

Section Notes

Adventurous Journey





This leaflet provides a basic outline of The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award, with particular emphasis on the Adventurous Journey section and what is involved in acting as an Adventurous Journey Supervisor and an Adventurous Journey Assessor. More information can be obtained from the participant's Award Unit.

What is the Award?

The Award enables 14-24 year olds to learn practical skills that are valuable to their personal and professional development.

It is comprised of three levels: Bronze, Silver and Gold. Participants set themselves challenging personal goals in four sections: Service, Skills, Physical Recreation and Adventurous Journey at each level in order to achieve their Award. At Gold level, participants also complete a Residential Project.

Throughout the programme participants can develop existing interests, but you should encourage them to do something new that would be challenging and enjoyable. Once participants have set their goals they strive to achieve them, showing improvement throughout their Award journey.





What are Adventurous Journey Supervisors and Adventurous Journey Assessors?

The Adventurous Journey Supervisor's role in the Award is a suitably qualified and experienced adult volunteer who is responsible for a group's safety throughout their practice and qualifying Adventurous Journeys. They are responsible for supervising practice journeys, for assessing the ability of an individual or team to carry out their qualifying journey, and for signing a participant's relevant documents to confirm that they are suitably skilled and prepared. The role of the Adventurous Journey Supervisor can be carried out by an Award Leader, but there must be a separate Adventurous Journey Assessor.

They should have considerable knowledge and experience of the chosen activity and be able to listen and help with a participant's thoughts, concerns and questions. They should encourage participants throughout the activity, assisting them from start through to completion by regularly meeting with them and discussing their goals.

Adventurous Journey section

This section of the Award seeks to provide participants with a unique, challenging and memorable experience. The venture, with an agreed purpose, should be undertaken in a small team in an unfamiliar environment, requiring determination, physical effort, perseverance and cooperation to complete. The key elements of this section are teamwork in planning and undertaking a journey against the background of the real challenges posed by an unfamiliar environment. The environment chosen should be challenging within the capabilities of the team.

There are three types of journey participants can undertake: 'exploration', 'expedition' and 'other adventurous journey'. All journeys must have a clearly stated aim or purpose, which can be developed and modified during the period of training and preparation.

The difference between an exploration and an expedition is one of emphasis or degree, although both require a process and journey.

An exploration is a purpose with a journey. In an exploration, the primary focus is to observe and collect information relevant to the purpose. More time and effort is spent on this and consequently less time is devoted to getting from one place to another, although a minimum of one third of the activity hours should be spent on journeying.



An expedition is a journey with a purpose. In an expedition, the primary focus is on the journey.

An other adventurous journey is one that does not quite conform to the specific requirements of an exploration or an expedition, but is as demanding. Due to the extra innovation and challenge involved, the minimum age to plan and undertake an other adventurous journey is 18 years or above.

The specific benefits will obviously depend on the chosen Adventurous Journey. Some general benefits include working as part of a team, understanding group dynamics, developing self-reliance and independence, improving investigating, reviewing and presentational skills and enjoyment.

Participants learn by doing in keeping with the Award methodology of experimental learning. By undertaking an Adventurous Journey, it is hoped that the participant will develop a spirit of adventure and discovery whilst undertaking a journey in a group.

Requirements

The following requirements are for explorations and expeditions only. Other adventurous journeys do not necessarily need to comply with all of them, although they must be at least as challenging.

Participants usually need to undergo relevant training and will also need to undertake sufficient practice journeys to ensure they can be self-reliant and safe in their chosen environment. On the qualifying journey, the team should be no fewer than four and no more than seven young people, operating independently of others but all involved in its planning. Not all participants on the journey need to be completing their Award, but they should be peer group equals, making decisions together.

The qualifying and practice journeys should be supervised and assessed by experienced adults. The Adventurous Journey Supervisor is responsible for the group's safety while on the journey, needs to be familiar with the Award and must be satisfied that the participants are properly trained and equipped to undertake the journey.

The journey can be on land or water, by a participant’s own efforts, (foot, cycle, paddle etc), by animal or by other non-motorised assistance. Accommodation should be in portable tents or simple self-catering accommodation.

In an exploration, the distance covered will depend on the speed of the team, as established in the practice journeys. For a physically able group travelling by foot, this would normally mean minimum total distances of 24, 48 and 80km at Bronze, Silver and Gold levels. Challenging terrain could reduce what could be reasonably accomplished in the minimum hours.

	Day	Night	Minimum hours of purposeful effort	Minimum hours of purposeful effort per day
Bronze	2	1	12	6
Silver	3	2	21	7
Gold	4	3	32	8

Purposeful effort means time spent towards accomplishing the purpose of the journey. Time associated with sleeping, cooking and eating is in addition to this time.

Plan

Initially the team must be briefed by their Award Leader or Adventurous Journey Supervisor on the concept of an Adventurous Journey. They will then need to agree the purpose, environment and mode of travel.

Preparation and training will usually be required to enable participants to undertake their journey safely, unless they are already skilled in the necessary techniques, and need to be given by a suitably qualified and/or experienced adult.



All journeys must be supervised by a suitably qualified and/or experienced adult, known as the Adventurous Journey Supervisor. They are responsible for the group's safety while on the journey and need to be familiar with the Award. They must be satisfied that the participants are properly trained and equipped to undertake the journey.

It is worth emphasising that the Adventurous Journey contains an element of risk. It is important that this risk is properly managed, to reduce the likelihood of an accident occurring or to decrease its consequences. The safety of young people is a priority.

Participants must undertake sufficient practice journeys to ensure they can complete their qualifying journey safely. Practice journeys should take place in a similar environment, should use a similar mode of travel and should reflect the purpose of the qualifying journey, but take a different route to the qualifying journey. The Supervisor should provide feedback on the team's strengths and weaknesses.

Do

For the qualifying journey, the team is required to be self-sufficient and independent. In normal circumstances this will mean being unaccompanied. The qualifying journey needs to be assessed by a suitably experienced person (the Adventurous Journey Assessor).

The Adventurous Journey Assessor should be looking to ensure that the minimum time requirements have been met, that participants have shown determination and effort and have worked as a team; and the purpose of the journey has been achieved.

They should make contact with the group at least once a day to ensure the group is working according to plan and is safe. Once the entire journey is completed, the Adventurous Journey Assessor should meet with the team and debrief.

Review

After the debrief, the team should work together on producing their report. All members should have an input into the report, which can be in any format, (written, verbal, photographic or video). It should tell the story of their preparation for, and conduct of, the qualifying journey. This will also provide a permanent record for their personal recollection.

Signing off the section

At an agreed time, the team should present their report to their Adventurous Journey Assessor who then records completion of the Adventurous Journey.



Adventure education intentionally uses challenging experiences for learning. The Adventurous Journey is often quoted by participants as their most significant experience during their Award and so the successful preparation for and conduct of the Adventurous Journey is key to the participant's overall Award experience.

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