

# Responding to Covid-19 in Canada

Guidance for Award Leaders on temporary changes to Award requirements

## A message from the Award

Award participants and adults delivering the Award around the world have been coming to terms with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on their lives, work and study.

The Award plays a crucial role, now more than ever, in supporting the individual health and well-being of Award participants, as well as in underpinning social cohesion and creating a vital sense of community and connection for young people.

To support participants during this challenging time and to encourage young people to stay active, we have implemented some temporary changes to the Award requirements. The temporary changes to the Award requirements are designed to avoid interruption to Award progress during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as protecting each participant's experience and – as far as possible - maintaining the educational outcomes intended for each section of the Award.

**Temporary changes are in effect from May 1 - December 31, 2020**

## Maximum age limit

 This change applies to participants at all levels of the Award.

All registered participants who are due to reach their 25th birthday between May and December 2020 will have an extension applied, granting them time to complete their current Award level.

Because the current social distancing/COVID-19 measures are beyond the control of participants in affected countries, a blanket extension is in place for all participants in the relevant age range. These participants will be able to continue logging activities, on the ORB (or offline) until December 31, 2021. Where possible, participants should be encouraged to continue their Award activities without interruption.

## Volunteering at home

 This change applies to participants at all levels of the Award.

**Participants can now volunteer for family members as part of their Award activities. This option is intended as a last resort**

If a participant has exhausted all opportunities to conduct an alternative voluntary role with an organization outside their home or online, they may start or continue their Voluntary Service by volunteering for family members – e.g. tutoring or coaching a younger sibling.

Regular household duties or other menial responsibilities are not acceptable.

The participant must receive prior consent from their Award Leader and must identify a suitable Section Assessor (not a family member). The Voluntary Service hours must be structured, logged and evidenced; the SMART Goal will need to be reviewed with the Award Leader for suitability.



## Adventurous Journey Temporary changes

If the Adventurous Journey (AJ) is difficult or impossible in the current environment, the preferred solution is to postpone AJs until such time as they are feasible.

### 1 Award Leaders can waive the requirement for a Bronze Practice Journey

 **This change applies to participants at Bronze level.**

The Practice AJ is intended as part of the process of preparing, training and learning for participants doing their AJ. Should the adults delivering the Award feel confident that the learning outcomes are being achieved in the absence of a Practice Journey; and that sufficient health and safety risk mitigation has been taken, the adults delivering the Award can choose to waive the Practice Journey.

The Award Coordinator / Leader must be confident that the group is able to do a Qualifying Journey, based on: a thorough health and safety risk assessment of the AJ; the team demonstrating acquisition of the required knowledge and skills from training and preparation; and the team having successfully come together (either virtually or previously in person) to establish their roles and norms. If an overnight Practice Journey was already completed by a group, that Practice Journey can be considered as the Qualifying Journey for the Bronze level.

### 2 Participants can continue to Silver without completing their Bronze AJ; and then be awarded their Bronze Award once their Silver Practice Journey is completed.

  **This change applies only at Bronze level, and only for participants who are continuing on to Silver level.**

The Bronze Qualifying Journey can be deferred for participants who are committed to continuing on to the Silver level. For those Bronze participants who have a minimum of one section completed, and with the remaining sections completed to the best of their ability, but are not able to complete their Bronze Adventurous Journey, can register for Silver and continue the activities of their previously completed section(s). At a later date, the participant's Silver Practice Journey will count as their Bronze Qualifying Journey. Once the Silver Practice Journey and all sections of their Bronze level are complete, the participant will be awarded their Bronze. This is intended to help the Award Centres which do not have the capacity to run additional Bronze and Silver AJs later on without limiting impact on new entrants. If a participant desires to do so, this must be discussed and approved by their Division office.

### 3 Adventurous Journeys may be organized in a familiar environment.

   **Change applies to participants at all levels of the Award.**

This change is intended for locations where AJs can be conducted while social distancing is in place. It will address health and safety concerns and limitations on travel and is most likely to be suited to AJs conducted as urban explorations. Participants will still be able to accomplish key learning outcomes, such as teamwork and leadership skills.

More information about urban explorations can be found in this document where we discuss further guidance on existing Award requirements.

### 4 Participants can use alternative venues to a campsite

   **This change applies to participants at all levels of the Award.**

This is only intended for locations where AJs can be conducted safely and in line with local government regulation, while social distancing is in place. It will address health and safety concerns and limitations on travel and is most likely to be suited to AJs conducted as urban explorations. An example of an alternative campsite venue could be a large yard. In addition, it caters for times when some social distancing measures are lifted but where young people are not allowed to share sleeping accommodation due to hygiene reasons and all sleep accommodations need to be physically separated. For example, participants all sleep in separate tents or accommodation.

### 5 Participants can now take part in a Virtual Bronze Exploration (VBE).

 **This change applies to participants at Bronze level.**

For more information on the VBE please visit: [www.dukeofed.org/covid19/vbe](http://www.dukeofed.org/covid19/vbe)

Where there is no prospect of delivering a Practice or Qualifying AJ and there is a time-sensitive desire for participants to complete Bronze in the coming months, a Virtual Bronze Exploration (VBE) may be considered. The VBE is a virtual team experience that can be completed from home, subject to internet access, and broadly matches the learning outcomes of the AJ section.

The VBE is intended to be used where there is a need to support a current cohort of Bronze participants to complete their Award so the next cohort of young people can begin at the Bronze level. Adoption of the VBE for this period should reduce difficulties in organizing multiple different Bronze and Silver AJs later.

# Further guidance on existing Award requirements

Much of the flexibility required to address challenges faced by Award participants and their Award Leaders during COVID-19 is already contained in the International Handbook for Award Leaders.

The further guidance listed below gives clarity on how some of the existing Award requirements can be implemented, so that participants can continue and complete their Awards throughout this period.

## Note to Award Leaders:

We ask that as Award Leaders you prioritize protecting the Award experience for participants. Please always choose an option that provides the least disruption to a participant's existing activities.

## Award section Assessors



### Assessors cannot be family members.

Assessors will often be known by the participant, but they must not be a relative.

This requirement remains. However, we wish to convey the following:

- Any adult, other than a family member, who knows the subject better than the participant can act as Section Assessor.
- The Section Assessor does not have to be present in the room while the participant is doing their activity.
- The Section Assessor does not have to actively provide instruction to the participant but should offer ongoing guidance.
- Section Assessor can keep track of a participant's progress remotely, with updates from the participant. In this case, a participant should keep photo / video / diary evidence of them doing their loggable hours of activity.
- Where an existing Assessor has become unreachable, the participant can change Assessor mid-way through a section.
- If a participant changes their section activity mid-way through, they will likely need to change their Assessor too.
- Award Leaders should be flexible in helping participants identify a new Assessor. In some cases, an Award Leader may be able to act as Assessor themselves if appropriate, or some cases Award staff may be available to act as Assessors.

## Participants continuing to the next level



Participants should be encouraged to complete all sections of their current Award level before progressing to another level. The Award is about achieving the personal goals that the participant sets for themselves in all sections, and not simply about counting numbers of hours engaged in one specific activity.

**If it proves difficult to complete the whole Award in a reasonable time, then they may start a section at the next level provided they:**

- have completed that section in their current level;
- have reached the minimum age of entry for the new level, and;
- are not working on all three levels at the same time.

If a participant desires to do so, this must be discussed and approved by their Division office. This can only be done in extreme circumstances and should be discussed with your Award Coordinator before approving this. The Participant is required to register and pay for the next level.

Participants who are prevented from completing a section(s) due to COVID-19 restrictions should be encouraged to register for and start their activities at the next level of the Award before returning to finish the outstanding activity at their current level when feasible to do so. Please note that to register for the next level, the participant will need to complete the registration process and pay the required fee as normal.

For example: where a participant cannot do their Qualifying AJ at the Bronze level but they have finished all their other sections, they can register and begin working towards their Silver Award logging their activities under Skill, Voluntary Service and Physical Recreation. When restrictions have eased, the participant can then do their Qualifying Bronze AJ and achieve their Bronze Award.

## Minimum age requirements



The minimum age requirements for beginning each level of the Award are 14, 15 and 16 years respectively. However, since the update to the Operational Guidelines in July 2018, there is some flexibility built into the Award framework in this regard:

- At Bronze level: discretion is allowed if the young person, who is younger than 14, is part of a peer group where the majority are 14 or older and wishes to start their Bronze with their cohort.
- At Silver level: young people who have completed their Bronze level may start their Silver level without a delay being imposed, even though they are not yet 15.
- At Gold level : no activities can be counted before a participants' 16 birthday to ensure it is more of an adult challenge.

## Breaks in activity for an extended period



Participants are allowed to take a break in their activity:

- Subject to the maximum age limit, participants can take as long as they want to complete their Award. On average, participants must spend at least one hour in a single period per week on their chosen activity. If a participant has a break for an extended period of time due to illness, studies or other important reason, then they will need to extend the minimum overall time taken to complete their Award.

Should it be necessary, a participant can allow for a gap in their activity logs for a section(s). Once they resume activity, they will need to take additional time to complete the minimum required amount of hours/weeks that still remain and show progress towards their SMART Goal.

**Remember, the Award is referred to as a marathon, not a sprint!**

## Changing activities



Participants are allowed to change their choice of activity mid-way through a section:

If the initial choice of activity proves to be unsuitable, participants may choose another activity and count the time spent towards their overall minimum time requirement. This needs to be done in consultation with their Award Leader who should use judgement on how often this can happen.

Therefore, in the context of COVID-19, participants should be allowed to change their chosen activity in any section if their original activity is not suitable to continue from home or under social distancing. This may require them to change their SMART Goal and/or their choice of Assessor too. Award Leaders should continue to recognize previously logged hours that are related to the participant's original activity, and if appropriate, allow them to switch back to their original activity once health and safety restrictions are eased.

## Changing of a major section for Direct Entrants



All participants at the Bronze level and those who are direct entrants at Silver and Gold may change their choice of major section:

- Bronze: All participants must do an extra 3 months in one of the following: Physical Recreation, Skills, or Voluntary Service
- Silver / Gold: All Participants must do an extra 6 months in one of the following: Physical Recreation, Skills or Voluntary Service

Award Leaders may allow participants to change their choice of major section if continuing an alternative section at home is more feasible. In this case, the SMART Goal in each relevant section should be reviewed for suitability.

# Voluntary Service in the community



## Voluntary Service

Voluntary service activities such as working with a local, national or global community organization on a cause supporting people, the environment or animals can be done from home. The COVID-19 pandemic represents an opportunity to use the Voluntary Service section to make a meaningful difference in communities.

Participants should be encouraged to continue engaging with community organizations. Where safe to do so, participants may wish to be involved directly in their community or national response to COVID-19. Alternatively, participants can continue volunteering by doing roles that do not require the participant to be in public locations. Activities can be conducted on or offline.

Please ensure voluntary service continues to be carried out in accordance with national legislation. Any participant who volunteers with children or vulnerable adults must conform to all relevant child protection policies, and as a bare minimum, the child protection policies of the Award.

## AJ preparation training



### Adventurous Journey

The AJ section requires months of preparation and training by Award participants. Some may be conducted online, so in many cases progress may continue uninterrupted under isolation or social distancing. The development of technical skills relating to the chosen route, journey type and mode of transport, as well as universal skills such as planning, teamwork and leadership, can be facilitated using online resources or through remote group work. Further to this, AJ teams can collaborate remotely to agree and develop their shared Adventurous Journey Aim.

Award Leaders may wish to reconsider the planned AJ environment and route if the intended preparation cannot be delivered remotely or if a revised risk assessment deems the health and safety risk too high.

## Urban explorations



### Adventurous Journey

The Adventurous Journey does not need to take place in a rural environment.

Urban environments are suitable for AJs, especially where participants choose to conduct an Exploration ('a purpose with a journey').

During an Exploration, an AJ team's primary focus is on observing and collecting information relevant to their Adventurous Journey Aim. The journeying aspect remains significant, with broadly one third of the hours of purposeful effort dedicated to journey, with the remaining two thirds spent on exploring/researching.

The average minimum hours of purposeful effort per day are:

- At Bronze level - 6 hrs per day / 2 days. For an exploration, this would mean 4 hours of exploring/ researching, with 2 hours of journeying per day.
- At Silver level - 7 hours per day / 3 days. For an exploration, this would mean 4 hours 40 minutes of exploring/researching, with 2 hours 20 minutes of journeying per day.
- At Gold level - 8 hours per day / 4 days. For an exploration, this would mean 5 hours 20 minutes of exploring/researching, with 2 hours 40 minutes of journeying per day.

An urban exploration may be an appropriate AJ to undertake under social distancing conditions. Contact your Division office if you would like more assistance with developing this type of Adventurous Journey.

**The above guidance reflects the Award requirements and associated guidance in the International Handbook for Award Leaders (Canadian Abridged version). While delivering the Award local safeguarding and child protection legislation must be adhered to by all.**