



A guide for Leaders and volunteers



Developing young
people for life and work



EXETER OPEN
AWARD CENTRE

Thank you for volunteering

This leaflet outlines what's involved in achieving a Duke of Edinburgh's Award, so you can help young people develop and complete a programme that's right for them. Every DofE adventure is unique, and this leaflet touches on just some of the options available. Please use this leaflet for your reference when talking to participants and give copies to other adults who support you with running DofE programmes.

Ask your local DofE Leader if you can attend an 'Introduction to the DofE' training course. To find out more about DofE training courses, please see www.DofE.org/training.

What is the DofE?

Anyone aged 14-24 can do a DofE programme at one of three progressive levels which, when successfully completed, leads 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 assistance from DofE Leaders, participants will select and set objectives in each of the following areas:

- Volunteering:** undertaking service to individuals or the community. This cannot be for a business or family member but can be for a charity or for a not-for-profit organisation.
- Physical:** improving in an area of sport, dance or fitness activities.
- Skills:** developing practical and social skills and personal interests.
- Expedition:** planning, training for and completing an unaccompanied adventurous journey in the UK or abroad.
- At Gold level,** participants must do an additional fifth **Residential** section, which involves staying and working away from home doing a shared activity.

How long does it take?

To achieve an Award young people must show persistence, commitment and personal development.

It's not something that can be achieved through a short burst of enthusiasm in one weekend! However, they may easily fit their DofE activities around their school, college or work commitments, carrying them out in their own personal time. They can be done partly as one of a range of options in supported/core time or as part of an after-school or lunchtime programme.

They may choose to use an activity they are already doing as a DofE activity – or go for something completely new.

Each progressive level demands more time and commitment from participants. There is no real time limit when it comes to completing a DofE programme.

As long as they are under 25 years old when they complete all their activities in their programme, they're free to work at a pace that they're comfortable with to achieve their Award.

This chart shows the **minimum** time participants must do their programmes for. Whilst timescales are given in months, participants need to give a regular commitment averaging at least an hour a week during this time.

Costs

To take part in the DofE, participants pay a nominal fee for a *Welcome Pack*, which includes their DofE Participation Place. This fee is their contribution towards the Charity's costs in running their DofE programme.

They will receive:

- Their online eDofE account
- A *Welcome Pack*
- An *Achievement Pack* (free PDF version, with the option to buy a professionally bound version)
- Their DofE Reward Card
- A certificate and badge on approval of the Award.

The fee represents a very small proportion of the overall cost which is supported by the funds raised by the DofE Charity. The current charge for participation can be found at www.DofE.org/go/costs.

It is often the chosen programme activities, not the cost of enrolment, that can make the greatest financial demands on a young person. Encouraging them to devise a programme that matches resources is part of the challenge.

Bronze (14+ years old)

Volunteering	Physical	Skills	Expedition
3 months	3 months	3 months	Plan, train for and complete a 2 day, 1 night expedition
<i>Participants must also undertake a further three months in the Volunteering, Physical or Skills section.</i>			

Silver (15+ years old)

Volunteering	Physical	Skills	Expedition
6 months	One section for 6 months and the other section for 3 months		Plan, train for and complete a 3 day, 2 night expedition
<i>If participants have not achieved their Bronze Award they must undertake a further six months in either their Volunteering or the longer of their Physical or Skills sections.</i>			

Gold (16+ years old)

Volunteering	Physical	Skills	Expedition	Residential
12 months	One section for 12 months and the other section for 6 months		Plan, train for and complete a 4 day, 3 night expedition	Undertake a shared activity in a residential setting away from home for 5 days and 4 nights
<i>If participants have not achieved their Silver Award they must undertake a further six months in either their Volunteering or the longer of their Physical or Skills sections.</i>				

Inspiring ideas for activities are available at www.DofE.org/sections

The sections in detail

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

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

Preparation: Participants research the activity they would like to do and agree it with their Leader.

Training: There will be regular times when a participant's choice of activity requires them to take a course, simple introduction or structured training before starting their activity. For the Physical, Skills and Residential sections, training may be the whole activity.

Activity: The most important and enjoyable part of any section – actually doing it! Each activity must be done for the minimum time given.

Assessment: To complete a DofE programme every activity undertaken must be successfully completed and assessed.

Activities are placed in specific sections for a reason and all activities must fit into a section – they cannot be split over or counted for more than one section. When participants are making their choices you should be on hand to advise them and support them in their decisions.

If you're unsure about a certain activity – whether it's okay to do or simply which section it belongs in – contact your Licensed Organisation who will advise you. Or visit www.DofE.org/sections for guidance.

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

For the full requirements of each section, and all DofE conditions, please refer to *The Handbook for DofE Leaders*, available from www.DofE.org/shop.

Volunteering

This section's aim is to inspire young people to make a difference within their communities or to an individual's life and develop compassion by giving service to others.

Volunteering is simple. It's about choosing to give time to do something useful, without getting paid. Participants can choose to volunteer individually, as part of a team or with their DofE group.

The key to successful volunteering is practical activity for a cause they're passionate about – getting out there and doing something. Just training in a skill that may help the community in the future is not enough.

Examples of volunteering activities:

- Being a weekly visitor to an older person.
- Being a DofE Leader.
- Raising money for a cancer charity.
- Running an awareness programme on HIV/AIDS.

Physical

This section is all about inspiring young people to achieve greater physical fitness and a healthy lifestyle through participation and improvement in physical activity.

In short, anything that requires a sustained level of physical energy and involves doing an activity can count – as long as they show interest and improvement over time. The key is having fun, getting better and fitter.

Examples of physical activities:

- Joining a football team and playing in matches regularly.
- Attending weekly salsa classes.
- Going to a gym every week and improving fitness.
- Joining a running group.
- Improving their karate skills and gaining the next belt.



Skills

The aim is to inspire young people to develop practical and social skills and personal interests.

Something old, something new – it doesn't matter. Young people can choose to improve an existing skill or develop a new one, as long as they can prove that they have broadened their understanding and increased their expertise.

Examples of skills activities:

- Learning how to cook food from different countries.
- Singing in school musicals.
- Learning about today's digital lifestyle, creating and distributing a podcast.
- Learning about, and keeping, tropical fish.
- Playing the guitar in a band.

Expedition

Doing an expedition inspires young people to develop initiative and a spirit of adventure and discovery, by planning, training for and completing an adventurous journey as part of a team.

Expeditions must be completed by the participants' own physical efforts with minimal external intervention and without motorised assistance. All participants must do at least one practice expedition, a qualifying expedition (the one that is assessed) and a presentation after it.

The expedition can be as far flung or as close to home as participants want it to be (but in an area unfamiliar to them). Before their expedition, participants need to identify their expedition aim, mode of travel and location.

If a participant is finding it hard to find a DofE expedition to join, they can find an 'open expedition' run by the DofE or by an organisation or company whose opportunities are approved by the DofE. See www.DofE.org/opportunities.

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.

Expedition activity examples:

- Studying the flora and fauna along the route.
- Taking a series of photographs to use in a calendar.
- Planning a horseback expedition, including identifying suitable camp sites to help future expeditioners.

Rules and advice for expeditions are in the *DofE Expedition Guide*: www.DofE.org/go/eg

Residential

Participants are inspired 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.

Unique to the Gold level, participants choose an activity they want to do that's based away from home that takes at least five days and four nights to complete. Participants could base their experience around an existing interest or they could try something completely new.

Examples of residential activities:

- Attending a conference on climate change as a youth representative for their local authority.
- Helping out on an overseas pilgrimage or camp.
- Joining a conservation camp.
- Studying a foreign language at a language camp.

How do they achieve an Award?

Young people will achieve their Duke of Edinburgh's Award if they show persistence, commitment and personal development over a period of time. To complete a DofE programme every activity undertaken must be successfully completed and assessed.

eDofE is the online record keeping system used by participants, Leaders and DofE Managers to keep track of a young person's progress through their programme. Participants upload photographs, scans of letters, certificates etc. to their eDofE account.

Assessors can submit their reports directly into the participant's eDofE account.

Once completed, the Licensed Organisation will authorise Bronze and Silver Awards. Gold Awards are authorised by your DofE Regional/Country Office.

Leaders and volunteers

DofE groups do what they do thanks to their teams of Leaders and volunteers.

Whether you're leading and inspiring a group, assessing a section of a young person's programme, supervising an expedition team or fundraising to support a group's activities, your commitment and efforts are greatly appreciated.

Leaders can receive a DofE Reward Card, entitling them to 20% discount in Cotswold Outdoor shops and online. Find out more: www.DofE.org/go/rewardcard.

Why should they do their DofE?

Doing their DofE can be a life-changing adventure. On the way participants will do their own programme of activities to help them reach their full potential. They'll learn new skills, help others, have fun, make friends and gain a great sense of achievement. Employers, colleges and universities value The Duke of Edinburgh's Award and see it as a mark of excellence. See www.DofE.org/go/impact.

Where is the DofE run?

DofE programmes are delivered under licence by over 400 partners (Licensed Organisations). They offer it through DofE centres in youth clubs, voluntary organisations, schools, academies, colleges, young offender institutions and businesses etc.

Who can do it?

Anyone aged between 14 and 24. DofE programmes are all about getting out there, having fun and self-development, so anyone can achieve.

Young people choose what they do in each section and set their own personal challenges – 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 and being the best they can.

Our work

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is the world's leading achievement award for young people. We are a charity. We aim to create a world where young people can reach their full potential whatever their circumstances. Our ethos is to enable every young person of every background to do their DofE and succeed.

"I've seen my participants gain so much self-confidence through the DofE, and it's opened their eyes to show them there's more to life than their phones... and it's fun for them and us Leaders too!" – Jon Irwin, DofE Leader

More information:

- Talk to a DofE Leader or Co-ordinator
- Find a local contact at www.DofE.org/takepart
- Visit our website: www.DofE.org
- Email us: info@DofE.org

Local contact:

DofE Coordinator
Exeter Open Award Centre

email: info@eoac.org.uk
phone: 07808 794091



A range of clothing and other merchandise is available from our online shop: www.DofE.org/go/shopfront