

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE)



**The
Senior Section**

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Introduction

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) is a voluntary, non-competitive programme of activities for anyone aged 14 to 24. Girlguiding has joined with DofE to offer you the opportunity to experience new activities or develop existing skills. The DofE fits in closely with many of the other awards and qualifications available to you through guiding, in particular the Queen's Guide Award.

There are three progressive levels of the award: Bronze, Silver and Gold. For each level you need to undertake challenges in the following areas: Volunteering, Physical, Skills and going on an Expedition. For the Gold level you will also need to take part in a Residential event.

It is the Gold DofE programme that matches closest to the **Queen's Guide Award**, but the Bronze and Silver programmes can also be matched across.

Why do it?

Potential employers and universities will be impressed with an achievement they know and respect, and the internationally recognised DofE programme operates in over 100 countries. The DofE programme is balanced and develops you as a whole person - mind, body and soul, in an environment of social interaction and teamwork.

The DofE programme can be matched with activities you are already doing in guiding, meaning you can get more than one award for the challenges you are undertaking.

Getting started

The DofE has three levels.

- Bronze (for those aged 14 and over) which takes at least six months to complete.
- Silver (for those aged 15 and over) which takes at least 12 months for direct entrants (ie those without Bronze Awards).
- Gold (for those aged 16 and over) which takes at least 18 months for direct entrants (ie those without Silver Awards).

You can decide if you want to work through the levels in order or which level you would like to take part in as long as you meet the minimum-age requirement. You must complete the levels you choose to work towards before your 25th birthday (this is different from the age for other awards and qualification in The Senior Section).

In order to register you will need to talk to your DofE Adviser or person within your County who has this responsibility. There will be a registration fee for your DofE which they will be able to tell you more about.

Top tips

- Thinking about doing your Queen's Guide Award as well as DofE? Sign up for both at the same time to get the most out of doing both awards. You can also count what you do towards other awards and qualifications such as Look Wider. To find out more about the Queen's Guide Award and Look Wider go to www.girlguiding.org.uk/what-we-do/our-programme-and-activities/the-senior-section-programme/.
- If you are doing your DofE through Girlguiding it will need to be recorded on your Go! profile and you need to remain a member of Girlguiding throughout your DofE programme. Your Leader, DofE Adviser or local Commissioner will be able to help you with this.
- One activity you are already doing can count towards your DofE if it was done in the previous three months and fits the principles, conditions and age requirements. If you already volunteer you could use that activity, but you might want to start something new. You can only backdate an activity in one section.

What you have to do

At each level you have to satisfy the requirements of four sections.

Volunteering - Undertaking service to individuals or the community.

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 adventurous journey in the UK or abroad.

Gold programme participants must also do the following additional section.

Residential - Staying and working away from home doing a shared activity.

Timescales

The tables below show the minimum timescales for each level and section. The length of time is in months but there must be a regular activity and commitment during this period averaging at least an hour a week.

Bronze

You can do a Bronze DofE programme once you are 14.

A Bronze DofE programme has four sections: Volunteering, Physical, Skills and Expedition. You must do a minimum of three months activity for each of the Volunteering, Physical and Skills sections, and plan, train for and do a two-day, one-night Expedition.

You also have to spend an extra three months on one of the Volunteering, Physical or Skills sections. It's your choice which one and, though you can change your mind later, you should decide which section you want to do for longer at the beginning. Knowing how long you're going to do it for will help you to choose your activity and set your goals for each section.

It will usually take you at least six months to complete your Bronze DofE.

Volunteering	Physical	Skills	Expedition
Three months	Three months	Three months	Plan, train for and undertake a two-day, one-night Expedition.

All participants must undertake a further three months in the Volunteering, Physical or Skills sections.

Silver

For this, the next step up from Bronze, you need to be at least 15 to start doing your Silver DofE programme.

The Silver DofE programme has four sections: Volunteering, Physical, Skills and Expedition. You need to do at least six months Volunteering and a minimum of six months on either Physical or Skills and three months on the other. It's up to you which one you do for longer.

The Expedition section involves planning, training for and doing a three-day, two-night Expedition.

If you start your Silver without doing Bronze first you'll have to do an extra six months Volunteering or doing whichever of the Physical or Skills sections you have spent more time on. Though you can change your mind later, you should decide which section you want to do for longer at the beginning. Knowing how long you're going to do it for will help you to choose your activity and set your goals for each section.

It will take you at least six months for Silver if you've already achieved your Bronze, or 12 months if you've jumped straight into Silver.

Volunteering	Physical	Skills	Expedition
Six months	One section for six months and the other section for three months		Plan, train for and undertake a three-day, two-night expedition.
Direct entrants must undertake a further six months in either the Volunteering or the longer of the Physical or Skills sections.			

Gold

Once you are 16 you can do your Gold DofE programme. No activities can be counted for this before your 16th birthday.

You'll spend 12 months on your Volunteering section. For Physical and Skills you must spend 12 months on one and 6 months on the other - you decide which way round you do it.

Your expedition will be for four days and three nights (plus an acclimatisation day) and should take place in 'wild country'.

The big difference at Gold is you'll also do a Residential section - staying away from home for five days and four nights doing a shared activity with people you don't know. It is great fun and a real chance to do something different.

If you've jumped straight into your Gold DofE programme you'll need to do a further six months either Volunteering or in whichever one of your Physical or Skills activities you spent more time on.

For Gold, you'll need to do your programme for at least 12 months if you've achieved your Silver Award, or 18 months if you've started at Gold level without achieving Silver - even if you've achieved Bronze.

Volunteering	Physical	Skills	Expedition	Residential
12 months	One section for 12 months and the other section for six months		Plan, train for and undertake a four-day, three-night expedition.	Undertake a shared activity in a residential setting away from home for five days and four nights.
Direct entrants must undertake a further six months in either the Volunteering or the longer of the Physical or Skills sections.				

Recording what you have done

For your DofE you will need to use eDofE to record your plans and achievements. eDofE is an online system that will enable you to manage your DofE programme and your Leaders to see what you are working on and have achieved. eDofE is easy to use and someone in your group will be able to show you what you need to do. DofE has also provided some videos to help, which can be found on its website, www.dofe.org.

When you are registered to work towards your DofE you will also receive a Welcome Pack with information about the DofE for yourself and those who will be signing off different sections of your programme.

In the *Look Wider and More Record Book* (available from www.girlguidingshop.co.uk, order code 6110), there is space to record your eDofE number and start and end dates to help you keep track of what you are doing.

To help you plan what you will do for each section, you can also use the DofE programme planners, which you can download from <http://www.dofe.info/en/content/cms/doing-your-dofe/activities-sections/>.

Evidence for eDofE

Here are some suggestions as to what you could include as evidence on eDofE.

- Young Leader Qualification certificate.
- Leadership Qualification certificate.
- Thank you letters you have received.
- Certificates from trainings you have attended.
- Photos of activities you have taken part in.
- Assessors' reports (one of these is essential for each section to be completed).
- Copies of Look Wider evidence from your record book.

Please note

If you are taking pictures of other people to upload on to eDofE, don't forget to make sure you have their permission to do so.

Counting DofE work towards other awards

If you are undertaking both the DofE and the Queen's Guide Award, then you need to comply with the conditions of each award. An activity can count towards both awards provided it meets the required criteria for each. You should make sure your Leaders and assessors are aware of your involvement in both programmes from the beginning.

To see how your DofE and your Queen's Guide Award overlap, go to www.girlguiding.org.uk/globalassets/docs-and-resources/programme-and-activities/dofe_girlguiding_leaflet-a5-2014.pdf.

When you have finished

After you've successfully completed all work for your DofE, your Leader will be able to submit it for approval by Girlguiding and then DofE. After this you will be presented with your badge or brooch locally, as well as your certificate for the Bronze or Silver Award. For the Gold Award, DofE will invite you to a national award presentation, when you will be presented with your certificate.

Don't forget

You have until your 25th birthday to complete whichever level you are working on to achieve your award.

Doing your DofE with a licensed organisation other than Girlguiding

If you are doing your DofE with another licensed organisation other than Girlguiding you can still achieve part of your DofE through guiding. For example, you could do your Volunteering section by helping at a unit, or event planning could be used as your Skill. There may be residential opportunities you can take part in which also count towards your Gold DofE.

You will need to comply with the rules and regulations of the licensed organisation and of Girlguiding. Your DofE Leader and Girlguiding Leader or Commissioner will be able to help you with this.

Support

There are a number of Girlguiding resources and programmes which might be able to help you further for different sections of the DofE.

- Information about the Queen's Guide Award from www.girlguiding.org.uk/what-we-do/our-programme-and-activities/the-senior-section-programme/queens-guide-award/.
- Information about Look Wider from www.girlguiding.org.uk/what-we-do/our-programme-and-activities/the-senior-section-programme/look-wider/.
- *Going Away With Guiding*, available from www.girlguidingshop.co.uk, order code 6045.

- *The Guiding Manual*, www.girlguiding.org.uk/guidingmanual.

DofE also provides lots of support, and additional information can be found on its website at www.dofe.org. The *DofE Handbook for Leaders* covers all the basic information Leaders need to know to support girls working towards their DofE. The *DofE Programme Pack* includes information about some of the many activities you could do for the different sections of your DofE.

Volunteering

The aim of the Volunteering section 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.

This section is all about making a difference to other people's lives, and taking time out to change things for the better can be great fun.

Guiding suggestions

There are a great many ways you can complete the volunteering section of your DofE - here are a few suggestions specific to guiding which you could count.

Community action and raising awareness

Peer Education

Being involved with 4 (Girlguiding's peer-education programme) can count towards your DofE. If you are already involved talk to your 4 Coordinator about how you can make a regular commitment. If you aren't already involved in 4 you will need to attend a Basic Training weekend. **To find out more about 4 go to www.girlguiding.org.uk/making-guiding-happen/programme-and-activities/peer-education/become-a-peer-educator/.**

Promotion and PR

Why not see about becoming a media spokesperson for guiding or volunteer with your local PR team? Talk to your Country or Region Office about attending a media spokesperson training, or to your local PR Adviser or Commissioner to find out more about what you can do locally.

Helping a charity or organisation

Fundraising

Fundraising is a suggested activity for the DofE so why not fundraise for your local guiding campsite, hall or unit? Talk to your local Commissioner to find out about what is needed in your area. You will need to put together a plan as to what you will be doing over the full length of time to make sure you are giving a regular commitment.

Administration

There are lots of administrative activities you could take part in to help guiding in your local area. This could be anything from helping a unit with their accounts, updating Go!, maintaining a guiding website or much more. Have a chat with the Unit Leader or local Commissioner to find out how you can help - don't forget you need to plan a regular commitment for the full length of time.

Supporting a charity

There are a great many other ways you can support guiding. Being a trustee either at a local level for a property or site or for Girlguiding can count towards your DofE. Organising a team of volunteers to decorate a local guiding property or prepare and maintain a local campsite through the season could also be counted. Maybe there is a need to find more adult volunteers or young members in your area or an area near you where you could manage a recruitment campaign.

Coaching, teaching and leadership

Leading a voluntary organisation group or unit - Girlguiding

This is an obvious one for many members but don't forget to think about what you want to get out of it too. It might be that you want to gain your Young Leader Qualification or Leadership Qualification, or you want to improve your understanding of the programme for another section by running sessions for them. Alternatively, you could mentor or support a group of younger members working towards an award or qualification you have already received or know about.

Top tips

- There are e-learning modules which can help you understand the programme for each section. If you are volunteering regularly with the same section it is recommended you complete the relevant training. There is also an e-learning module on mentoring so if this is what you are doing for your Volunteering section why not develop your skills further? **To find out more about e-learning trainings go to www.girlguiding.org.uk/making-guiding-happen/resources/resource-library/e-learning/.**
- It's important to think about when you are going to start Volunteering. Many units for example don't have regular meetings during the school holidays so this might not be the best time to start.
- Depending on the volunteering role you undertake and what you already do in guiding, you may need to have this added to your Go! record and may need to complete the Girlguiding recruitment process (reference and disclosure checks). Your local Commissioner or DofE Leader will be able to help you with this.
- Don't forget to make sure you can count your Volunteering towards Service in guiding for your Queen's Guide Award, if you have signed up to both awards.

Physical

The aim of the Physical section is:

To inspire young people to achieve greater physical fitness and a healthy lifestyle through participation and involvement in physical activity.

Guiding suggestions

There are as many physical activities on offer to you as a member of Girlguiding, such as climbing, archery and water sports to name a few.

Depending on your local area there may be guiding groups who go walking regularly, which could also count towards your Physical. If there isn't a group already set up maybe this is something you could start with a group of your peers.

Top tips

- Depending on the physical activity you pick it might be possible to count it towards your Queen's Guide Award too.
- Don't forget to check *The Guiding Manual*, www.girlguiding.org.uk/guidingmanual, about the rules and regulations for the activity you choose.
- Take a look at the Training and Activity Centres (TACs) to see what opportunities they have - go to www.girlguiding.org.uk/what-we-do/our-activity-centres/.

Skills

The aim of the Skills section is:

To inspire young people to develop practical and social skills and personal interests.

Guiding suggestions

- Event planning can be counted towards Skills. The event could be anything from a Brownie Adventure Day to an overseas trip, so there are a great many opportunities for you to develop your event-planning skills within guiding. The rules and regulations will be different depending on the kind of event that you wish to plan and you may need to gain a Girlguiding qualification to run the event - more information about this can be found in *The Guiding Manual*, www.girlguiding.org.uk/guidingmanual.
- If you are part of a Scout and Guide Orchestra you could develop your skills in playing a musical instrument. The challenge could be learning a new instrument or learning new pieces of music on an instrument you already play.
- There might be a local guiding singing circle you could join to develop your singing skills for your DofE.
- You could help your local PR team and develop your photography skills at the same time by recording local guiding through photos.
- Under Media and Communications you could develop your skills with newsletter or magazine production. This could be anything from a newsletter for a local unit to a blog for a local guiding website.
- There are many digital skills you could develop within guiding. Maybe you could produce podcasts or a digital scrapbook about your unit. Alternatively, you could develop a website for a local unit, District or Division.

Top tip

Depending on the skill you develop it might be possible to count it towards your Queen's Guide Award and Look Wider too.

Expedition

The aim of the Expedition section is:

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.

Guiding suggestions

Why not team up with other members of The Senior Section to plan and complete your expedition? As well as local Leaders and Advisers, there may also be other members who have already completed their DofE expedition who could offer you help and support.

Top tips

- If you have any spaces on your team or are looking for a team to join ask your County DofE Adviser if there is anyone locally working towards their award too and join forces.
- If you are doing your Queen's Guide Award and need to gain The Senior Section Permit, do this on the DofE practice Expedition rather than the qualifying one. This way the qualifying Expedition can count towards your Queen's Guide Award too.
- Rather than completing both DofE and Residential Event Notification forms separately, you can complete the Girlguiding Green Form. You can download the Green Form and accompanying guidance notes from www.girlguiding.org.uk/what-we-do/our-programme-and-activities/the-senior-section-programme/the-duke-of-edinburghs-award/.
- Share your skills and knowledge with others - whether it's the best food to take or ways to pack your bag, it could all be helpful information for other groups.

Residential

The aim of the Residential section is:

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.

Guiding suggestions

Girlguiding offers a great deal of residential opportunities, many of which meet the requirements of the DofE.

Service to others

This could be service to people with additional support needs, younger people or helping a community group. Being on the service team for a large-scale camp, volunteering as a carer to enable a member who would otherwise be unable to attend a residential event or cooking at an international trip could all count towards your Residential.

Learning

There are many opportunities to attend residential training sessions within guiding which can be counted towards your DofE. The Training and Activity Centres run events which could help you learn a new skill or develop existing ones as well as counting towards the Residential section of your DofE. Check also if local guiding or your Country or Region have anything planned which could count.

Activity based

The activities you take part in on an activity-based residential could vary from exploring a town or city, working towards a walking qualification or taking part in adventurous activities at the Training and Activity Centres. An activity-based residential opportunity within guiding shouldn't be hard to find!

Top tips

- If you are working towards your Queen's Guide Award, don't forget to make sure you can count your Residential towards both awards.
- To find out more about what's going on at the Training and Activity Centres go to www.girlguiding.org.uk/what-we-do/our-activity-centres/.