participants have difficulty getting hold of kit or equipment, check with your centre's Coordinator or LO to see if they can help. Sponsorship from local businesses or support from grant awarding bodies may also be a route worth investigating. The DofE provides advice on expedition kit at **DofE.org/shopping**.

Exams

Given the age of participants it's quite likely that their activities will become disrupted by exams. Obviously, you cannot expect their programme to take precedence over these, but during this time you can support them from a distance. Make yourself available to them so that they know they can achieve their Award after their exams.

Too many other things on the go

From part-time jobs and other clubs, to parties and peer pressure to do other things, many young people find it difficult to fit everything in. With regular mentoring and chats, you should be on top of what your participants are doing. Keep a close eye on attendance levels, and if things start to drop, chat with them to find out why.

If they are doing too much, it's worthwhile to help them plan and reprioritise their activities so that they can continue with their programme. They could do one section at a time. It's also worth reminding them that they may already be enjoying activities in their spare time that could count towards their DofE. Try to work with them to see if they can use something they're doing as part of their programme.

Change in family or other circumstances

These can have an emotional and practical impact on a participant's life.

If there is upheaval in their family life, attendance at group meetings may wane and they may find it more difficult to get to and from their activities. By keeping in close regular contact with the young person, you'll know about potential problems early on.

You can reassure them and ensure that they are aware that they can always return to their programme at any time if they feel unable to continue for the moment. For some, attendance may prove a good distraction. If they do choose to reduce attendance, keep in touch via phone (if appropriate), email and newsletters.



Finances

There are plenty of grant-awarding bodies that participants could get in touch with to support them in their adventures. Local businesses and local authorities can assist, too. Make sure participants who are experiencing financial problems are aware of these potential solutions. We want to ensure no young people miss out on their DofE due to financial barriers and to ensure that DofE programmes are truly accessible to all young people, reflecting the most diverse generation ever.

If your Licensed Organisation (LO) or the young people you support face challenges delivering or doing their DofE due to finances, please visit **DofE.org** for up-to-date information about available funding, or contact your Operations Officer who can advise you on possible support.

Equity, diversity and inclusion

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is for all young people. As a charity we are actively working to ensure that we are relevant to all young people and that we attract a diverse range of people to undertake the Award. We know that people from different groups can experience different barriers to either beginning or completing the Award.

Be mindful of different cultures and religions and always remember, the programme is flexible and therefore a young person will be able to design a programme that works for them.

Remember to mention this both whilst recruiting and during the programme. Your local Operations Officer will be able to support on the above, if you have any questions.

Unapproved activities

Many young people complete all their activities and sections and simply forget to send them for approval on eDofE. Remind them to keep updating eDofE and make sure that you respond promptly with feedback and approvals. You can also encourage them to download the free DofE app, which gives them an easy way to update eDofE on the go.

As a Leader you can directly approve completed sections on eDofE providing the Programme Planner and minimum timescales have been completed and there is an Assessor's Report.





Change/lack of Leader

If you are unable to continue as the DofE Leader for your group, make sure you give your DofE Co-ordinator and/or DofE Manager as much notice as possible, so they can recruit a new Leader. Give them as much help and support as you can to find one and do a handover/training session with the new Leader.

Moving

If a young person is moving out of your area, give them details of their nearest Licensed Organisation. They just need to give their new group Leader their eDofE ID number. The new LO can then transfer their account to the new group. Remind them to update their eDofE email address to a personal address and remove their current school or college address if they will no longer be using it.

Sectional certificates

It is a huge achievement to achieve a Duke of Edinburgh's Award, but each section is a milestone to be celebrated in itself. Sectional certificates recognise a participant's hard work and commitment throughout their DofE journey – and keep them motivated.

Participants can download sectional certificates from eDofE to mark the achievement of each section. As soon as any section of their Award receives its final approval, they will be able to download their certificate either through the eDofE account, or the DofE app. Upon completion of their DofE programme participants will have access to a certificate for each of the completed sections of the Award, along with the overall certificate to celebrate the completion of that Award level.

Certificate of Achievement

Completing multiple sections of an Award deserves recognition, and as Leaders, you can choose to celebrate this achievement by awarding participants with a Certificate of Achievement if they have completed any three sections of their Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

Achieving an Award

Completing a programme and achieving their Award gives a participant unique experiences and helps develop the skills and attitudes they need to succeed in life.

From start to finish, it's one huge adventure that will stay with them forever. The great thing is that, as a DofE Leader, you'll play a key role in helping young people achieve an Award. You'll be encouraging, supporting and advising them every step of the way; it's a huge but truly fulfilling responsibility. To achieve an Award, the participant's eDofE records must be signed off by a DofE Award Verifier within your Licensed Organisation. An Award Verifier is someone who is completely independent from the delivery of the programme so acts as an important, independent quality check. For Gold Awards, these must also be approved by the relevant DofE Country Office.

Progression

Once one Award has been achieved and celebrated, your key role as a DofE Leader is to encourage participants to progress to the next level.

Respond promptly with feedback and approvals and talk to them about moving up a level. If a Participation Place is available, the next level can easily be added to the participant's existing eDofE account.



If a young person has only one section left to complete and they meet age and programme requirements, you could also get them started on the next DofE level earlier.

Each step up demands more commitment, which is great news for young people who love a challenge. However, it's equally important that you don't leave them overwhelmed at this thought.

Allay any concerns or work out how to overcome any issues or difficulties your participant faced during the level they've just finished to ensure their DofE experience can be continually improved.

It's also worth reminding your participants that they can choose completely different activities for the next level or choose to keep getting better at the ones they've just been doing – whatever interests them most. You can show or send participants the DofE Welcome film for the section they are about to progress to, to show them what they can expect.

Certificates, badges and Award presentations

Bronze and Silver Award holders receive a certificate and a badge. Gold Award holders receive a certificate and can choose either a badge or a brooch. In Northern Ireland, under the Joint Award Initiative, all young people can choose a Duke of Edinburgh's Award, a Gaisce – The President's Award or an International Award Certificate. If they select a Gaisce – The President's Award certificate they will also receive a medal in addition to their badge.

Your LO is in charge of deciding how to present Bronze and Silver Awards and many will organise local presentations.

If you would also like to arrange one just for your group and/or centre that's absolutely fine, but let your LO know about your arrangements first. Remember, you must wait until your LO has authorised and granted the Awards before organising the presentation.

Gold Award holders are invited to a national celebration at one of the Royal Palaces in the presence of HRH The Duke of Edinburgh. These are held throughout the year in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland. The date of their Gold Award celebration may be some time after the participant's Award is confirmed but they'll receive an invitation as soon as possible.



Gold Award holders in Northern Ireland who select to receive Gaisce – The President's Award Certification will be invited to either a Gold Joint Award Presentation or a Gold Gaisce – The President's Award presentation. For details of Gold Award celebrations please see **DofE.org/do/gold-award-celebrations**.



Lost certificates and badges

Participants can apply to the Licensed Organisation (LO) for replacements of any lost Bronze or Silver certificates and badges. There may be a charge for this. The appropriate DofE Country Office will deal with any Gold Award badge or certificate replacements, for which there is a small charge. In such cases, or in the case of historic Awards at any level, participants will be asked to provide evidence that they hold the Award.

Staying involved

For many people, achieving an Award is just the beginning of their DofE journey. Continuing their DofE life as a helper is the way for our Award achievers to stay involved and give something back.

A DofE Young Leader is a DofE participant who takes on additional responsibility to support the DofE at their centre alongside adult Leaders, and who is trained by the DofE to fulfil their role. They provide peer-to-peer support and help other young people to access and achieve their DofE programme from a relatable standpoint.



You can also introduce young people to the DofE UK Youth Ambassadors Programme. Youth Ambassadors are involved in shaping the charity's work to benefit other young people. These young people have the opportunity to meet with ministers and MPs and speak at high-profile events, including party conferences, international forums and the DofE Gold Award celebrations across the UK. Becoming a Youth Ambassador will help shape young people's leadership skills and strengthen their knowledge, equipping them with self-belief and confidence. Young people in Wales can also apply to become a DofE Cymru Youth Ambassador.



So, once you've got their attention, what can you do?

- Run an "open evening" and leadership taster sessions
- Give them meaningful, specific roles to support specific participants through eDofE
- Use them as ambassadors to go out to speak to potential participants
- Provide them with training opportunities. Training courses may be provided by you, your centre or your LO.

If they're moving away, help them get in contact with their local LO in their new area.



Impact measurement framework

Evaluating the impact of DofE programmes is the starting point for improving what we do and ensuring that the Award has a positive benefit for young people. Providing young people with a way of tracking their DofE progress and reflecting on how they may have changed along the way has tremendous value for them as individuals. It's also beneficial for Licensed Organisations supporting young people, as they can demonstrate the more comprehensive benefit and positive outcomes of delivering the DofE.

The DofE uses an Impact Measurement Framework to help us measure the impact of our work. Young people are able to answer these questions at various stages of their programmes via eDofE, so please do encourage them to complete these. The questions used in the framework have been carefully selected from government and academic surveys to allow benchmarking against national data.

> "The young people at my DofE centre are always talking about the importance of recycling. When a group of them achieved their Gold Awards recently, I suggested they "recycle themselves." They are now really enjoying helping the next generation of participants through their programmes."
>
> **Ian, DofE Leader**



6. OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION



This chapter provides you with information about support, training, our partners, our international network and guidance on DofE policies.

Safeguarding 114

Empowering young people 114

Support from your Licensed Organisation 115

Support from the DofE charity 116

Complaints, feedback and enquiries 118

The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Foundation 119

Links with other programmes 119

Approved Activity Providers 119

Marketing Partnerships 120

Environmental impact policy 120

Safeguarding

The DofE is all about supporting young people as they learn new skills, overcome obstacles, and build confidence and resilience through activities which offer personal challenge in settings that understand risk management and promote safeguarding.

Safeguarding and safe practice are vital to accomplishing this. They are at the very heart of everything the DofE charity does, and we expect the same standards from those who work with us.

It is everyone's responsibility to safeguard young people. Anyone working with young people has a responsibility to keep them safe and to understand what they need to do, what to look for, and how to report and respond appropriately to concerns.

Standards and expectations for Licensed Organisations (LOs) and Approved Activity Providers (AAPs) are set out in the licensing agreement in place between each organisation and the DofE charity.

However, we expect that all LOs and AAPs will, as a minimum, meet the standards set out in our safeguarding principles and policies. These are available at **Keeping young people safe - The Duke of Edinburgh's Award (dofe.org).**

LOs and AAPs must report any concerns regarding young people or adults who are engaged in the delivery of, or participate, in DofE programmes to us by emailing **safeguarding@DofE.org**

It is our responsibility as Leaders to ensure that, as far as we are able, young people, vulnerable adults and their parents/carers make informed choices about the safety of the activities that they take part in for their DofE, including by sharing good practice and ensuring that the appropriate reassurances can be obtained. The Government's guidance for parents and carers on keeping children safe during out-of-school activities is a helpful resource for this: Keeping Children Safe: Parental Guidance **(dofe.org)**

Empowering young people

We never forget that young people are at the heart of everything we do.

The DofE encourages Licensed Organisations, Co-ordinators, DofE Managers and Leaders to involve participants individually, within their peer groups or through forums, in considering how best to use DofE programmes to address:

- The issues that affect their lives
- How DofE programmes are delivered to help meet those needs
- How resources are allocated to support that process



Support from your Licensed Organisation

Your Licensed Organisation is always your main source of support. They will authorise your appointment and support you during the set up of your group.

LOs will clarify the range of services and support they provide through their induction training. This includes the responsibilities outlined in their Licensed Organisation licence but, in general, you can expect the following:

Ongoing support

Your LO will keep you informed about developments within your area and any programme opportunities. They can let you know how to get hold of any specialist equipment that your participants might need and assist you in organising Award presentations.

As you can imagine, leading a DofE group and/or centre requires administration so, in addition to eDofE, which supports the administration of participants' programmes, your LO can provide you with help to keep things running smoothly. They will also provide you with training, promotional and support material.

Many Licensed Organisations offer imaginative ways to help participants complete their programmes, for example:

– A regular surgery for anyone who needs advice and guidance



– Support from a Development Worker when you have a new group
– Extra advice and information sheets
– Certificates of thanks for centres that have high completion rates.

Check with your LO to see what they will do to help you.

Training for success

The success of DofE programmes relies on the effectiveness of people like you – DofE Leaders who run them. It's your competence and confidence that provides inspirational, high-quality experiences for the thousands of young people who aim for an Award.

Your training is an integral part of this support as it enhances the experiences of all participants. This is why we believe everyone should receive quality training according to their needs. In turn this will:

– Achieve consistency in the delivery of programmes to young people
– Promote and share good practice
– Support organisations and individuals in the delivery and development of DofE programmes

– Keep individuals up to date with new methods of delivery, changes to any criteria and to the DofE charity itself.

The DofE provides learning opportunities for you and your volunteers in the form of Learning Pathways, full details can be found at **DofE.org/learning**. Your LO is responsible for your induction into your role, as well as regular support and recognition whilst involved with the DofE.

You may also have access to a range of non-DofE-specific training opportunities through your Licensed Organisation including, for example, safeguarding and child protection, technical skills or training on equity, diversity and inclusion.

Some of this training can lead to qualifications in youth work and outdoor activities. It may involve meetings, courses, conferences, online and distance learning provided by your LO or DofE Country Office.

Accreditation for Expedition Assessors and Supervisors is also available through the DofE's Expedition Assessor and Supervisor Pathway.

Remember, your Licensed Organisation is there to help you. If you do have any questions or need assistance, just speak with your DofE Manager.

Support from the DofE charity

DofE.org

We provide a wide range of useful resources to help run your DofE group and to promote your activities. For information on everything including current training opportunities, fundraising and the latest expedition advice, visit **DofE.org/run** and keep an eye on the news and resources pages in eDofE and our social media channels.

You'll also find plenty of free downloadable guidance notes, as well as answers to some of the most common questions we are asked, at **DofE.org/run**.

Communications

As a DofE Leader with an eDofE account you will automatically receive our regular emails which contain relevant programme-related information and support including important announcements around safeguarding processes and procedures and any changes relating to DofE programmes. You can update your preferences and contact details on your eDofE account at any time.

eDofE

eDofE provides access to the latest news, communication and resources as well as useful information to help you manage your group. Support on using eDofE can be obtained from your DofE Manager, who may seek clarification from the DofE Country Office if necessary.

The DofE Learning Pathways

At the DofE we've invested in an online learning platform for adult volunteers who deliver and support DofE programmes.

The learning platform lets you set your own pace and complete your learning on desktop and mobile apps, at a time that suits you.

The learning pathways are designed to reduce repetition, improve quality, and offer flexible, engaging and accessible learning to help you in your role. You can find details of the learning pathways at **DofE.org/learning**.

Getting your activities noticed

Naturally, you'll need the right resources to promote your group and activities. So for posters and leaflets – available at nominal cost – email our trading arm, ASL, at **asl@DofE.org** or have a look at what's available in DofE Essentials, accessed via your eDofE account. Your LO or centre may also provide material to help you.

All Licensed Organisations, approved centres and groups can use the DofE logo, available at **DofE.org/run/logo** along with guidelines on how it should be used. You can also order free bespoke logos for your group.

DofE groups and centres are instrumental in generating local publicity and attracting new participants and helpers.

Publicity for your DofE group can be achieved by:

- Celebrating young people's achievements in your local communities at presentation events and through the local media
- Using your LO's own channels - such as noticeboards, newsletters, assemblies or meetings, or intranet to promote your DofE group
- Holding open evenings for parents and carers and potential participants
- Promoting the activities and successes of your group/centre
- Engaging the active support of local sponsors and key community figures.

You can find a range of practical tools to help you promote your group and recruit participants - including posters, presentations, leaflets, films and more - at **DofE.org/recruitment-toolkit**.



Brand Centre

The Brand Centre provides a central resource to produce DofE materials promoting the DofE in your area.

The Brand Centre allows you to customise DofE leaflets, posters, banners etc. It offers flexibility and the opportunity for you to tailor resources to your needs. Read more about it and access the Brand Centre at **DofE.org/run/brandcentre.**

Complaints, feedback and enquiries

We define a complaint as when a person wishes to formally register their dissatisfaction with the information or service provided by The Duke of Edinburgh's Award, or the manner in which they were treated.

Most complaints, feedback or enquiries can be dealt with locally by you, the DofE Leader, your DofE Co-ordinator or a DofE Manager at your Licensed Organisation.

Where this is not possible a procedure is set out on our complaints, feedback and enquiries system, which can be accessed at **DofE.org/contact-us**.

If you receive a complaint, please deal with it promptly.

Members of the public may not be aware of between the levels of responsibility within the DofE. If you cannot deal with it, please contact your Licensed Organisation, who, if necessary, will refer it to their DofE Country Office.

Incident reporting

The DofE charity collects information about incidents relating to the delivery of DofE programmes around the UK. It does so in order to:

- Identify common themes or trends and communicate these to the DofE network, helping everyone to better manage risk
- Help the charity to ensure that Licensed Organisations and AAPs are complying with the terms of their operating licence
- Help the charity to support and manage communications with all parties, particularly in the case of serious incidents
- Help the charity to identify potential enhancements or changes to our adult training offers and DofE programmes.

To report an incident to the DofE charity visit Incidents - The Duke of Edinburgh's Award **(DofE.org) (https://www.dofe.org/run/running programmes/incidents/)**



The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Foundation

This is the governing body for all countries that offer DofE programmes, including the United Kingdom.

DofE programmes now operate in over 130 countries under a variety of titles including, for example, The International Award for Young People, The President's Award, and The National Youth Achievement Award.

Whilst the title may vary, the underlying philosophy and basic principles of operation are the same.

Further information can be obtained from The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Foundation at **intaward.org.**

Links with other programmes

Participants can use experiences gained with other organisations as part of their programme. This can include, for example, voluntary and community organisations, secondary, independent and special schools, colleges and universities, young offender institutions, pupil referral units, housing associations, open DofE groups and businesses.

Activities followed through these partner organisations may count towards their DofE programme, as long as they satisfy the relevant conditions and requirements.

Approved Activity Providers

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award licenses organisations that provide opportunities for participants to do activities for sections of their Award. These opportunities have been proven to meet our conditions and so can count towards the achievement of an Award. We call these partners Approved Activity Providers (AAPs).

They can be commercial organisations or charities and are usually able to provide a section in its entirety, including accredited assessment and providing reports on eDofE. As a DofE Leader, you can confidently recommend AAPs to your participants. Organisations wishing to deliver the Expedition section on behalf of a Licensed Organisation must be an AAP.

The AAP licence is a quality standard on an organisation's activity, confirming that it meets the programme and sectional requirements of the DofE.

Please note that the AAP licence does not guarantee the suitability of an AAP in terms of health and safety or its financial stability. Licensed Organisations 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.

Participants/parents/carers booking on open expeditions are responsible for evaluating the health and safety of the expedition, as it is a private contract with the AAP. You'll find a list of current Approved Activity Providers at **DofE.org/AAP** together with details of how organisations can apply for this status.



Marketing Partnerships

The DofE works with brands and businesses that can support young people doing the DofE.

These partnerships:

- Help young people work towards their DofE
- Reduce the cost of doing an Award
- Generate donations and royalties that go back to the DofE charity to help more young people start and achieve their Awards.

Our partnerships include licensed products from expedition partners, discount cards and codes, and relevant education, training and leisure services.

Environmental impact policy

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. In light of this we have developed an environmental impact policy, which we all commit to.

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/Scottish Outdoor Access, Highway and Water Sports Codes
- 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 our activities have significantly contributed to that damage.

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 our 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 our operation on an area or community
- Follow the Countryside/Scottish Outdoor Access, Highway and Water Sports Codes.



Educating participants about the natural environment and local area

- Promote awareness and respect for the natural environment
- Encourage 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

- Reducing our use of global resources and recycling waste products
- Using products and materials that support the ethos of the DofE
- Using materials from sustainable sources and recycled materials
- Using environmentally efficient methods such as eDofE and other online resources.

"

It's important for programmes such as the DofE to help young people develop. It allows people of all backgrounds and races to take part in things that they would otherwise not have the opportunity to do."

Sumiya, Gold Award holder


YOUTH

Appendices

Glossary of roles and terminology 124
DofE contact details 129



Glossary of roles and DofE terminology

Assessor

An adult who checks on a young person's progress and agrees the completion of a section of their programme. They will provide an Assessor's Report to confirm this (see below).

In the Expedition section, qualifying expeditions must be assessed by a competent adult who is approved by the Licensed Organisation and accredited by The Duke of Edinburgh's Award charity.

Assessor's Report

An Assessor's Report is completed by the Assessor for a particular section of a participant's programme. It constitutes a review of the activities that the young person has been carrying out and documents their progress towards their goals. The report can either be submitted online by the Assessor at **DofE.org/assessor** or on paper using the Assessor Cards found in the participant's *Welcome Pack*, or any other submission, that can then be uploaded to eDofE by the participant.

Award holder

A young person who has achieved a Duke of Edinburgh's Award by completing their DofE programme.

Directly Licensed Centre (DLC)

A Directly Licensed Centre is a type of Licensed Organisation which holds a licence to deliver DofE programmes to young people on its own premises. Directly Licensed Centres can include schools, youth clubs and young offender institutions, which do not run their DofE provision under a licence provided by an Operating Authority.

DofE Workplace

A DofE Workplace is a type of Licensed Organisation (LO) which offers DofE programmes to a number of its employees.

DofE Award Verifier

Award Verifiers grant final approval to the Awards achieved by participants in eDofE. They are completely independent from the delivery of DofE programmes to the young people and so act as an important, independent quality check.

DofE centre

A location where the DofE is run, for example, a school, youth centre or young offender institution. There may be one or more groups at a centre.

DofE Co-ordinator

The person who sets up and manages the DofE in a centre. They support the Leaders and oversee the groups.

DofE group

A group of young people who are working together on their DofE programmes, with one or more DofE Leaders.

DofE Leader

The adult responsible for a DofE group. They lead, guide and encourage young people, agree their programme choices and approve their progress and pictures in eDofE.

DofE Young Leader

A DofE participant who takes on additional responsibility to support the DofE at their centre alongside adult Leaders, and who is trained by the DofE to fulfil their role. Find out more about the young leader programme at **DofE.org/young-leaders.**

DofE Learning Pathways

Learning Pathways have replaced the Modular Training Framework and are delivered via the DofE's Learning Platform and the UK training team. Full details can be found at **DofE.org/learning.**

DofE Manager

The named person in a Licensed Organisation who is responsible for the day-to-day delivery of the DofE. There will often be other assistants, administrators and staff involved.

eDofE

The online system for managing young people's progress through their DofE programmes.

Expedition Supervisor

A Supervisor is essential for the Expedition section as they are responsible for supervising and supporting a team of participants to ensure their safety and wellbeing whilst they are doing their expedition.

Expedition Training Framework

The Expedition Training Framework consists of a number of areas in which young people must prove their competency before they can do their DofE expedition. This skills training helps to ensure their safety.

Helper

Any adult who volunteers to help a DofE Leader run a group. They may give general support, i.e., administration, help run one section or give specific training.

Joint Award Initiative

The joint agreement between The Duke of Edinburgh's Award and Gaisce – The President's Award which enables young people in Northern Ireland to have a choice of Award certification. For more information see **theawardni.org**.

Licensed Organisation

Licensed Organisation (LO) is the umbrella term used for organisations who hold a licence to deliver DofE programmes.

The four different types of licence are:

- Directly Licensed Centre (DLC)
- Multi-Site Organisation (MS)
- Operating Authority (OA)
- DofE Workplace Partner.

National Operating Authority

A National Operating Authority (NOA) is a type of Operating Authority which holds a licence to deliver DofE programmes to the young people with whom they work in one or more of the UK nations.

Operating Authority

An Operating Authority (OA) is a type of Licensed Organisation which deliver DofE programmes in a specified geographic area. Operating Authority licences are often held by local authorities.

Participant

Any young person doing a DofE programme.

Participation Place

To take part in the DofE, participants pay a nominal participation fee for which they are allocated a Participation Place within eDofE. The current charge for participation can be found at **DofE.org**.

Welcome Pack

Once a participant has paid their participation fee, they will receive a **DofE Welcome Pack** which contains information and advice on the DofE, their programmes and eDofE. In Northern Ireland young people also have a choice of receiving a **tri-branded Joint Award Initiative Welcome Pack** or a **tri-branded Irish language Welcome Pack.** Participants in Wales have the option of a **Welsh language Welcome Pack.**

DofE contact details

Country DofE Offices

England: england@DofE.org
(**DofE.org**)

Northern Ireland: nireland@DofE.org
(**DofE.org/northern-ireland**)
Joint Award Initiative: info@theawardni.org
(**theawardni.org**)

Scotland: scotland@DofE.org
(**DofE.org/scotland**)

Wales: wales@DofE.org
(**DofE.org/wales**)

Approved Activity Providers (AAP) Team:
AAP@DofE.org

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award – Head Office: info@DofE.org (**DofE.org**)

National Fundraising Team:
supportus@DofE.org (**DofE.org/support**)

The Award Scheme Ltd (ASL):
asl@DofE.org

The International Award Foundation:
sect@intaward.org (**intaward.org**)



YOUTH WITHOUT LIMITS

The world's leading achievement award for young people

This Handbook provides advice and guidance for DofE Leaders to set up and run a DofE group.