

AWARD CANADA PARTICIPANT GUIDE



Welcome to your Award challenge!

Taking part in the Award requires commitment over time, but getting started is simple 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 and set personally challenging goals.
- Work with adult mentors.
- Make a positive impact on the lives of others through community service.
- Learn valuable practical and social skills for career development.
- Develop your personal fitness and well-being.
- Take on the challenge of completing an Adventurous Journey with peers.
- Connect with other Award participants at home and abroad.

The Bronze Award is the first step to getting involved in The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award and you can continue your Award journey by undertaking Silver and then Gold levels. 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 joining the Global Award Holder Network, mentoring other young people in their Awards by becoming an Award Leader, Adventurous Journey Supervisor or Assessor, or become a supporter of the Award.

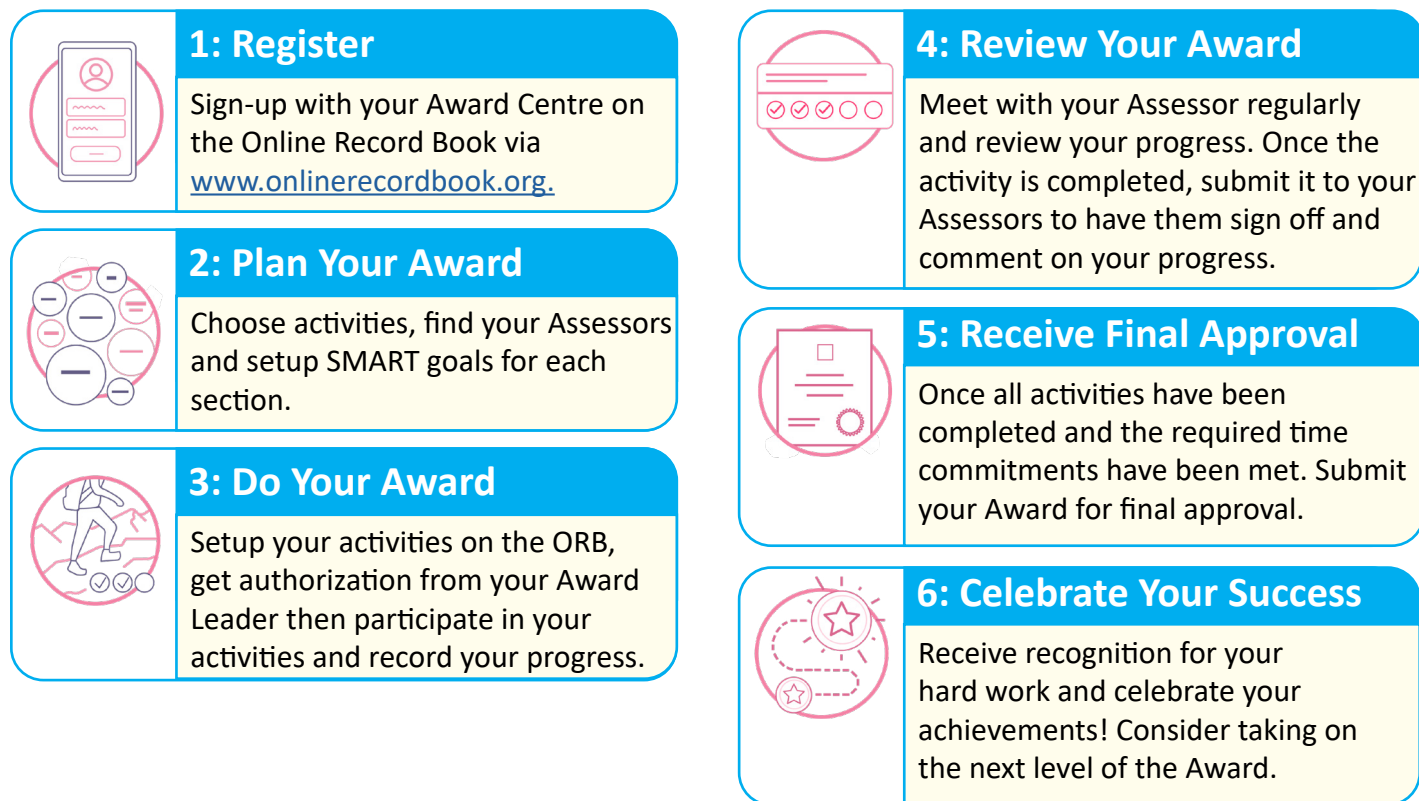
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An Overview Of Your Award Journey



Your Award Requirements

The Award consists of three levels: Bronze, Silver, and Gold, and four activity sections – with a fifth if you’re doing Gold. To begin, you need to plan your Award by choosing an activity and a personally challenging goal for each of the sections. Remember, your Award should be balanced so choose activities from a range of areas and all Award activities must be voluntary.

You can continue with activities you’re already taking part in and start counting these towards achieving your Award, or your Award could be an opportunity to try something different and develop new passions.

Physical Recreation Challenge yourself to improve your health, fitness and performance. [See page 10.](#)

Skills Challenge yourself to improve your skills and widen your interests. [See page 10.](#)

Voluntary Service Challenge yourself to make a positive difference in your community. [See page 11.](#)

Adventurous Journey Challenge yourself in planning, preparing and undertaking a journey with a team of peers. [See pages 12-14.](#)

Gold Project Challenge yourself to work with new people towards a common goal in an unfamiliar setting. [See page 15.](#) This is an additional requirement at the Gold level only.



Time Commitment

You will need to participate in your activities regularly for the set minimum duration of time; completing an average of 1 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.

This program is a marathon, not a sprint! These time requirements are minimums rather than maximums. You may set your own pace and take more time to complete a section if needed. You may also complete one section at a time, or all sections at the same time. It is up to YOU what your Award experience looks like!

	Bronze	Silver	Gold
Physical Recreation	13 weeks	26 weeks	52 weeks
Skills	13 weeks	26 weeks	52 weeks
Voluntary Service	13 weeks	26 weeks	52 weeks
Major Section*	13 weeks in either Physical Rec, Skill OR Voluntary Service. Totalling 26 weeks in 1 section when combined with the time requirements above. <i>*Applicable to all Bronze participants.</i>	26 weeks in Physical Rec, Skill OR Voluntary Service. Totalling 52 weeks in 1 section when combined with the time requirements above. <i>*Applicable only to participants who have not completed the Bronze level.</i>	26 weeks in either Physical Rec, Skill OR Voluntary Service. Totalling 78 weeks in 1 section when combined with the time requirements above. <i>*Applicable only to participants who have not completed the Silver level.</i>
Adventurous Journey	Preparation & Training 1 day Practice Journey 2 day + 1 night Qualifying Journey 6 hours of Purposeful Activity each day	Preparation & Training 1 day + 1 night Practice Journey 3 day + 2 night Qualifying Journey 7 hours of Purposeful Activity each day	Preparation & Training 1 day + 1 night Practice Journey 4 day + 3 night Qualifying Journey 8 hours of Purposeful Activity each day
Gold Project	N/A	N/A	5 days + 4 nights
Minimum Age to Start <i>Participants who have completed the previous level may start the next level without delay even if they have not reached the minimum age.</i>	14 years old <i>*When approved by an Award Leader some participants may start at 13.5 years old</i>	15 years old	16 years old
Maximum Age to Finish	By 25th birthday		



Plan Your Award

Design Your Award

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. **Visit the [Participant Resource Portal](#) to find useful templates and information to support you while you work towards achieving your Award.**

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, availability and access to the activities you would like to do.
3. **Who do I know?** Having support will help you complete your Award. Write down a list of people you know who can help you get started and 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 Assessors or Award Leader for guidance in setting SMART goals and developing a realistic plan to achieve it.

Find Your Assessors

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.

You will need to find a different adult to be an Assessor for each of your activities. Your Assessor must be competent and experienced 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 through the ORB 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 experience in what you are trying to achieve and can share their knowledge and expertise 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 you will get there. Having a clear goal is essential to starting your Award. Talk to your Assessor and Award Leader to help you establish clear goals.

For your Adventurous Journey goal you will need to work with your team to create it. Resources to help you get started can be found through the [Adventurous Journey Navigator](#).

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SPECIFIC

What do you want to do?

MEASURABLE

How will you know when you've reached it?

ACHIEVABLE

It is in your power to accomplish it?

REALISTIC

Can you realistically achieve it?

TIME BOUND

When exactly do you want to accomplish this?

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.

STARTING GOAL:	SMART GOAL:
Physical Recreation: I want to become a faster swimmer.	I will swim 400 m in 8 minutes or less by the end of 26 weeks. I will achieve this by training 3 times per week with the school's swim team. I will check in with my coach every other week and implement any feedback provided.
Skill: I want to learn to play the piano.	In the next 13 weeks, I will take piano lessons learning to play scales and performing 2 beginner-level songs on the piano in front of my family at our holiday party.



STARTING GOAL:	SMART GOAL:
Voluntary Service: I will clean up my community and produce less waste.	Over the next 26 weeks, I will spend 1.5 hours each week collecting litter in my community with my neighbours. I will also research and implement ways to cut back on household waste so that after 26 weeks, our community will be cleaner and we will produce less household waste.
Gold Project: I will travel to another part of Canada to assist with renovating a school.	I will travel to Northern Ontario with other young people from across Canada. We will spend 6 days in a community renovating a classroom that was damaged by a wildfire. During my stay I will learn more about the environmental challenges, local culture and new skills. I will keep a journal to reflect on what I learn. When I return, I will give a presentation about the experience to my school to help raise awareness for climate change and those most affected by it.

Do Your Award

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.

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 check-in frequently with your Assessor and Award Leader as you work through your Award and reach out for support when needed.

Logging regularly is a great way to keep up with your Award and engage in personal reflection on the progress you are making. We recommend building in time to your weekly routine to track your Award progress. You can choose to log right after you've completed an activity or schedule a regular time each week to submit your logs on the ORB. These logs should typically be 2-4 sentences each and address one or more of the following questions:

- What did you plan to do this week? What did you actually do?
- How did you progress towards your goal?
- What challenged or surprised you?
- What was successful?
- What would you do differently next time?
- What did you enjoy most about your activity this week?



Review Your Award

As you work on your Award schedule regular times to meet with your Assessor to discuss your progress towards your goal. During these progress checks if you feel you are no longer able to accomplish your initial goal, speak with your Assessor or Award Leader and update it.

Once you have completed an activity it will need to be sent to your Assessor for review. This can be done through your Online Record Book account. Your Assessor will then have a chance to review your activity goal and logs. They will then provide comments on your progress and sign-off on the activity. All sections must have completed Assessor Reports before your Award can be submitted for final approval.

Receive Final 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. If all requirements have been met, you will receive confirmation from the Award that your Award is achieved!

If any requirements have not been met, your Award will be sent back for revision with a note explaining why your Award needs to be revised. Once you make the necessary revisions you may send your Award back in for approval. Speak with your Award Leader if you have any questions or concerns.

Celebrate Your Success

All Award participants will receive an automated email within 24 hours of their Award Level being authorized in the Online Record Book. The email will include:

- An official digital approval letter.
- A digital certificate
- A link to a level-specific webpage outlining the outcomes, skills developed, digital frames and how to post or share to social media, including LinkedIn.

For Bronze and Silver Award participants, Award Centres will be able to order hardcopy certificates and/or pins to present to participants. Gold Award participants will be able to notify their intentions of attending a formal recognition event, hosted by Award Canada and order an optional hardcopy certificate and/or a physical pin. Bronze and Silver celebrations are organized by the Award Centre and Gold celebrations by the national Award Office.

Don't forget to mention your Award in your university and job applications. You can also check out our website for more information on utilizing your Award achievements on your resumes, in interviews and on applications.

If you are active on social media, you can follow us on LinkedIn, YouTube, Facebook and Instagram @dukeofedcanada. It's a great way to stay involved with the Award. You can also stay involved by volunteering at events, mentoring other young people in their Awards or becoming an Award supporter.



Stay Involved - Global Award Alumni Network

To help preserve your Award Legacy, The Duke of Edinburgh's International Foundation has created an accomplished network for Award Holders like yourself. The Global Award Alumni Network (GAAN) is an esteemed community of people who have taken the skills learned as a participant and are now implementing those lessons into their everyday life to help shape and guide their future.

As an Alumni, you will obtain special access to professional development support and resources, job opportunities both within Canada and Internationally, Award Holder events and many networking opportunities with other Award Holders locally and globally.

If you are 18 or older, you can join our Global Award Holders Network and connect with achievers around the world. If you have not already joined the GAAN, we invite you to preserve your Award Legacy.

[Click here to join today](#)

The Award Sections

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

For each section you can choose something you already do regularly, have tried before or something completely new to you. 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.

If you are struggling to come up with an idea of what to do for a section, there are a number of resources available to you. You can speak to your Award Leader, chat with other participants and/or check out the Participant Portal.

[Click here for the Participant Portal](#)



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. 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!

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.

There are many ways you can complete your Physical Recreation section. You may choose to get involved in a team sport, take a fitness class, join a club or gym, or perhaps scheduling regular activity outside or at home.

[Click here for Physical Recreation ideas](#)



I've biked over 1,000km throughout the program, gone on day-long biking trips with friends, and seen the world from a completely different angle. I've been places where I'd never have gone by car or on foot.

Jerry, Bronze Award Holder

Skills

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

[Click here for Skill ideas](#)





My photography commitment became a journey. I've always liked taking photos but learning cool and creative photography techniques over my 26 weeks, helped me discover my passion. As part of my Silver level, I started an Instagram account to blog about my photography, and I continue to take photos and post them today.

Evangelina, Silver Award Holder

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.

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.

[Click here for Volunteer Services ideas](#)



One of the best and most rewarding sensations this Award has given me is the utter happiness and sheer sense of joy I feel after spending a small portion of my day to effect change and improve someone else's.

Roma, Silver Award Holder

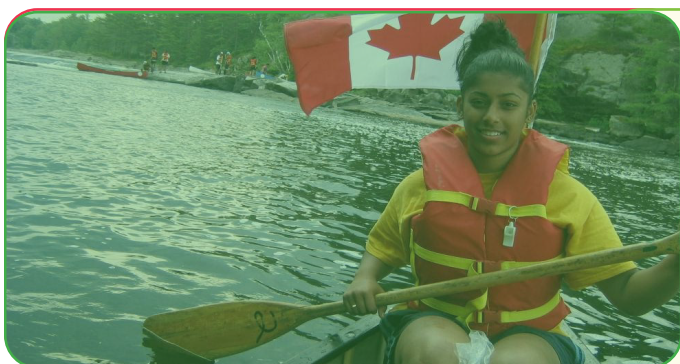


Adventurous Journeys

The Adventurous Journey encourages a spirit of adventure and discovery while planning and undertaking a journey with a small team of peers. Teams work together to set a clear and challenging goal that is achievable and defines what activities they will be doing throughout their journey. This may include researching, investigating and/or exploring the natural world.

The main purpose of the AJ is teamwork through planning and undertaking the Practice and Qualifying Journeys while working through real challenges posed by the wider environment. The AJ can take place in urban, rural or wilderness environments. It's not just a camping trip, teams may choose to discover local features, cycle between cities, explore historical sites or learn more about the environment. The possibilities are endless!

The AJ requires initiative, communication and perseverance. It provides teams with a sense of accomplishment, self-reliance and discovery. With suitable training, planning and supervision, the AJ section aims to safely take young people out of their comfort zone and promotes experiencing new challenges in a team setting.



Our journey was definitely a life changing event. I was able to really appreciate the outdoors and realized how beautiful this region is. I was able to walk away from this experience with many skills that will stay with me forever.

Daniella, Bronze Award Holder

Adventurous Journey Stages

There are 3 stages to an Adventurous Journey (AJ). Each part must be done with **your team***, have a clearly defined team 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.**



All Award participants will receive an automated email within 24 hours of their Award Level being authorized in the Online Record Book. The email will include:

1. Plan the Journey: Planning & Preparation

- All AJ team members work together to plan and prepare for the journey with the support of an adult mentor (this may include their Award Leader, AJ Assessor and/or AJ Supervisor).
- Together, the team decides on a mode of travel, a team goal and an environment where they can safely travel. Teams train, plan and prepare to make sure they have the skills and resources they need to safely complete their journey.
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2. Do the Journey

- Practice Journey:
 - a) A preparatory adventure undertaken by the team, with guidance from their adult mentor(s).
 - b) It is designed to ensure that the team is adequately prepared, well-trained, and equipped with the necessary skills and resources for a safe and successful Qualifying Journey.
- Qualifying Journey:
 - a) Provides the team with a chance to apply their acquired skills and knowledge to undertake a challenging and achievable journey.
 - b) Teams will demonstrate their ability to collaborate effectively and safely work together to achieve their chosen goal.

3. Review the Journey

- The final stage of the Adventurous Journey is to review and learn from the experience.
- The team debriefs each stage with their adult mentor(s) to determine what went well, what could be improved, what was learnt and the impact of the journey on the team.
- When and how the debrief is completed is decided by the team and the adult mentor.

Visit the [Adventurous Journey Navigator](#) for ideas, templates and guidelines on doing your AJ.



Adventurous Journeys 10 Requirements

- ☐ 1. **AJ Team Size:** 4-8 team members
- ☐ 2. **The Journey:** Plan and undertake a Practice and Qualifying Journey for the appropriate length of time determined by your level.
- ☐ 3. **Adult Support:** AJ Supervisor and Assessor (may be the same person) and must be competent in type of journey being done.
- ☐ 4. **Team Goal:** All journeys must have a clearly defined team SMART goal. The goal must be challenging and achievable by all team members.
- ☐ 5. **Location:** Adventurous Journeys may take place in all locations, including areas known to the participants of time determined by your level.
- ☐ 6. **Mode of Travel:** Team members must use a mode of travel that requires their own effort.
- ☐ 7. **Accommodation:** Team members must stay in simple self-catering accommodation.
- ☐ 8. **Training and Practice:** The team must be suitably trained to have the appropriate skills and competency to safely complete the Qualifying Journey.
- ☐ 9. **Self-sufficiency:** Teams must be self-sufficient by ensuring they have what they need to be successful on their journey.
- ☐ 10. **Review & Debrief:** Teams must debrief the AJ experience with their Assessor and/or Supervisor.

For a more in-depth description of the requirements, visit the [Adventurous Journey Requirements](#).



Gold Project

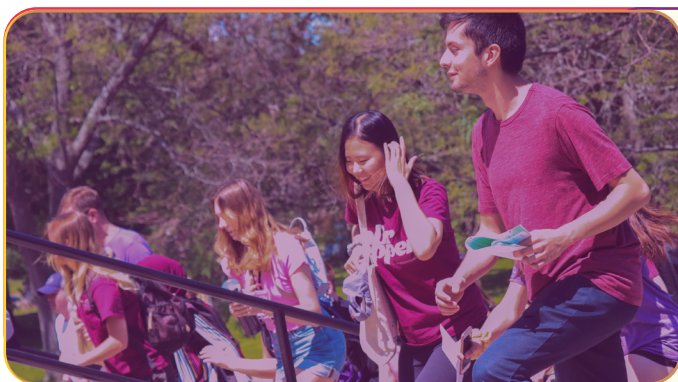
For the Gold Project section you'll have the opportunity to build on the many skills developed during your Award.

It will involve you undertaking a shared activity or specific course in an unfamiliar environment 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.

[Click here for Gold Project ideas](#)



Through this project, I have learned a lot about working together as a team toward a common goal. Due to our diverse experiences and perspectives, we encountered many difficulties as a team; however, I feel that this allowed me to grow as an individual.

Alexandra, Gold Award Holder



Participant Submission Checklist

PHYSICAL RECREATION		ADVENTUROUS JOURNEY	
	Logged a minimum of 13, 26, or 52 weeks depending on your Award level		Preparation and Training completed
	SMART goal(s) achieved		At least 1 Practice Journey completed with team
	Completed Assessor Report for each activity on the ORB		Completed a team debrief and review for Practice Journey
SKILL			Completed Assessor Report for Practice Journey on the ORB
	Logged a minimum of 13, 26, or 52 weeks depending on your Award level		Qualifying Journey completed with team
	SMART goal(s) achieved		Team goal achieved
	Completed Assessor Report for each activity on the ORB		Completed a team debrief and review.
VOLUNTARY SERVICE			Completed Assessor Report for Qualifying Journey on the ORB
	Logged a minimum of 13, 26, or 52 weeks depending on your Award level	GOLD PROJECT	
	SMART goal(s) achieved		Gold Project completed (min of 5 days and 4 nights away)
	Completed Assessor Report for each activity on the ORB		SMART goal achieved
MAJOR (PHYSICAL REC, SKILL OR SERVICE)			Completed Assessor Report on the ORB
	Additional 13 weeks at Bronze level or 26 weeks at Silver/Gold* logged in one section depending on your Award level <i>*Only applicable to participants who have not completed the previous level.</i>		



Any Questions?

If you have any questions or concerns 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

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.

Our mission is to ensure the Award, and its benefits, are known and embraced by institutional and individual partners and used as a tool to inspire and guide young people into life enhancing experiences. 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:



The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award- Canada

www.dukeofed.org

Registered charity in Canada number 12391 6751 RR0002

