



Step-by-Step Guide to Starting the Award at Your Organization

This guide is for organizations who are interested in licensing with The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award USA. As a licensed Award Unit, you will be authorized to deliver the Award to the young people in your area.

Providing the opportunity for young people to take part in The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award is a rewarding and enriching experience. The Award allows adults to make an impact on young people and empowers young people to discover their true potential. While the Award is simple in concept, quality delivery requires effort and involvement from a number of adult leaders with a diverse set of skills and experience. It also requires funding to cover the costs of licensing, materials, and an Award recognition ceremony for Participants. Understanding the scope of and commitment to the Award program is essential for the successful operation of the Award program.

The purpose of this guide is to present in a step-by-step format what an organization must do to begin delivering the Award. All steps are necessary and the steps are generally taken in this order, although there may be some variation.

Step 1: Determine the level of interest

While the Award is a great opportunity that should be available to every young person, there does need to be a reasonable level of interest on the part of the young people you currently serve or you intend to engage. You could gauge the level of interest by holding a young person and parent informational meeting. The National Office will happily supply you with digital materials to facilitate that meeting. You may also send out an email to young people and parents providing links to [The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award USA website](#), [Facebook page](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube channel](#) so they can start to understand what the Award is about.

Step 2: Enlist the support of your organization's senior administration

You will need the support of the administration of your organization to run the Award. Licenses are issued to the organization and not to an individual Award Leader or the person motivated to start The Award. Because of this, the administration needs to support delivery of the Award from day one and be committed to its ongoing success. Your organization must be prepared to support participation in the Award program with three key resources:

- Staff and/or volunteers- Every Award Unit must have at least two trained Award Coordinators (who may also serve as Award Leaders). If your organization intends to deliver the Adventurous Journey, you will also need a trained Adventurous Journey Supervisor. Unless the number of Participants in your program is very small, it is essential that the organization provides the Award Coordinators and the Award Leader(s) with some time away from other responsibilities to manage the Award. Please see Step 3 for the definition of all Award roles.
- Finances- Starting the Award requires funding to cover the costs of licensing, training fees, travel to and lodging near Award Coordinator training, and any materials needed to engage young people and their parents (e.g. handouts, forms). For most programs, in-person training costs are included in the first year of operations, but are not necessary in subsequent years. The ongoing operation of the Award requires an annual license fee as well as the incidental costs named above. Participants are expected to pay a Participant Registration Fee, and for any costs associated with completing the sections of the Award (while Skills, Physical Recreation and Service sections may be gained at a very low or free rate, the Adventurous Journey can have a more substantial cost). Financial assistance for these fees is available for Participants through the Award USA. [In many cases, Participants are charged a fee by the organization to offset the cost of operating the Award program]
- Flexibility- Particularly necessary in a school context, the administration will need to be flexible in finding opportunity for Award Participants, Leaders and Supervisors to complete the components of the Adventurous Journey. Although efforts toward one's Award is done in the young person's free time outside of school, it is difficult to fit Adventurous Journeys into the academic calendar, especially at the Silver and Gold levels. Support from administration and understanding from all staff of Award activities and young people's time commitments is essential for facilitating the Adventurous Journey section.

Step 3: Identify and recruit Award Leaders, Supervisors, and other volunteers

From the start, identify key people who will commit their time to the Award, understanding that the Award is voluntary for young people (Participants).

Each Award Unit must have at least two adults trained as Award Coordinators (ACs) in the delivery of the Award at all times. Award Coordinators are adults who are interested in volunteering to work with young people in a non-formal setting and gain personal and professional development. Award Units engaged in delivering their own Adventurous Journeys (AJ) must also have an Adventurous Journey Supervisor trained in the delivery of The Award at all times. AJ Supervisors are usually adults who are interested in the outdoors and have some personal and/or professional experience in the outdoors.

Delivering The Award requires a number of different people with a wide range of skills. Some of the roles that will need to be filled:



- *Award Coordinator (AC)* – The Award Coordinator takes overall responsibility for the delivery of The Award. They coordinate other Award staff, liaise with administration of the licensed organization, and work with the Award USA to ensure smooth operation of the Award in their organization. The two trained adults may share AC responsibilities and/or act as Award Leaders; or, one may serve as Award Coordinator and the other simply as Award Leader. In either case, Award Coordinators often work directly with a number of young people as an Award Leader. You may think of the Award Coordinator as the *main* Award Leader.
- *Award Leaders (ALs)*—Award Leaders actively work with Participants, helping them to choose their activities, monitoring their progress, and coordinating aspects of their individual Award programs.
- *Adventurous Journey Supervisors*—Supervisors are responsible for organizing and carrying out the Adventurous Journey section with the Participants and take legal responsibility for the groups while out on their journeys. This position may be out-sourced to a third-party vendor, a Registered Activity Provider.
- *Adventurous Journey Instructors*—Instructors train the participants in the range of necessary skills to ensure Participants independence and ownership for their outdoor adventures. This position may be out-sourced to the Registered Activity Provider.
- *Adventurous Journey Assessor*—This is the person who certify that Participants have successfully completed this section of The Award. It is best for this role to be held by an objective adult who has not worked closely with the Participant(s). This position may be out-sourced to the Registered Activity Provider third-party vendor.
- *Other volunteers and helpers* – All aspects of The Award can benefit from additional helpers and volunteers, whether administrative help, or people willing to go out to assist on Adventurous Journeys.

In an organization with many Participants, it may be that there are many people filling the above roles. While at a smaller organization, especially one just getting started, it is likely that two or three people will be doing most of these jobs.

Step 4: Apply for an Award Unit License

Once your organization has determined that there is sufficient Participant/parental interest and at least two volunteers to fulfill the Award Coordinator and Award Leader roles, respectively, you can apply for an Award Unit license. The licensing process follows these steps:



1. Contact Award USA to begin the licensing process.
2. The Award USA will send you the license application pack which contains all the documents and information necessary for applying to become licensed.
3. Complete and return the license application form.
4. The Award USA will prepare and return your license and will issue the initial invoice for the annual license fee.
5. A senior manager of your organization will need to sign the license and send a scan of the signed license back to the Award USA.
6. Upon receipt of the license and license fee, your organization will be issued the tools and materials to begin delivery of the Award program. You will also be eligible to enroll for Award Coordinator training courses.

Once your Award Coordinator(s) have been trained your organization will be authorized to promote the Award, access the available resources and use Award-branded materials and logos.

Pre-conditions for becoming licensed

There are few preconditions for obtaining a license:

- Complete the application form fully,
- Submit documentation to Award USA of your organization's legal operational status as an established and reputable legal entity,
- Award USA believes that the reputation and standards of the Award will be safeguarded by your organization,
- Describe the structure in which the Award fits within the scope of the work of the organization

Step 5: Award Coordinators receive training

In order to accurately and realistically plan and implement the roll out of the Award, it is essential that at least two adults attend the Award Coordinator in-person training course before the organization can start to deliver the Award. Award Coordinator courses take place regularly throughout the year and in various cities. You will need to check the training calendar and apply for a place on a course well in advance of the planned launch of the Award in your organization. You can find details of planned training courses in your on the Award USA website.



Step 6: Plan and prepare for your Award Launch

Typically, the Award fits comfortably into the standard academic year, although it is possible to start and finish the Award at any time during the year. It is an excellent way to engage young people during the summer months. In your first year, it is likely that you will need a considerable amount of lead time to prepare for launching the Award program.

Planning considerations for Award Launch

When preparing for your Award launch there are several key components that need to be included in planning.

- **Online Record Book (ORB) activation** – The Online Record Book is the primary tool for tracking and managing participant registration and activity progress. As part of the required Award Coordinator training, ACs will undergo an introduction to the system, but ACs must train any additional Award Leaders and Participants in its use.
- **Registration procedure** – Develop the suite of documents necessary for registering participants in the Award. These will usually include a registration form, parental consent form, medical release form, and lists of activities young people can choose to do. Templates are provided once your licensing process is completed.
- **Budget** – Determine your organization's Award budget. Both the annual license fee and the Participant Registration Fee are paid to the Award USA. The current fee schedule is attached. In addition to these fees, there will be other costs. Your organization may choose to charge your Participants an additional fee for program administration, particularly if you will be providing the Adventurous Journey directly. Developing a budget will allow you to determine how much, if anything, you need to collect from each participant.
- **Promotional Strategy** – Decide your strategy to attract young people to participate in the Award. Schedule and carry out promotional meetings for students and parent informational meetings to raise interest. Once licensed, you will have access to our online Brand Center to design and produce your own promotional Award materials.
- **Acquisition of materials and gear** – Consider the materials and equipment you may need to run your Award program, especially if doing an expedition for the Adventurous Journey section. If you intend to outfit your Participants with gear, you may need to source equipment such as compasses, backpacks, tents, cooking equipment, sleeping bags, etc. There are a number of organizations who will rent these items at low costs. Organizing these materials takes time and needs to be done well in advance of the first Adventurous Journey.
- **Management Structure** – With a small number of participants with just one or two volunteers this will be a very simple document, but if you will be launching with 50 participants or more then you will need to define a management structure. Will you have Award Leaders (ALs) assigned to each Award level, one AL for each group of 15 or 20 participants, or will you divide the responsibilities based on the Award section? There are many ways to divide the

responsibilities and planning is key to ensuring that every Participant has the support and guidance they need.

- **Program Scheduling** – How will the Award fit into your organization’s calendar for the year? Events such as Adventurous Journey training sessions and journeys and the Award recognition ceremonies need to be planned and scheduled well in advance so as to not conflict with other organizational events or busy periods.
- **Staff/Volunteer Training for the Adventurous Journey** – Before Participants can take part in the Adventurous Journey (AJ) section, it is essential that those responsible for the delivery of the section receive training from the National Office. Like Award Leader training, AJ Supervisor and Assessor training courses run on a regular basis and in various locations. It is also possible to use a Registered Activity Provider to conduct all aspects of the AJ including the trainings for the young people. It is also possible to use one of our Registered Activity Providers, who offer training, practice journeys and Qualifying Journeys, either through a sequence of weekends or via a camp-style Adventurous Journey. Camp-style AJs consist of a 7- to-15-day residential experience where training, practice, and Qualifying Journeys all occur at once.

Step 7: Recruit your first Participants

Once all the pieces are in place you will be ready to enroll Participants. This will be an exciting time for your organization and young people! It is important in the first few weeks after you enroll Participants to ensure that they are making a good start with their program of activities. This is a busy time for Award Leaders as they need to spend time with each Participant to discuss their activity interests and options, approve suitable Assessors for each section, and set Participants on course with the activities that have been agreed upon. It is important to ensure that Participants’ activities are a suitable challenge for each individual, clearly fit within either the Service, Skills or Physical Recreation section, and that activities will be undertaken regularly enough and for long enough to count as an Award activity. The Award USA will supply you with some activity planning and approval documents to aid in that process during the Award Coordinator training.

Step 8: Manage your Award year

Once established within your organization, the Award year follows a pattern from one year to the next. There are key points in the year when specific activities take place, with intervening period of regular week-after-week tasks and responsibilities. This means there is an ebb and flow of activity for Award Coordinators /Leaders. The beginning and end of the program generally requires about 5 hours of work a week. The intervening periods may only require 1-2 hours of work per week.

Start of year tasks

- Promotional events and recruitment of Participants
- Parent/Guardian meetings
- Registration and induction of new Participants
- Introduction to the Online Record Book for new Participants

On-going tasks

- Regular meetings with Participants and overseeing Participant activity progress
- Adventurous Journey training sessions, practice and qualifying journeys (this may be out-sourced)
- Signing off on Award activities

End of year tasks

- Award approvals and passing information to the Award USA to authorize Award completion
- Organizing and holding Award presentation ceremonies
- Planning and preparation for the next Award year
- Recruitment of new or additional Award Leaders and volunteers
- Making arrangements for Participants who didn't complete their Award during current cycle

Conclusion

Going from initial enquiry to successfully delivering the Award may seem like a daunting task because there are a number of steps and things that need to be planned carefully. However, the Award Framework is very simple. Once you've transcended the learning curve, Award delivery can be smooth and incredibly enjoyable. Additionally, there are many resources available to help you in this process.

First, you have direct access to the national office of The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award USA. There are dedicated staff available to answer questions, give advice, and help you along the way.

Second, there are numerous experienced Award Leaders at schools and other organizations around the world, and in the United States, who will be able to give you advice and share best practice. Once you are trained as an Award Leader, you join The Award Guild. Our highly-esteemed Award Guild is the member society of Award Leaders who are anxious to network with you and support you in Award delivery. Our Online Learning Hub is our platform to converse with other members of the Award Guild.

And finally, there are print and online resources at your disposal. The Handbook for Award Leaders and the Award Unit Management Manual (available Autumn 2017) are excellent resources as you plan and begin to deliver the Award. These will be your primary resources if you have any questions or are unsure about any aspects of the Award. We also have digital templates for nearly every document you will need for parents, Participants, and other stakeholders of the Award. We will work to ensure that you have everything that you need so that you may enjoy the rewarding work of mentoring young people in realizing their highest potential.

We wish you good luck as you embark on the adventure of starting and delivering The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award!