Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme – Gold Expeditions 2026

Dear Participant,

How will your expedition work?

We deliver Gold expeditions around the country - either from our site on the Ashdown Forest or in a Wild-Country location of your choice.

Your team will be given a specific arrival time to the start point and we would ask that you adhere to this as best as possible. This is to ensure we stagger other teams. You will be met by your trainer / supervisor / assessor who will advise on the next stages of the expedition.

With the amount of DofE groups that operate in the National Parks, we also expect you to be polite to members of the public, keep the noise to a respectful level and adhere to the Countryside Code, making sure that you stick to the marked routes and close any gates behind you. Please avoid cattle, horses and any other animals or wildlife, plus take any litter you find with you, even if it is not your own. *'Take nothing but memories, leave nothing but footprints' – Chief Seattle*.

All group equipment (as per the kit list) will be provided but you are of course welcome to bring your own! Cooking wise, we suggest that you bring personal snacks and 'boil in the bag' meals. These are quick and simple and provide all the necessary nutrients etc that will help to keep your energy levels up during the expedition. Pasta with various sauces are also popular choices. *Only stoves that operate with a 'screw on' gas container will be permitted*. We will also provide you with a group first aid kit. Do please bring any additional personal medication that you require (i.e. inhalers if you suffer from Asthma, blister plasters, hay fever tablets, pain control etc).

You can purchase 'boil in the bag' meals from any good outdoor provider. We would suggest brands such as Wayfarer or Summit To Eat. These are available from any good retailer such as Cotswolds Outdoors and Blacks. You can also purchase these online.

Each team will be provided with an emergency phone number. A member of our staff will be on-call for the duration of your expedition. You should use this number immediately should any of your team members show any signs of serious illness or injury. If appropriate, dial 999 first!

Training / Practice and Qualifying Expeditions

Under normal circumstances, you should attend a practice expedition to demonstrate that you have been sufficiently trained to undertake the qualifying expedition. This may have been completed with your school, youth group or another Approved Activity Provider.

The training / practice expedition will have covered / re-visited areas such as:

- The Expedition Rucksack, Equipment and Footwear, including Blisters and how to avoid them!
- Use of Stoves and Expedition Food.
- Tents and Campcraft to include Campsite Etiquette.
- Emergency Procedures, First Aid and Road Walking / Crossings.
- Navigation and Navigational Techniques.
- Keeping Safe during the Expedition.

You will complete your route planning at the start of the qualifying expedition. This means that you will have plenty of time to work on this with your team.

If applicable - Should you be joining us for a qualifying expedition only (i.e. you have already completed a practice expedition) or you are joining us as an Open Expedition participant, you will be given a chance at the start of the expedition on day 1 to plan your routes with your assessor. We will provide you with the campsite details and it will be your responsibility to plan a suitable route between them!

Other Information

Blackland Farm Outdoor Centre is an Approved Activity Provider (AAP) for the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme for both Walking (foot) and Paddlesport (canoe based) expeditions at all levels; Bronze, Silver and Gold, plus Gold Residential activities. We also hold an Adventure Activities Licensing Authority (AALA) licence, a Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) Quality Badge, AAAIC Adventure Mark and Visit England 'We're Good To Go' Quality Mark.

Our Assessors will complete all the necessary paperwork following your qualifying expedition (you will need to provide your eDofE ID). Once we update the expedition report, your Local Authority or School / College DofE Coordinator will receive confirmation that you have completed this element of the Award.

A kit list is provided on the following page to help you plan your expedition:

EXPEDITION KIT LIST – PERSONAL EQUIPMENT – GOLD AWARD

Amended – September 2025

QTY	ITEM	NOTES
1	Walking boots (broken in)	
4	Pairs of walking socks	Ideally woollen
2	T-shirts (as appropriate)	Ideally wicking, not cotton
1	Fleece top / warm jumper	
2	Walking trousers / leggings	No jeans
4	Underwear (as appropriate)	
1	Night wear (as appropriate)	
1	Warm hat (beanie) / sunhat	Sunglasses are also recommended
1	Warm gloves	
1	Waterproof jacket	Breathable and with taped seams
1	Waterproof Over trousers	Breathable and with taped seams
1	Expedition rucksack	Approx 65 – 75 litres
1	Rucksack waterproof liner	Or 2 x heavy duty rubble sacks / heavy bin liners
1	Sleeping bag	Season appropriate for the time of year
1	Sleeping mat	Roll mat or self inflating mat
1	Torch	With spare batteries – Head torches are ideal!
1	Personal First Aid Kit	Personal medication (inhalers / epipens etc)
Various	Expedition food	'Boil in the bag' and high energy snacks
2	Water bottles	To hold up to 2 litres of water
1	Mug and Cutlery	'Sporks' are ideal
1	Box of matches	Long matches preferred for lighting gas stoves
1	Wash Kit / Small pack towel	Keep to the minimum and include toilet paper!!
1	Mobile Phone	For emergency use only – Keep fully charged
1	Spare glasses / contact lenses	If applicable
1	Sun cream and Insect repellent	Ideally Factor 50!
1	Small Hand Sanitiser	
1	Washing-Up kit	Scourers, washing up liquid, and tea towel

EXPEDITION KIT LIST – GROUP EQUIPMENT – GOLD AWARD

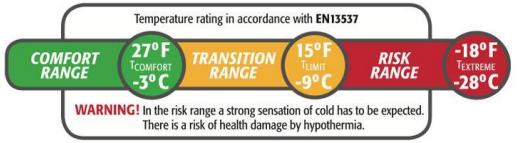
Amended – September 2025

Various	Expedition Tents	Supplied
Min 2	Stoves + adequate gas	Ideally Trangia with gas – Supplied
Various	Washing-Up kit	Scourers, washing up liquid, and tea towel
2	Compasses	Ideally Silva branded– Supplied
1	Group First Aid Kit	Supplied
1	Group Shelter	Supplied ****For emergency use only****

SLEEPING BAG GUIDE

Season	Season Rating	Use	Typical Night Temperature
Summer	Season 1	Summer Camping Indoor use	+10 degrees or higher
	Season 2	UK late spring Early Autumn	+5 degrees or higher
Winter	Season 3	Autumn / Winter Mild – Cold nights – Without frost	+0 degrees or higher
	Season 4	Cold winter nights May be frost / snow	-5 degrees or higher

Example:



Synthetic Sleeping Bags

PROS	CONS
Retains insulation when damp / wet	Does not retain heat as well as down
Cheaper than down	Bulkier and heavier
Easier to clean	Shorter life span

Down Sleeping Bags

PROS	CONS
Excellent heat retention	Loses heat insulation ability when wet
Lightweight – better warmth to weight ration	Takes a long time to dry out when wet
Wider comfort temperature range – This makes it suitable for cold and warm temperatures	More expensive
Long lifespan if looked after!	Requires special cleaning
Easier to compress and packs small	

Sleeping Bag Liners

Sleeping bag liners are inserted inside your sleeping bag to provide an extra layer of warmth, improve hygiene and extend the life of the sleeping bag.

Sleeping Mats

Sleeping mats and roll mats go under your sleeping bag and provide insulation from the ground to keep you warm when sleeping outdoors.

Expedition Kit List

Please feel free to contact us should you have any questions regarding any items on the kit list.

Expedition Requirements

As you should be aware, you are required to meet what are known as the 'Expedition Requirements'. These are detailed in the page below.

And Finally!

Hopefully, this has provided you with an insight as to how your expedition will run this year. Please feel free to contact me should you have any further questions or concerns!

Kind regards,

Ollie Saffery
Duke of Edinburgh Manager

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The Expedition Aim and Requirements

DofE Qualifying Expedition Requirements	
Pre Expedition	
1	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).
2	There must be between four and seven participants in a team (eight for modes of travel which can be used by two people at once e.g., tandem bikes, open canoes).
3	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.
4	All expeditions must be supervised by an adult (the Expedition Supervisor) who is able to accept responsibility for the safety of the team.
5	Assessment must be by an Accredited Assessor. At Bronze level only, the Assessor may also be the Expedition Supervisor.
6	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 2 days, 2 nights.
Planning an Expedition	
1	*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.

The Expedition Aim and Requirements

(Continued….)

2	*Environment:* The environment chosen must become progressively more challenging through the award levels – environments could include rural, urban, or restricted spaces.
3	*Accommodation:* Accommodation should be by camping or other simple self-catering accommodation e.g., bunkhouses.
4	*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.
5	*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.
6	*Food:* Participants must plan an appropriate expedition menu, including cooking and eating a substantial hot meal each day (optional on the final day).
During Expedition	
1	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).
2	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.
3	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.

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