

# Guide for Gold Award Participants

DATE OF LAST REVISION

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# Welcome to your Gold level Award challenge!

Taking part in the Award isn't easy – it requires commitment over time – but it is simple to get started and after all your time and effort you will have achieved something special of which you can be very proud.

As an Award participant you will have the chance to:

- Design your own Award program
- Work with your adult mentors to set goals and record your progress
- Make a positive impact on the lives of others through community service
- Learn valuable practical and social skills for career development
- Take up the challenge of an Adventurous Journey
- Connect with other Award participants at home and abroad

You can continue with activities you're already taking part in, such as sports or volunteering, and start counting these towards achieving your Award, or your Award could be an opportunity to try something new and develop a passion for something different.

The **Gold Award** is the final level of The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award but it doesn't need to be the end of your Award involvement. Consider mentoring other young people in their Awards by becoming an Award Leader, Adventurous Journey Supervisor or Assessor, or become a supporter of the Award.



# Your Gold Award Requirements

To begin, you need to plan your Award by choosing an activity and a personally challenging goal for each of the five sections. You can choose to start a new activity or continue to develop your skills in activities you have already been doing. Remember, your Award should be balanced so choose activities from a range of areas; and all Award activities must be voluntary (no cash, no chores, no school credit).

<p><b>Service</b></p> <p>Challenge yourself to make a positive difference in your community. <a href="#">See pages 10–11</a></p>	
<p><b>Physical Recreation</b></p> <p>Challenge yourself to improve your health, fitness and performance. <a href="#">See pages 12-13</a></p>	
<p><b>Skills</b></p> <p>Challenge yourself to improve your skills and widen your interests. <a href="#">See pages 14–15</a></p>	
<p><b>Adventurous Journey</b></p> <p>Challenge yourself in planning, preparing and undertaking a journey with a group of peers. <a href="#">See pages 16-19</a></p>	
<p><b>Gold Project</b></p> <p>Challenge yourself to meet new people, broaden your horizons and open your eyes to the world. <a href="#">See pages 20–21</a></p>	

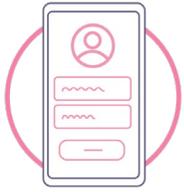
## Time Requirements

You can start your Gold Award if you are 16 or older. You will need to participate in your activities regularly for the set minimum duration of time; an average of an hour per week. Participants must be registered with their Award Centre before starting their Award. Activities prior to registration cannot be counted towards the Award.

<p><b>Physical Recreation</b></p> <p><b>Skills</b></p> <p><b>Voluntary Service</b></p>	}	<p>Direct Entrant participants (those who have not achieved Silver) must complete a Major of an additional 26 weeks in one section (Voluntary Service, Skill, OR Physical Recreation).</p>
<p><b>Adventurous Journey</b></p>	<p><b>minimum 52 weeks</b></p> <p><b>minimum 52 weeks</b></p> <p><b>minimum 52 weeks</b></p>	
<p><b>Gold Project</b></p>	<p><b>4 days + 3 nights</b> plus training, preparation, and a Practice Journey.</p> <p><b>5 days +4 nights</b></p>	

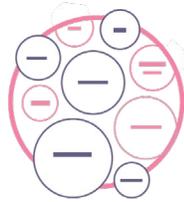


# An Overview of Your Award Journey



1

Register via [www.dukeofed.org/sign-up](http://www.dukeofed.org/sign-up).



2

Plan your Award: Choose activities and setup SMART goals for each section, find your Assessors, setup your activities and get authorization from your Award Leader on the Online Record Book (ORB).



3

Do your activities for minimum duration of time and record your progress.



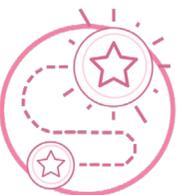
4

Submit AJ report and have your Assessors sign off and comment on your progress.



5

Submit your Award for final approval and consider staying involved by volunteering with the Award or joining the Canadian Award Holders Network.



6

Receive official recognition for your hard work and celebrate your achievements!



# Plan Your Program

This is your Award and it is entirely up to you what you do for each section. It is all about setting yourself a challenge and feeling great when you see yourself progress and achieve your goals. You can take this as an opportunity to explore new activities that interest you or you can continue participating in activities you are already passionate about - your Award, your choice!

## **Questions that will help you design your Award:**

1. **What do I want to do?** Think about what you enjoy, what you are passionate about and what areas of interest you would like to explore for each section of the Award.
2. **What do I need to plan for?** Consider your resources and access. All your Award activities must be extra-curricular and voluntary, meaning you cannot receive payment or credit for them.
3. **Who do I know?** Having support will help you complete your Award. Writing down a list of who you know can help you get started to identify potential Assessors.
4. **How can I challenge myself further?** It's more than practicing what you're already good at doing. To be really good at something, you need to push yourself out of your comfort zone. Speak with your Award Leader or Assessors for guidance in setting realistic goals and developing a plan to achieve your goal.

# Find Your Assessors

You will need to find a different adult to be an Assessor for each of your activities. You will work with your Assessor to build your goal and a check-in plan for the duration of your activity.

Assessors can be teachers, leaders, family friends, neighbours, coaches etc. Assessors must be adults and cannot be immediate family members. Your Assessor should be knowledgeable in the activity and be able to mentor you as you work through your Award. Your Assessor does not need to be present for your activity, but you need to communicate with them regularly. Once the activity is completed your Assessor will verify your participation and submit a report to comment on your progress.

## 3 Reasons Why Having a Great Assessor Can Help

1. **Learn from someone who 'walks the walk'** - Your Assessor has typically done what you are trying to achieve and can share their knowledge and experiences with you.
2. **Get support and build resilience** - Your Assessor is someone who wants to see you succeed and can offer support if you ask. They will cheer you on when you are doing well and encourage you to keep going when times get tough.
3. **Uncover more of your potential** - Your Assessor can help you to see your strengths and weaknesses. If you are struggling, a mentor can offer valuable advice to help you find a solution.



# Set Your Goals

Goals are a great way of helping yourself maximize your motivation to achieve. The best goals are specific and acknowledge where you are, where you want to be, and how will you get there. Having a clear goal is essential to starting your Award. Talk to your Award Leader and Assessor(s) to help you establish a goal.

<b>S</b> G	<b>M</b> O	<b>A</b> A	<b>R</b> L	<b>T</b> S
<b>SPECIFIC</b>	<b>MEASURABLE</b>	<b>ACHIEVABLE</b>	<b>REALISTIC</b>	<b>TIME BOUND</b>
What do you want to do?	How will you know when you've reached it?	It is in your power to accomplish it?	Can you realistically achieve it?	When exactly do you want to accomplish this?

When you are ready, set up your activities on the [Online Record Book \(ORB\)](#). Your Award Leader will confirm whether your Assessors and goals are suitable for your chosen activities. Your Award Leader can offer support and guidance throughout your Award; if you have any questions or concerns throughout your Award don't hesitate to reach out.

## 5 WAYS A SMART GOAL WILL KEEP YOU MOTIVATED

1. Gives you something to visualize
2. Plans out your progress
3. Breaks down your goal into smaller, ongoing steps
4. Allows you to measure your progress and adjust your plan
5. Reminds you of the bigger picture

## WHICH OF THE TWO GOALS SOUNDS MORE MOTIVATING?

1. I want to learn to swim better.
2. I will swim 500 m in 7 minutes or less by the end of September. I will achieve this by training with my swim coach three times per week to continuously improve my times. I want to learn to swim better.



# Do the Work

Work towards your goals and do your activities regularly for the set duration of time. Log your progress in your ORB account. In your logs provide detail on what you are doing and how you feel you are progressing towards your overall goal. Be sure to communicate with your Assessor and Award Leader as you work through your Award.

# Submit Award for Approval

Once you have finished all the requirements of the Award and gathered your completed Assessor Reports, you will need to submit it to your Award Leader for approval. Your Award will be sent to your Award Leader through the ORB and then to the Award office for final approval. If all requirements have been met, you will receive confirmation from the Award office that your **Gold Award is achieved!**

# Celebrate Your Success

You will also receive an invitation to an Award presentation ceremony from the Award office - this will be an opportunity for you to celebrate with other achievers and be recognized for your hard work! Don't forget to mention your **Gold Award** in your university and job applications. If you are active on social media we have a Gold Award Achievers page on Facebook and LinkedIn. It's a great way to stay involved with the Award. You can also check out our website for more information on utilizing your Award achievements on your resumes, in interviews and on applications. There are lots of ways to continue to stay involved with the Award. Reach out to the Award office for more information.

# Stay Involved - The Canadian Award Holders Network

When you have completed your Gold Award, you will be invited to join the [Canadian Award Holders Network](#). This network is made up of Award Holders from across Canada who, like you, want to celebrate achieving the Award, and leverage your success. By joining the network, you will be a part of the thriving Global Award Alumni Network with Award Holders across the world.



# Participant Submission Checklist

PHYSICAL RECREATION	
	Logged a minimum of 52 weeks
	SMART goal(s) achieved
	Completed Assessor Report for each activity
SKILL	
	Logged a minimum of 52 weeks
	SMART goal(s) achieved
	Completed Assessor Report for each activity
VOLUNTARY SERVICE	
	Logged a minimum of 52 weeks
	SMART goal(s) achieved
	Completed Assessor Report for each activity
MAJOR (PHYSICAL REC, SKILL OR SERVICE)	
	Additional 26 weeks logged in one Section OR Silver Award Holder; Major completed at previous level

ADVENTUROUS JOURNEY	
	Preparation and Training completed
	At least 1 Practice Journey completed with team
	Completed Assessor/Supervisor Report for Practice Journey
	Qualifying Journey completed with team
	Group aim achieved
	Group AJ Report submitted
	Completed Assessor/Supervisor Report for Qualifying Journey
GOLD PROJECT	
	Gold Project completed (min of 5 days and 4 nights away)
	SMART goal achieved
	Completed Assessor Report



# The Sections

The following pages contain basic information about each section you'll complete in order to achieve your Gold Duke of Edinburgh's International Award.

We'll give you some ideas to get you started when you are trying to decide what to do for each section. Remember that these are only suggestions of activities that other people have done in the past. Use them to help you think about what interests you or what you'd like to try.



# Voluntary Service



Through the Voluntary Service section you can volunteer in your community, meet people and see how your service benefits those around you.

Volunteering over a period of time enables you to meet people within the community whom you might not otherwise engage with and realize the positive difference you can make. It can also help improve skills such as team work, communication and self-confidence.



*“Through doing my Award I definitely felt that I developed my confidence, which helped me to engage better with my community. The program taught me many other things too. I have learned to manage my time better, to keep building experiences, and also to embrace trying new things.”*

*Nia  
Indonesia*



# Types of Activities

The list of possible activities is almost unlimited and is often dictated by available resources or opportunities. To ensure the essential balance of your Award, you should be careful not to pick activities that are too similar to your chosen **Physical Recreation** or **Skills activities**.

There are many people and organizations that are willing to provide you with opportunities for practical service. These include: social workers, doctors, religious leaders, schools, hospital or prison authorities, youth departments, conservations groups, local government authorities, voluntary youth organizations, animal welfare organizations, service clubs, and both national and international non-governmental organizations or agencies.

Do some research in your local area to identify a suitable opportunity. Activities should generally fall into the following categories:

## Voluntary Service Ideas

- Supporting people in the community
- Youth work
- Community education and health education
- Environmental service
- Charity work
- Supporting a local emergency service

If you are struggling to come up with an idea of what to do for your **Voluntary Service section**, there are a number of resources available to you. You can speak to your Award Leader, chat with other participants or check out the Canadian Award website ([www.dukeofed.org](http://www.dukeofed.org)).



# Physical Recreation



The Physical Recreation section of the Award encourages you to improve your health and fitness, whatever your starting point. You could choose to do a team sport, solo sport or any healthy activity. It could be something you already do regularly, have tried before or something completely new to you.

The Physical Recreation section should make you feel healthy and happy, and should help you build valuable team skills, self-esteem and confidence. It's also great fun!



*“When my teacher encouraged me to try a new sport rather than stick with football, I wasn’t very enthusiastic but I was also looking for something new to do so, reluctantly, I took up the challenge and chose track...I know of the Award saying ‘There is more in you than you think’ and I am an example of this.”*

*Etiam  
Ghana*



# Types of Activities

The list of possible activities is almost unlimited but you should be careful not to pick activities that are considered, in Award terms, to be **Skills** section or a **Voluntary Service** section activity (or at least ensure there is a balance to your program). Essentially, the chosen activity should be physically challenging or demanding for you.

The types of activities for the **Physical Recreation** section can be grouped broadly into the following categories:

## Physical Recreation Ideas

- Ball and racket sports
- Athletics
- Cycling
- Water sports
- Winter sports
- Martial arts
- Animal Sports
- Fitness activities
- Adventure sports
- Street sports

If you are struggling to come up with an idea of what to do for your **Physical Recreation** section, there are a number of resources available to you. You can speak to your Award Leader, chat with other participants or check out the Canadian Award website ([www.dukeofed.org](http://www.dukeofed.org)).



# Skills



Through the Skills section you can develop your personal interests as well as your practical and social skills.

You could choose to improve on an existing skill or try something new. It's all about engaging, learning something new and getting better at it; giving yourself a sense of achievement and well-being. Colleges, universities and employers like to see that you have life skills too!



*“The Award has shaped me, moulded me, empowered me, and truly changed me for the better. I am so confident in myself and I can serve others whilst contributing positively to the world because of all that I learned with the Award.”*

*Emily  
South Africa*



# Types of Activities

The list of possible activities is almost unlimited but participants should be careful not to pick activities that are considered, in Award terms, to be a **Physical Recreation** or **Voluntary Service** section activity. If you think more than you sweat, it's a skill! In other words, your chosen Skill activity should be passive in nature rather than physically active.

The types of activities for the **Skills** section can be grouped broadly into the following categories:

## Skill Ideas

- Music
- Sports-related (eg leadership, coaching and officiating)
- Arts and crafts
- Nature and the environment
- Animals
- Media and communications
- Games
- Life, technical and vocational skills
- Performance skills

If you are struggling to come up with an idea of what to do for your **Skills** section, there are a number of resources available to you. You can speak to your Award Leader, chat with other participants or check out the Canadian Award website ([www.dukeofed.org](http://www.dukeofed.org)).



# Adventurous Journey



For the Adventurous Journey section you'll need a sense of adventure and discovery as you go on a team journey, expedition or exploration.

You'll have the opportunity to learn more about the wider environment, as well as to develop self-confidence, team work and health. It is a tough challenge and you might be taken out of your comfort zone for a bit but you will be safe with suitable training and supervision, and you won't regret it!



*"I am proud to say that on 21 May 2016 at 5:27am, I made it to the summit of Mount Everest... I gained a really great sense of achievement in myself and it has driven me to carry on my involvement in the Award so that I can continue to see how it impacts other young people from across the world."*

*Antish  
Nepal*



# Adventurous Journey Stages

There are three stages to an Adventurous Journey (AJ). Each part must be done with **your team\***, have a clearly defined aim/goal, be assessed by a suitable adult and be completed as a distinct activity for the Adventurous Journey to be considered “complete.”

**NOTE** \*All team members must be equally involved in each of the Adventurous Journey stages. Team members must be peers and you must work with the same team for the duration of your AJ. Team members may include people who are not participating in the Award.

1. **Preparation and Training:** participants decide as a team on the aim, location, and mode of travel. Participants undertake suitable training for their journey including: appreciating the culture within the journey's environment, camp craft skills, competency in the mode of travel, first aid and emergency procedures, navigation, equipment knowledge and training, route planning, team building and leadership skills, and understanding your impact on the environment.
2. **Practice Journey(s):** the team takes take on at least one Practice Journey to ensure they will be successful and self-sufficient as a team on the Qualifying Journey.
3. **Qualifying Journey:** the team will work together to achieve their journey aim. After the Qualifying Journey is completed participants will debrief together and complete an Adventurous Journey Report that is presented to their Assessor and submitted on the ORB.

Adventurous Journey Checklists can be found [here](#) and Adventurous Journey Report Template [here](#).

## Types of Adventurous Journeys

With your team you will need to decide what type of Journey (Expedition or Exploration) you will plan and implement.

### **Expedition**

An Expedition is a “journey with a purpose” - the primary focus is on the journeying. More time is devoted to journeying with less effort put into research and gathering information.

**Example Aim** - To canoe along the Stagg River in the Northwest Territories to Stagg Lake. Each day we will paddle 20-30 km and camp at a designated area. We will utilize basic paddling techniques and add a stroke every day that will help us with navigating the wind and water patterns to ensure we reach our campsite before nightfall. We will keep a journal of route, weather observations and paddling skills learned; these will be included in our journey report along with an analysis of the best paddling technique to navigate the Stagg.



## Exploration

An Exploration is a “purpose with a journey” in which the primary focus is to observe and collect information relevant to the purpose. More time is spent on this, and less time is devoted to getting from one place to another.

**Exploration Example Aim** - To study Gros Morne as a National Park and its impact on the different communities that lie within its boundaries. We will conduct pre-trip research on the National park including landforms, wildlife, vegetation and communities. During our trip we will hike Gros Mornes Mountain to the backcountry campground and travel daily by hiking or canoeing throughout the area conducting interviews, exploring and detailing unique landforms, and will work with a geologist to help us study plants, soil, rocks etc. We will submit our findings in our AJ report at the completion of our trip.

# Adventurous Journeys 13 Requirements

1. A clearly defined aim (a purpose with a desired outcome)
2. No fewer than four and no more than seven participants in the group (eight for tandem travel) \*
3. Must have undergone suitable training
4. All participants must be involved with the planning and preparation of their Practice and Qualifying Journeys
5. Completed at least 1 Practice Journey \*
6. Journey is through own physical effort, on land or water
7. New and unfamiliar environment chosen \*
8. Minimum time spent on purposeful effort per day (6 hours at Bronze, 7 hours at Silver, 8 hours at Gold)
9. Suitable Assessor and Supervisor chosen
10. Sufficient equipment and supplies are packed and group equipment is shared out \*
11. Accommodations are self-sufficient (tent, hut, etc.) with little or no amenities \*
12. Substantial meal prepared and consumed each day of the journey
13. Report submitted to Assessor once completed

\* COVID-19 accommodations in place until December 31 2022. Contact your Award Leader or Award office for details and approval.



# AJ Duration by Level

Level	Practice Journey	Qualifying Journey	Purposeful Activity Each Day
Bronze	1 day (night out optional)	2 days, 1 night	6 hours
Silver	1 day, 1 night	3 days, 2 nights	7 hours
Gold	1 day, 1 night	4 days, 3 nights	8 hours

## Types of Activities

Here's a list of ideas to inspire your Adventurous Journey Expedition or Exploration.

### Adventurous Journey Ideas

- Exploring the natural world: glaciations, erosion, geology, coastal studies, river valleys, plant studies, bird studies or animal studies, insect studies
- Exploring historic land use: prehistoric man, historical periods
- To investigate the survival or extinction of a language
- Exploring human impact: visitor pressure in national parks, pollution monitoring, surveys of numbers of walkers in remote areas
- To carry out health surveys or health education in remote areas
- To complete a particularly demanding journey by foot, cycle or canoe/kayak, horseback, ski
- To investigate group dynamics in challenging conditions while on a camping trip
- Following an ancient pilgrimage trail



# GOLD PROJECT



For the Gold Project section you'll have the opportunity to build on the many skills developed during your Award.

It will involve you undertaking a shared activity or specific course with people you don't know that will build on a talent you've developed in another section, learn something completely new on an intensive course or do something to help others. It's a big, exciting and very fulfilling experience that will leave you with a great sense of achievement.



# Requirements

- Undertake shared purposeful activity which provides opportunities for broadening your interests and experience.
- Reside away from your usual place of residence for a total period of no less than five days and four nights.
- Be in the company of others who are, in the majority, not your usual companions.

## Types of Activities

There are many different opportunities for completing a **Gold Project**.

Some suitable categories are listed below. It is worth emphasizing that the activity must be purposeful and not be considered as a holiday. These may include:

### Gold Project Ideas

- Personal training courses including leadership training, youth camps and youth parliament
- Environmental and conservation projects such as working with a national park authority or restoring an old building
- Service to other people and communities including working with a charity or in a hospital
- Activity based courses such as being a crew member on a tall ship or attending an outdoor adventure course

If you are struggling to come up with an idea of what to do for your **Gold Project**, there are a number of resources available to you. You can speak to your Award Leader, chat with other participants or check out the Canadian Award website ([www.dukeofed.org](http://www.dukeofed.org)).



# Frequently Asked Questions

## How do I know who my Award Leader is?

**A:** You can find your Award Leaders' contact information by logging into your Online Record Book. At the top of the screen, click on "My Award Leader", and a pop-up will display your Award Leader's email address and phone number.

## Who is an Assessor?

**A:** An Assessor is someone who is interested in helping you to complete your section and achieve your Award. Assessors should have experience in the activity you have chosen and can offer you support and guidance throughout the time you are doing your activity. They could be a teacher, coach, counsellor, neighbour, leader, family friend etc. Family members do not qualify as Assessors. You should have a different Assessor for each section of the Award.

## I've got evidence I want to save, can I save it in the Online Record Book?

**A:** Yes, you can upload photographs, videos and scanned documents not bigger than 10 MB.

## Can I change activities mid-way through a section?

**A:** If your current activity becomes unsuitable or difficult to complete you can speak with your Award Leader about choosing another activity. The time you spent on your previous activity will still count towards your Award.

## How does the Online Record Book count hours/weeks?

**A:** For the Skills, Physical Recreation and Voluntary Service sections of the Award, you must undertake regular activity over a set period of time. On the Online Record Book, all logs are recorded in quarter, half and full hours. The general requirement for Skills, Physical Recreation and Voluntary Service is to undertake regular effort of one hour of activity per week or two hours per 2 weeks over the required time frame. You achieve your Award by being consistently active; working towards your goals for the set duration of weeks. You can choose to take longer than the minimum requirements but you cannot complete your Award in less time.

## My Assessor needs to sign off my logged activities, how can they do this?

**A:** Once you've completed a section, you can either download and print a summary of your activities for your Assessor to sign and then upload it to your documents OR you can send a digital report directly from the ORB to your Assessor's email. If you have any issues contact your Award Leader.



# Any Questions?

If you have any questions about your Award, talk to your Award Leader first – they are there to help you.

You can also find further information via [www.dukeofed.org](http://www.dukeofed.org)

## Acknowledgements

This publication has been inspired by the work of The Duke of Edinburgh's Award in the United Kingdom and their publication DofE Participants' Handbook.

## About our Charity

[The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award - Canada](#) is a charity registered in Canada whose mission is to promote The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award (known simply as the Award) to provide young people with the Award, and to preserve the quality of the Award in Canada.

We want every young person aged 14 to 24 in Canada to have the opportunity you've had to participate in the Award. We hope you enjoy your experiences!

Don't forget to let us know how it goes and [share your stories and photos!](#)

You can also connect with us via social media:



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