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# PARTICIPANT HANDBOOK

*YOUR GUIDE TO COMPLETING THE  
DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S  
INTERNATIONAL AWARD THROUGH  
THE OPEN AWARD CENTER  
1ST EDITION*

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*Image by: Chris Quinn, Alto International School  
Location: Saddlebag Lake, CA*

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# Chapter 1: Introduction to the Award

## What is The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award?

The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award is a global framework for non-formal education, which challenges young people ages 14-24 to dream big, celebrate their achievements, and make a difference in the world.

Since its launch in 1956, it has inspired millions of young people to transform their lives. Participants design their own Award programs, set their own goals, and record their own progress. By creating opportunities for young people to get physically active, develop skills, give service, and experience adventure, the Award can play a critical role in their development outside the classroom. The Award allows young people's achievements to be consistently recognized worldwide, giving them a unique international accreditation of their experiences.

Young people who take part in the Award become more confident and resilient, and develop skills in areas such as communication, problem solving, and leadership. This in turn impacts their communities, which see improvements in areas that include employability, health and wellbeing, and educational attainment.

Through the Award, young people can be empowered not just with the ability, but also the desire to create meaningful change. They find their purpose, passion, and place in the world.

For more information on Award USA, please visit us at [usaward.org](https://usaward.org).

For more information on The Award around the world, please visit [intaward.org](https://intaward.org).



# Chapter 2: Award Requirements

## 2.1 Award Framework

Taking part in the Award requires commitment over time. However, the sense of accomplishment you'll feel at the end of the journey will be worth it because it will be something you did just for you!

The Award is open to anyone between the ages of 14 and 24. All participants have until their 25<sup>th</sup> birthday to complete their Award. Awards may be submitted after that date, but all activities must be completed by then. There are three levels to the Award: Bronze, Silver, and Gold. You can start at any level as long as you meet the minimum starting age requirement.

The Award has different sections designed to provide a balanced program of personal development and challenge. These sections are as follows:

Voluntary Service	Physical Recreation	Skills	Adventurous Journey	Gold Residential Project
Participants volunteer in their communities, make a positive contribution to society and demonstrate social responsibility.	Encourages young people to improve their fitness and performance, and enjoy healthy lifestyles for good mental and physical well-being.	Enables participants to develop their talents, broaden their abilities, increase their self-confidence and improve their employability.	Young people discover a spirit of adventure and gain a deeper understanding of the environment and the great outdoors.	Participants broaden their experience by staying in an unfamiliar environment with other young people, taking part in a worthwhile project and building new relationships.

The Voluntary Service, Physical Recreation, Skills, and Adventurous Journey sections must be completed at each level of the Award, and the Gold Residential Project is only done at the Gold level. All participants create their own program, choosing their own activities to do for each section. Each level of the Award becomes more challenging, with participants required to spend more time completing their activities.

	Physical Recreation	Skills	Voluntary Service	Direct entrants	Adventurous Journey
<b>Bronze</b>	3 months / 12 weeks	3 months / 12 weeks	3 months / 12 weeks	All participants must do an extra 3 months in one of the following: Physical Recreation; or Skills; or Voluntary Service	2 days + 1 night
<b>Silver</b>	6 months / 26 weeks	6 months / 26 weeks	6 months / 26 weeks	Non Bronze holders must do an extra 6 months in one of the following: Physical Recreation; or Skills; or Voluntary Service	3 days + 2 nights
<b>Gold*</b>	12 months / 52 weeks	12 months / 52 weeks	12 months / 52 weeks	Non Silver holders must do an extra 6 months in one of the following: Physical Recreation; or Skills; or Voluntary Service	4 days + 3 nights

\*Plus additional requirement of 5 day / 4 night Gold Residential Project at the **Gold** level

**Participants receive credit for one hour per week, or two hours every two weeks, for working on their activities for the Physical Recreation, Skills, and Voluntary Service sections.** The Award is designed to build lifelong habits. Therefore, it is impossible to complete the required hours in a shorter period of time than stated in the table above.

At whichever level you choose to begin your Award journey, you are considered a “Direct Entrant” and **must major in one section**, meaning you will spend additional time working on that activity. Once you move onto the next level, you no longer need to choose a major and will complete the same amount of time working on each section.

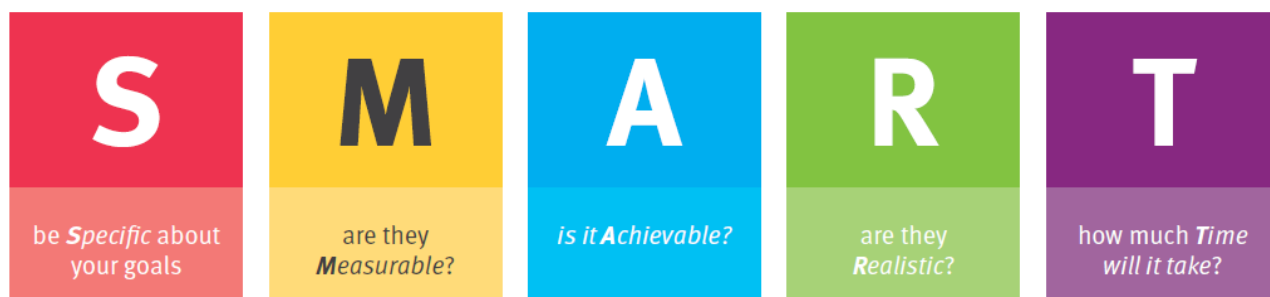
**NOTE:**

**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!**

## 2.2 SMART Goals

The Award is meant to be a journey of growth for participants. This is achieved through the setting of personal goals for each section. Young people do not merely participate in an activity each week. They work towards improving specific skills and developing new abilities through that activity.

The SMART goal framework ensures that participants set realistic and achievable goals that bring both purpose and challenge to each section of the Award. Both Award Leaders and Assessors can provide you with support and feedback on your goals.



Example Goal	Example SMART Goal
Skill Goal: I will learn to play the piano.	In the next three months of my Bronze level, I will learn to play scales and three beginner-level songs on the piano.
Voluntary Service Goal: I will volunteer at the animal shelter.	I will help the local animal shelter transfer their paper files to an online system in the next six months.
Physical Recreation Goal: I will run every week.	Over the next twelve months, I will work to improve my personal best mile time by 20 seconds by running intervals and doing weight training, in addition to the daily runs I do now.

## 2.3 Activity Logs

In order to track progress in each section and engage in personal reflection on growth, participants enter a log of their weekly or biweekly activities into the Online Record Book. These logs should be at least 3-4 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?

Example of Basic Log	Example of Award USA Log
Physical Recreation Log: I went to the gym.	This week, I focused on strengthening my biceps in order to help me progress towards my goal of doing twenty pull ups. I did a standing dumbbell curl, hammer curl, and a barbell bent-over row. I also ran for thirty minutes on the treadmill, since my cardiovascular fitness is also important for my goal. The last ten minutes on the treadmill were very challenging this week and I had to slow my pace but I was able to keep running and not stop.
Voluntary Service Log: Helped at the homeless shelter.	I was assigned a new role at the homeless shelter yesterday. Rather than just help prepare dinner, I was able to serve it to our guests. I enjoyed this new role a lot since I was able to interact more with the guests and get to know them. I realized that many of them had childhoods much like mine. For example, one woman attended the same elementary school that I did. We were able to connect over this shared experience.
Skill Log: I gardened.	At the community garden, I did my usual pruning and watering of the plants in my plot. In addition, I set up a new irrigation system for the root vegetables. With the change in season, I need to replace some of my summer plants. Therefore, I consulted with the head gardener to discuss which plants would be best for my plot and when I should switch them out.

## 2.4 Assessors

For each section of the Award, you will choose an Assessor. An Assessor is the person that instructs, coaches, or supervises you during your activities. This person should be qualified to assess and comment on your progress and efforts. When you choose your activities, you will also choose your Assessors and speak with them about fulfilling this role. You will seek their feedback on your SMART goals. When you complete the required hours for a section, you will request that your Assessor submit a report about your progress through the Online Record Book. This report will confirm your hours and provide feedback on your progress over time.

Ideally, you will have a different Assessor for each activity. **Parents or immediate family members should not act as Assessors.** It is incumbent upon each participant to find an adult community member that is willing to serve as an Assessor. Please note that your Award Leader is not automatically your Assessor and should not sign off on activities they did not witness.

### **Example Activity**

Piano Lessons  
Basketball Team  
Knitting  
Kayaking Expedition  
Student Council  
Public Speaking  
Going to the gym

### **Example Assessor**

Piano Instructor  
Basketball Coach  
Family friend that has knit for 15 years  
Expedition Leader  
Teacher Sponsor  
Coach/Toastmasters President  
Trainer or Front Desk Attendant

Please see Chapter 9 for a link to resources you can provide to your assessor to further explain The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award and the role of the Assessor.

## **2.5 Award Leaders**

Your Award Leader is your main guide throughout the program. Award Leaders provide support to get you started with the Award, work your way through the sections, and complete each level. Their responsibilities include:

- Responding to all inquiries about the Open Award Center.
- Registering and onboarding participants.
- Checking in regularly to ensure that participants remain engaged and progress through their Award journeys.
- Serving as a mentor to participants.
- Ensuring that all Award requirements are met and approving Awards.

Award Leaders are your main point of contact for all questions and concerns. It is your responsibility to stay in touch, attend all scheduled calls and meetings, and demonstrate professional communication etiquette. Per the Communications Policy signed by participants when registering for the Award, participants and Award Leaders agree to respond to one another within 72 hours. All scheduled phone and video calls are considered mandatory, and if a participant is no longer able to attend, they must notify their Award Leader promptly.



# Chapter 3: Physical Recreation Section

The Physical Recreation section encourages participants to improve their personal physical performance through training and perseverance in their chosen activity. Involvement in physical recreation should be an enjoyable experience, regardless of physical ability.

This section is based on the belief that a healthy body is a good end in itself and can often help to develop a healthy mind. Physical activity is essential for a person's wellbeing, and by introducing young people to enjoyable physical activity, they will develop long-term beneficial habits. Accomplishing a physical challenge also gives a lasting sense of achievement and satisfaction. Participants may either take up a new activity or seek to improve their ability in an activity that they already do.

## 3.1 Choosing an Activity

Participation, persistence, and improvement are the key outcomes of the Physical Recreation section. This applies equally to all young people, regardless of physical ability. Working with your Award Leader, you should choose a physical activity that interests you and in which you can show improvement over a sustained period of time. To maintain the essential balance of the Award, you should be careful not to pick an activity that is too similar to those chosen for the Skills and Voluntary Service sections.

Participants may choose a physical activity that they do on their own or as part of a team, and although the Award itself is non-competitive, competitive sports are perfectly acceptable for Award purposes. In the case of a team sport, it is the individual participant's personal effort and commitment that counts.

### **Physical Recreation, Skill, or Voluntary Service?**

It is common to be unsure which section an activity fits into. For instance, doing the very technical activities of scuba diving or refereeing a soccer match may be seen as both Physical Recreation and a Skill. Umpiring or coaching, for example, can be undertaken as Voluntary Service or a Skill. In such circumstances, there should be a discussion between the participant and Award Leader to determine whether the activity that they wish to pursue in one section works well alongside the activities they are undertaking in other sections. In the end, it comes down to ensuring that the participant undertakes a *balanced* program that matches the overall philosophy of the Award.

## 3.2 Example Activities

The following activities have been done by previous Award participants. Will you follow in their footsteps, or choose a new activity to add to the list? It's up to you!

### Individual Sports

Archery	Athletics/Track & Field	Biathlon/Triathlon
Bowling	Boxing	Croquet
Cross Country Running	Cycling	Fencing
Golf	Horseback Riding	Modern Pentathlon
Roller Blading	Running	Wrestling

### Water Sports

Canoeing	Diving	Dragon Boat Racing
Freediving	Rowing & Sculling	Sailing
SCUBA Diving & Snorkeling	Swimming	Surfing & Body Boarding

### Dance

Ballet	Ballroom Dancing	Belly Dancing
Bhangra Dancing	Ceroc	Contra Dance
Country & Western	Flamenco	Folk Dancing
Hip Hop & Breakdancing	Jazz	Salsa or Other Latin Styles
Scottish/Irish Dancing	Swing	Tap Dancing

### Racquet Sports

Badminton	Racketlon	Real Tennis
Squash	Table Tennis	Tennis

### Fitness

Aerobics	Cheerleading	Fitness Classes/Gym Work
Gymnastics	Pilates	Running/Jogging
Talking	Weightlifting	Yoga

### Extreme Sports

Caving & Potholing	Climbing	Free Running (Parkour)
Mountain Biking	Parachuting	Skateboarding
Skating	Skiing & Snowboarding	Skydiving

### Martial Arts

Aikido	Capoeira	Ju Jitsu
Judo	Karate	Self-Defense
Sumo	Tae Kwon Do	Tai Chi

### Team Sports

Baseball	Basketball	Cricket
Curling	Dodgeball	Football
Hockey	Hurling	Lacrosse
Netball	Polo	Rugby
Soccer	Volleyball	Water Polo

# Chapter 4: Skills Section

The Skills section stimulates new interests or improves existing ones. These interests are typically of an intellectually challenging or creative nature and may be hobbies, vocational or job-related skills, as well as social, individual, or cultural activities. Participants should be encouraged to interact with people who are experienced in the activity and so can share their enthusiasm, whether they are new to the activity or seeking to improve their ability in an activity that they already do.

## 4.1 Choosing an Activity

Participants should choose an activity that they find interesting and will be able to engage with over a sustained period of time. The specific benefits of the section can vary based on the skill chosen, but by discovering and developing new abilities, or improving existing talents, participants should refine their awareness of their own potential, develop time management and planning skills, enhance self-motivation, interact with others in a meaningful way, and improve their employability.

As with the other Award sections, participants should be careful not to pick activities that are too similar to those they will complete in the Physical Recreation and Voluntary service sections. The types of activities for the Skills section can be grouped broadly into the following categories:

- Music
- Sports-related, e.g. leadership, coaching, and officiating
- Arts and crafts
- Nature and the environment
- Animals
- Media and communications
- Games
- Life, technical, and vocational skills
- Performance skills

## 4.2 Example Activities

The following activities have been done by previous Award participants. This is by no means an exhaustive list. Is there a new activity you would add?

### Performance Arts

Ballet Appreciation  
Conjuring & Magic  
Puppetry  
Theater Appreciation

Ceremonial Drill  
Dance Appreciation  
Singing  
Ventriloquism

Circus Skills  
Majorettes  
Speech & Drama  
Yoyo Extreme

## Science & Technology

Aerodynamics  
Biology  
Ecology  
Entomology  
Oceanography  
Rocket Making  
Website Design

## Care of Animals

Agriculture/Livestock  
Caring for Reptiles  
Keeping of Pets

## Music

Analyzing Music  
Evaluating music  
Playing an instrument

## Natural World

Agriculture  
Gardening  
Snail Farming

## Games & Sports

Cards  
Cycle Maintenance  
Fishing  
Go-Karting  
Mah Jongg  
Motor Sports  
Sports Appreciation

## Life Skills

Alternative Therapies  
Democracy in Action  
Hair & Beauty  
Life Skills  
Navigation

## Learning & Collecting

Aeronautics  
Archaeology  
Bird Watching  
Collections & Surveys  
Costume Study  
Fashion  
History of Art  
Movie Posters

Anatomy  
Botany  
Electronics  
IT  
Paleontology  
Taxonomy  
Zoology

Aquarium Keeping  
Dog Training/Handling  
Looking after birds

Composing  
Improvising melodies  
Playing in a band

Conservation  
Groundskeeping  
Vegetable Growing

Chess  
Darts  
Flying  
Historical Re-enactment  
Marksmanship  
Power Boating  
Sports Officiating

Cookery  
Event Planning  
Emergency Services  
Massage  
Public Speaking/Debate

Aircraft Recognition  
Astronautics  
Coastal Navigation  
Comics  
Criminology  
Gemstones  
Language Skills  
Postcards

Astronomy  
Chemistry  
Engineering  
Marine Biology  
Physics  
Weather/Meteorology

Beekeeping  
Horse/Donkey/Llama Care  
Pigeon Breeding/Racing

DJing  
Music Appreciation  
Reading/Notating Music

Forestry  
Growing plants

Clay Target Shooting  
Dominoes  
Gliding  
Kite Construction/Flying  
Model Construction  
Snooker/Pool/Billiards  
Table Games

Car Driving/Maintenance  
First Aid  
Library/Information Skills  
Money Management  
Skills for Employment

Anthropology  
Astronomy  
Coins  
Contemporary Legends  
Dowsing & Divining  
Genealogy  
Military History  
Reading

Religious Studies

**Media & Communications**

Amateur Radio

Journalism

**Creative Arts**

Basket Making

Candle Making

Clay Modelling

Drawing

Embroidery

Floral Decoration

Glass Painting

Knitting

Painting & Design

Quilting

Textiles

Ship Recognition

Communicating

Signaling

Boat Work

Canoe Building

Crocheting

Dressmaking

Enameling

Furniture Restoration

Interior Design

Leatherwork

Photography

Rug Making

Weaving

Stamp Collecting

Film & Video making

Writing

Cake Decoration

Ceramics

Dough Craft

Egg Decorating

Fabric Printing

Glass Blowing

Jewellery Making

Mosaic

Pottery

Soft Toy Making

Woodwork



# Chapter 5: Voluntary Service Section

The Voluntary Service section seeks to give participants a sense of compassion; help them become more active, engaged citizens; and provide the opportunity to strengthen and improve their communities. Participants undertake this section by volunteering their time to support others, whether that be people, the community at large, the environment, or animals.

It is hoped that young people will develop a lifelong commitment to voluntary service and community involvement, as well as make a personal connection with the environment, people, or animals through their service.

## 5.1 Choosing an Activity

Voluntary Service is a part of the Award where participants have a real impact on the lives of other people, in addition to their own lives. It is therefore important that participants are properly prepared to engage in an activity that is positive and preferably, enduring.

The potential activities for this section are almost unlimited, and often dictated by available resources and opportunities. There are many people and organizations willing to provide participants with opportunities for practical service. These include social workers, doctors, religious leaders, schools, hospital or prison authorities, youth departments, conservation groups, local government authorities, voluntary youth organizations, animal welfare organizations, service clubs, and agencies that work internationally. Participants should do some research in their local area to identify a suitable opportunity to volunteer. Activities should generally fall into the following categories:

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

## 5.2 Example Activities

The following activities have been done by previous Award participants. We hope this list provides you with some inspiration to choose your own voluntary service activity!

### Helping People

Helping children to read	Helping older people	Helping people in need
Helping people with special needs	Youth work	

### Community Action & Raising Awareness

Campaigning	Cyber safety	Council representation
Drug & alcohol education	Home accident prevention	Peer education
Personal safety	Promotion & PR	Road safety

### Working with the environment or animals

Animal welfare	Coastal conservation	Litter picking
Preserving waterways	Rural/urban conservation	Zoo/nature reserve work

### Helping a Charity or Community Organization

Administration	Charity internship	Event management
Fundraising	Mountain rescue	Religious education
Serving a faith community	Volunteer lifeguard	Work in charity shop

### Coaching, Teaching, & Leadership

Air cadets	Boy Scouts	Dance leadership
Girl Scouts	Music instruction	Sports leadership

# Chapter 6: Adventurous Journey

In this section, all participants work in a small group to plan, train for, and undertake a journey with a purpose in an unfamiliar environment. This requires determination and perseverance, and cultivates a sense of independence, self-sufficiency, and discovery. This is the only section of the Award that must be undertaken in a team; developing group work skills and team building are a key component to successfully completing this section.

Adventurous Journeys should be progressive through an Award participant's involvement with the program, from a relatively challenging journey at the Bronze level to a much more demanding journey at the Gold level.

**"When the mind is stretched by new experiences, it can never return to its former dimensions."**

**-Dr. Kurt Hahn**

## 6.1 Types of Adventurous Journeys

There are two types of journeys:

- **Expedition:** An expedition is a journey with a purpose. In an expedition, two thirds of the purposeful effort time must be spent journeying, with the remaining time focused on achieving the journey's aim, which might involve research and data gathering.
- **Exploration:** An exploration is a purpose with a journey. In an exploration, two thirds of the purposeful effort time must be spent observing and collecting information relevant to the aim. The remaining time is spent on journeying.

## 6.2 Adventurous Journey Aims

The first thing that needs to be completed before an Adventurous Journey ("AJ") occurs is that the group must decide on an aim. An aim must include:

- A description of the environment or destination of the adventure
- Confirmation of the mode of travel during the adventure (e.g. by foot, cycle, paddle/oar, horse, mule, or other non-motorized means, such as sailing)
- A brief description of the adventure's activity

Some example aims are as follows:

### **Expedition Aims**

- To undertake a journey by foot in the Great Smoky Mountains while exploring the effects of the terrain on team morale.
- To study the effects of tourism on the rural environment in Sequoia National Park while undertaking an expedition on foot.
- To kayak the upper reaches of the Rio Grande River while measuring the human impact.

### **Exploration Aims**

- To compare the differences between the urban and rural environment while undertaking an exploration in Glacier National Park.
- To investigate, by foot, the impact of wildfires in the Santa Monica Mountains.
- To study, by canoe, the visitor impact within Everglades National Park.

## **6.3 Time Requirements for Qualifying Journey**

	<b>Days</b>	<b>Nights</b>	<b>Total Minimum Hours of Purposeful Effort*</b>	<b>Average Minimum Hours of Purposeful Effort Daily</b>
<b>Bronze</b>	2	1	12	6
<b>Silver</b>	3	2	21	7
<b>Gold</b>	4	3	32	8

*\*Purposeful effort consists of either actively journeying or working towards achieving the journey's aim.*

## **6.4 Conditions of the Adventurous Journey**

There are three sections of the Adventurous Journey:

- Training and Preparation
- Practice Journey
- Qualifying Journey

There are two key roles played by adults: Adventurous Journey Supervisor and Adventurous Journey Assessor.

The requirements for the AJ section are further described in the following table.

<b>Adventurous Journey Conditions</b>		<b>Notes</b>
1.	The expedition must have a clearly defined aim.	This should be a topic or observation agreed upon by the team during the planning phase of the journey.
2.	All journeys must be completed as a team. Teams cannot have less than 4, nor more than 7, members (8 for modes of travel that are tandem).	A group must be unaccompanied and work independently of other groups. Except in the event of an emergency, the team must always stay together. The team must not include those who have successfully completed a Qualifying Journey at the same or higher Award level. Not all team members need to be enrolled in the Award nor under assessment, but they should be similar ages.
3.	All participants must have undergone suitable training to have appropriate skills to undertake their journeys.	All participants must be trained in the necessary navigation and outdoor skills and the correct use of expedition equipment. A beginning traveler usually requires a minimum of 12 hours of training; however, this may increase depending on the location of the AJ and the mode of transportation.
4.	All members of the group must be involved with the planning and preparation of their Practice and Qualifying Journeys.	This must, at a minimum, include suitable training in route planning and consideration of the risks. It is important that the participants take ownership of their journey. Non-Award participants must also be involved with the training and planning.
5.	All participants must undergo a minimum of one Practice Journey per level, using the same mode of travel and in a similar environment as the Qualifying Journey.	All Practice Journeys must include, at a minimum, one day and one night in the chosen environment, using the same mode of travel, but not over the same route or in the immediate vicinity of the Qualifying Journey. A longer period of time may be required if the Supervisor or Assessor thinks it is advisable. The number of Practice Journeys will depend upon the ability of the group; this is a decision of the Supervisor or Assessor.
6.	All journeys must take place on land or water; all team members must use a mode of travel that requires their own effort, without motorized or outside assistance.	“Own effort” includes by foot, cycle, paddle/oar, etc. or by other non-motorized means, e.g. sailing. Travel with the use of animals is allowed, but participants must be trained in their usage, care, and handling. Exceptions exist for young people with health conditions or special needs, such as the use of a motorized wheelchair.
7.	The environment chosen must be unfamiliar to all participants.	Participants should not select a location for their Qualifying Journey where they’ve journeyed before. The environment should be appropriately challenging for the team. This is typically remote or wilderness terrain, depending on the mode of travel.
8.	The distance covered on all journeys will depend on the terrain, weather conditions, and the ability of the group members. However, all groups members must undertake the minimum hours of purposeful effort.	Bronze – 6 hours of purposeful effort daily Silver – 7 hours of purposeful effort daily Gold – 8 hours of purposeful effort daily Purposeful effort is time spent travelling and navigating on the day’s route and in activities related to the aim. Setting up a camp site, sleeping, cooking, and eating should not be included in the hours of purposeful effort.
9.	On an exploration, at least one third of the purposeful effort requirement must be spent journeying, with the remainder focused on working towards the overall aim.	Bronze Exploration – 4 hours on aim, 2 on journey daily Silver Exploration – 4.5 hours on aim, 2.5 on journey daily Gold Exploration – 5.5 hours on aim, 2.5 on journey daily



Adventurous Journey Conditions		Notes
10.	On an expedition, at least two thirds of the purposeful effort requirement must be spent journeying, with the remainder focused on working towards the overall aim.	Bronze Expedition – 4 hours on journey, 2 on aim daily Silver Expedition – 4.5 hours on journey, 2.5 on aim daily Gold Expedition – 5.5 hours on journey, 2.5 on aim daily
11.	All journeys must be supervised and assessed by a trained adult who is able to accept responsibility for the safety of the team.	The team should be unaccompanied and unguided. Supervisors must plan to monitor the team by either shadowing them from a distance or using an appropriate system to track their progress. Throughout the journey, supervisors must be in the immediate vicinity, but should remain discrete and distant enough to allow the team to act independently. Close supervision may be employed when necessary to ensure safety.
12.	Accommodation must be in portable tents or simple self-catering accommodation such as hostels, huts, or similar shelters.	This ensures that young people are taken out of their comfort zones, are self-sufficient, and develop their team skills.
13.	All members of the group must carry enough equipment, food, and water to be completely self-sufficient throughout their journey.	Equipment must be appropriate to the type of journey, the season and the environment in which the journey is taking place. Teams must carry all equipment and supplies necessary for the duration of the journey. Except for water (in arid environments only), nothing may be transported and placed at campsites or along the route. Adjustments for medical purposes are also accepted.
14.	All members of the group must ensure that they prepare and consume a full meal each day.	Teams must have appropriate light-weight cooking equipment and should be able to prepare simple meals. Use of campfires for cooking purposes is not suitable for Award expeditions and use of campfires at any time is discouraged, except in emergencies and only where permitted by law.
15.	All groups will prepare and deliver a presentation identifying their aim and findings to their Supervisor and Assessor after the Qualifying Journey. Groups completing the Independent Adventurous Journey will also submit a report.	The presentation may be in any format the team chooses and must be related to the aim of the journey. All members of the team must contribute to their presentation.  Guidance for the report can be found in the Guide to the Independent Adventurous Journey.

**Note for larger Award groups:** Multiple teams should not travel in convoy, but rather have individual routes from campsite to campsite. Where this is unavoidable, a substantial amount of time must separate each team using the same route and they must operate as discrete teams. It is allowed for groups to camp at the same location, if necessary, but they should ensure they are departing at different times or on different routes the following day.

## 6.5 Roles on the Adventurous Journey

### ▪ **Adventurous Journey Supervisor:**

The AJ Supervisor ensures the safety of participants while on their journey and maintains the standards of the Award. All AJs, including the Practice Journey, must be supervised by an experienced adult who is competent in the model of travel and who will be based in the area where the journey takes place. Supervisors accept responsibility for the welfare of the team. They should be familiar with the team, their individual strengths and challenges, their knowledge of the chosen route, and have an understanding of the route themselves. They are the focal point for communication before, during, and after each journey, and assist the team in all phases of this section.

### ▪ **Adventurous Journey Assessor:**

Similar to the assessors of other Award sections, the AJ Assessor is the objective observer of this section. They are tasked with providing their assessment of the Qualifying Journey only. Assessors must ensure that the participants uphold the standards of the section on the journey, leveraging the Conditions of the Adventurous Journey as their rubric. Through communication with the Supervisor and the participants, the Assessor ensures that the participants have adequately prepared for the journey, set an aim, and determined how they will collect and present their findings and observations. (Note: Assessors should not be a family member of Award participants they assess.)

## 6.6 Preparation and Training

The safety of all participants throughout their training, Practice, and Qualifying journey is the Award's top priority. Training is required to enable all group members to undertake their journeys safely. All training must be delivered by a suitably qualified and/or experienced adult. After training, the AJ Supervisor should be satisfied that the group is technically able to carry out their Practice and Qualifying journeys in a safe and self-sufficient manner.

## STEPS TO COMPLETING AN AJ

1. Participants form a group of 4-7 young people (max. 8 for tandem activities).
2. The group decides on their aim and type of journey, appropriate area, and mode of travel.
3. The group undertakes necessary training.
4. The group plans and prepares the paperwork for their Practice Journey, including tracings, outlines, route cards, etc.
5. The group goes on a Practice Journey to show their Supervisor that they have all the necessary skills to proceed to a Qualifying Journey.
6. The group plans and prepares for the Qualifying Journey with feedback from the Supervisor after the Practice Journey.
7. The Supervisor checks final plans, focusing on risk, and has final discussions with the Assessor.
8. The Assessor conducts a pre-departure check, focusing on the 15 AJ Conditions.
9. The group goes on their Qualifying Journey with their Supervisor and Assessor present.
10. The Assessor debriefs with the group and confirms when and how the AJ presentation will take place.
11. The group presentation occurs, focusing on the aim of the Qualifying Journey.
12. The Supervisor assesses the group presentation and signs off on the AJ section.

It is worth emphasizing that the Adventurous Journey, by its nature, contains an element of risk. It is therefore important that this risk is properly managed to reduce the likelihood of an accident occurring and decrease the consequences if an accident does occur. The key to this is proper preparation and training. The following is a table of the subjects that should, at a minimum, be covered prior to participants embarking on a Practice Journey, pending the type of environment and mode of journey chosen and approved. This table is not exhaustive; the exact training requirements will be determined by the nature of the chosen Adventurous Journey.

Understanding of the AJ	First Aid and emergency procedures
Necessary equipment and how to use it	Route planning
Navigation	Camp craft, including food and cooking
Team building and leadership training	Mode of travel
Observation and recording skills	Managing risk
Understanding the impact of the journey on the environment	Appreciating the culture withing the journey's environment

## 6.7 Options to complete the Adventurous Journey Section

For youth that complete the Award through Award USA's Open Award Center, there are three options for completing this section:

1. Registered Activity Provider: Participants from across the county may register for an Open Adventurous Journey through a Registered Activity Provider. Registered Activity Providers (RAPs) are trained and licensed by the Award USA National Office to offer Adventurous Journeys that meet all of the requirements of the section, including Preparation and Training, Practice Journeys, and Qualifying Journeys. Further information on RAPs, including AJ locations and pricing, can be found at [usaward.org/adventurous-journeys/](http://usaward.org/adventurous-journeys/).
2. Independent Adventurous Journey: For those participants that would like to coordinate their own AJs, the independent option is the right one for you! Your Award Leader can share with you the Guide to the Independent Adventurous Journey, which lays out the expectations for putting together your own trip and includes resources for the adults you identify to serve as the Supervisor and Assessor. Your Award Leader can also share the application you will submit to the National Office prior to embarking on your trip. **You must receive approval of your proposed trip from the National Office in order to receive final approval of your Award.**
3. International Adventurous Journey: The Award is offered in over 130 countries, and many of them also partner with organizations to offer AJs that meet Award USA's requirements. If you learn of an AJ being offered in another country, share it with your Award Leader and they will let you know whether the trip you are considering can be used for your Award.

# Chapter 7: Gold Residential Project

The Gold Residential Project is an additional requirement at the Gold Level and is an opportunity to use many of the skills developed during the overall Award experience, such as teamwork and leadership, while living and working with others in a residential setting. The section gives participants a shared, purposeful experience with people who are not their usual companions, together working towards a common goal. It should be an experience that broadens participants' outlook and horizons.

## 7.1 Choosing an activity

Participants should choose a shared activity where the majority of those they work with are not their usual colleagues or friends, and they are in an unfamiliar residential setting, e.g. away from their home or other locations where they have already undertaken their Award activities.

**TIME REQUIREMENT:  
4 NIGHTS, 5 DAYS  
(AT MINIMUM)**

The Gold Residential Project may be related to activities completed in other Award sections. For example, a young person may complete a photography course for their Skills section, and then take part in a Gold Residential Project linked to photography. The key point is that the time allocated to the activity done or any course completed for the other section does not count towards completing this section.

Participants must discuss their area of interest with their Award Leader before choosing a Gold Residential Project. It requires a significant personal investment of time, and sometimes money. Participants should choose an activity that interests them, then make the necessary inquiries and arrangements. A suitable Assessor is to be agreed upon with the Award Leader. This will usually be the Gold Residential Project instructor, leader, or facilitator, ie. the individual that can assess the participant throughout the experience and record their completion of the section.

There are many different opportunities to complete this section. Some suitable categories are listed below:

- Personal training courses
- Environment and conservation projects
- Service to other people and communities
- Activity-based

## 7.2 Requirements

### Organization

Must be with an organized group, registered nonprofit or company, or an Approved Activity Provider.

### Duration

A minimum of five days and four nights consecutively.

### Daytime Activities

Learning or developing a skill, training for a qualification, or volunteering with a group. The activity should take up the majority of the day, starting by noon on the first day and finishing by midafternoon at the earliest on the last day (if the project is just meeting the five-day minimum).

### Evening Activities

Spent with the group, whether organized activities, or just socializing and cooking together.

### People

Five or more people in the group (including you, and in addition to course leaders) that you don't know and who don't know each other, doing the same activity or role as each other. An Assessor needs to be identified on the project and engaged with you during your time there. You may know a few other people as long as you are joining a large group, the vast majority of people are not known to you or to each other, and you can be separated from others that you know. You shouldn't know the staff, unless you can be separated from them. Other members of the group can be of any age and do not need to be doing the Award.

### Accommodation

Staying together with the group, whether in tents, a hostel, dorm, or other type of accommodation. You don't have to stay in the same accommodation each night as long as the group is travelling and staying together.

### Approval

Your Award Leader must approve your Gold Residential Project beforehand.



#### Things that will not be accepted:

- **Accommodation in homestays, staying separately from the group, or staying with relatives or friends.**
- **Your activity cannot include internships or work experiences for which you are paid; volunteering with a commercial organization; academic or school curriculum trips; going on vacation; or your Adventurous Journey.**

## 7.3 Example Activities

The following activities have been done by previous Award participants. Do any of these align with your personal interests, or will you help us expand this list?

### **Learning**

Language courses

Skills development (e.g. music, art, craft)

Youth camps

Leadership training

Ecology student course

Youth summits/parliaments

### **Environment and Conservation**

Environmental clean up

Research on habitats and ecosystems

Volunteer work with national parks

Restoration of buildings

### **Service to Others**

Provision of facilities

Assist as a leader at a youth camp

Work in a care home or hospital

Construction projects

Work with a local or international charity

### **Activity-Based**

Outdoor adventure courses

Sports skills development

Sports coaching course

Crew member on board a ship

## **GUIDANCE TO GIVE YOUR ASSESSOR**

PARTICIPANTS SHOULD BE ASSESSED ON:

- PERSONAL STANDARDS (APPLICATION, PUNCTUALITY, ETC.)
  - RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHERS ON THE ACTIVITY
- WILLINGNESS TO SHOW INITIATIVE AND TAKE RESPONSIBILITY
  - LEVEL OF EFFORT AND COMMITMENT TO THE PROJECT

# Chapter 8: Using the Online Record Book

The Online Record Book (ORB) is an easy-to-use online system in which you will record your activities and achievements as you work towards your award. Your Award Leader will also track your progress here, and your Assessors will submit their reports electronically through the site. The ORB can be accessed at [onlinerecordbook.org](http://onlinerecordbook.org). The app, called “ORB Participant” from The Duke of Edinburgh’s International Award Foundation, can be downloaded from the Apple Store or Google Play Store.

**NOTE ON FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE:** Award USA does provide need-based financial assistance to help cover the costs of the program for participants, including the registration fee and fees/supplies for activity sections. If you plan to request assistance, [please complete the application here](#) PRIOR to registering for the Online Record Book. We will be in touch regarding your application with specific instructions on how to register for the ORB, specifically what to enter in the payment section.

## 8.1 Register for the ORB

Go to [onlinerecordbook.org](http://onlinerecordbook.org). On the right-hand side under “Not Registered?” select “Award Participant” and click “Register.”

THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S INTERNATIONAL AWARD

[Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#) English

**Participant** Award Staff

Participant login

Email

Password

[Forgot your password?](#)

Log in

Not Registered?

Register a new account as:

☒ Award Participant

☐ Award Leader

Register

You can also download our brand new **Participant app** to access the Online Record Book anytime, anywhere.

Enter the relevant information.

1 Welcome

2 Award Level

3 Contacts

4 Participant Details

5 Profile

6 ORB Account

## Welcome to the Online Record Book

You are now registering as an Award participant.

Select Country

USA

×

▼

Select your Operating Partner

Virtual Award Program

×

▼

Select your Award Centre

National Open Award Center

×

▼

Do you know your Award Leader's email address?

☐ Yes

☒ No

Continue

**Operating Authority:**  
Virtual Award Program  
**Award Unit:** National  
Open Award Center  
**Award Leader:** Select  
No. You will be matched  
with your Award Leader  
later.

Select the Award level you are participating in.

✓ Welcome

✓ Award Level


3 Contacts

4 Participant Details

5 Profile

6 Payment

7 ORB Account

 [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#)

## Award Level

What level of the Award are you registering for?

What level of the Award are you registering for?

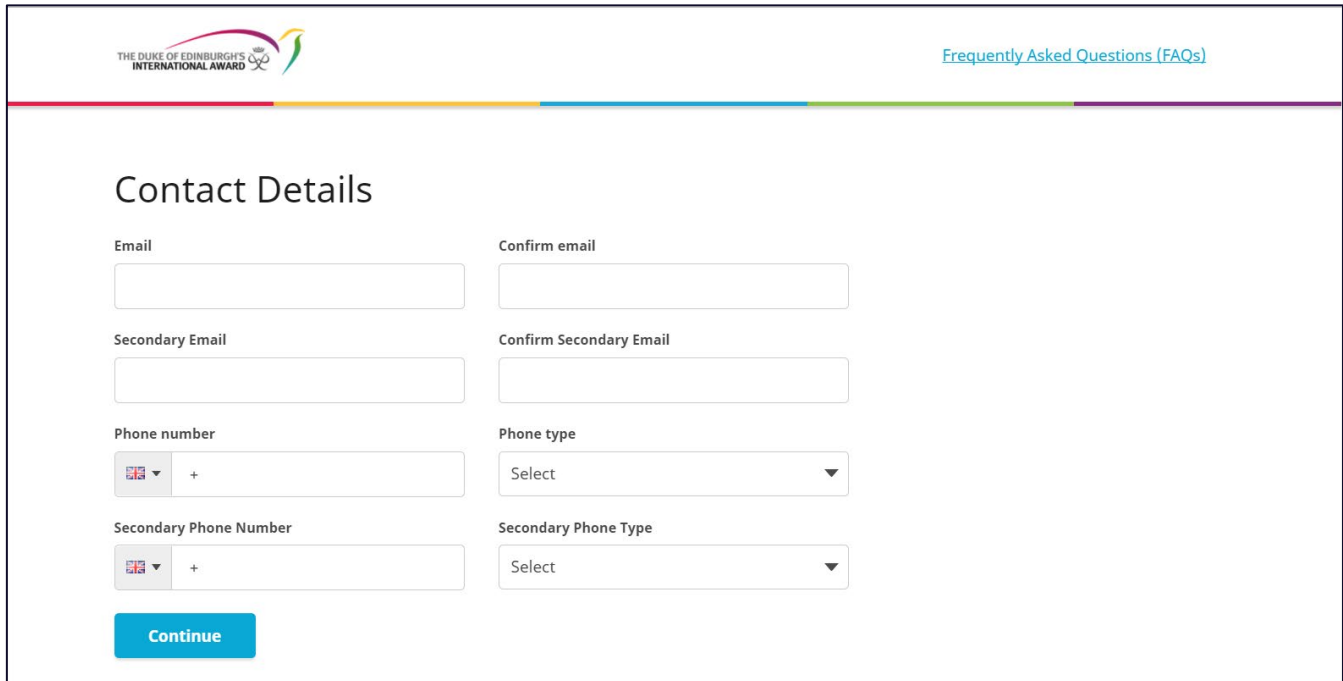
☒ Bronze Level

☐ Silver Level

☐ Gold Level

Continue

Complete your contact details.

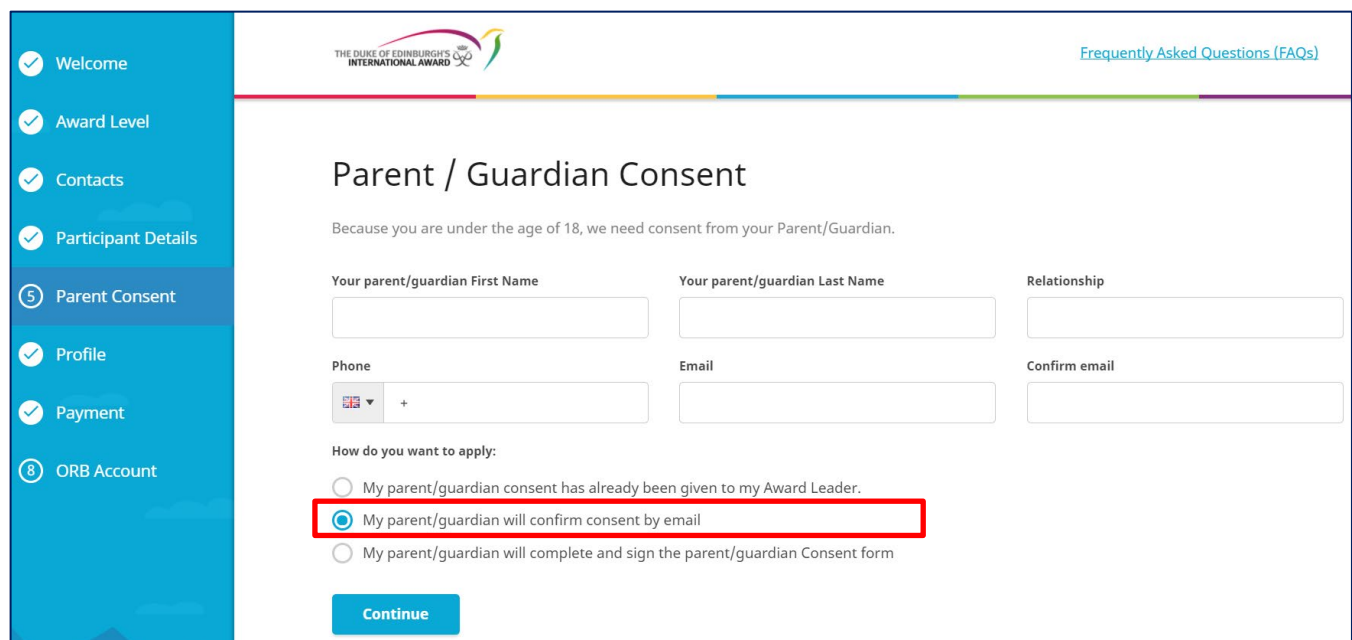


The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award logo is in the top left, and a link to 'Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)' is in the top right. The form is titled 'Contact Details' and contains the following fields:

- Email:
- Confirm email:
- Secondary Email:
- Confirm Secondary Email:
- Phone number:  (with a dropdown for country code and a '+' sign)
- Phone type:  (with a 'Select' dropdown)
- Secondary Phone Number:  (with a dropdown for country code and a '+' sign)
- Secondary Phone Type:  (with a 'Select' dropdown)

A blue 'Continue' button is at the bottom left.

If you are under age 18, your parent or guardian will need to submit consent. Enter their contact information and select the relevant option for the consent form. **The easiest option is consent by email; however, sometimes these emails go to the Spam folder and your parent/guardian will need to check there.** If you select the third option, please print and submit your signed consent form to your Award Leader.



The form is titled 'Parent / Guardian Consent' and includes a sidebar on the left with navigation links: Welcome, Award Level, Contacts, Participant Details, Parent Consent (selected), Profile, Payment, and ORB Account. The main content area has the following fields:

- Your parent/guardian First Name:
- Your parent/guardian Last Name:
- Relationship:
- Phone:  (with a dropdown for country code and a '+' sign)
- Email:
- Confirm email:

Below the fields, the text reads: 'Because you are under the age of 18, we need consent from your Parent/Guardian.' The question 'How do you want to apply:' is followed by three radio button options:

- ☐ My parent/guardian consent has already been given to my Award Leader.
- ☒ My parent/guardian will confirm consent by email
- ☐ My parent/guardian will complete and sign the parent/guardian Consent form

A blue 'Continue' button is at the bottom.

Complete the profile/survey questions and continue to the payment section. Select “Pay online with PayPal account or credit/debit card.” This will take you to a PayPal screen where you can either log into a PayPal account and use funds from there or scroll down and pay directly with a credit/debit card. **NOTE: If you are applying for financial assistance, you will receive information on what to enter on the payment page if/when your application is approved. Wait until that is received to register for the Online Record Book.**

THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S INTERNATIONAL AWARD

Payment Type:

- ☒ Pay online with PayPal account or credit/debit card  
Click the Pay button below to pay online using your Visa, MasterCard credit card or Visa debit card.
- ☐ Pay online with manual transaction ID  
You will be asked to type in your transaction ID.
- ☐ Other method (pay to Award Leader or Unit)  
Bring required amount to your Award Leader or Award Coordinator in your Unit.

Continue

You will receive an email to confirm your email address. Go to the email inbox you registered with, click on the automated email (it may be in your Spam folder), and click on the link. The email sender will be [ORB@onlinerecordbook.org](mailto:ORB@onlinerecordbook.org) and the email will be titled, “The Duke of Edinburgh’s International Award – Organization Contact Confirmation Email.”

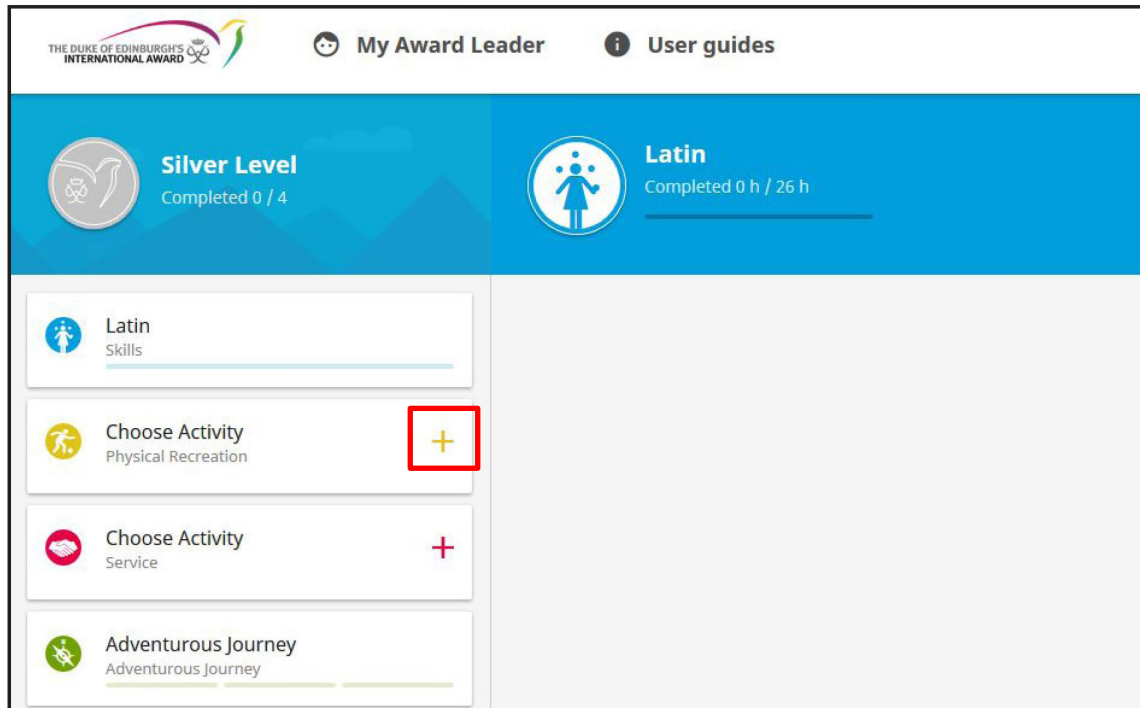
## 8.2 Set up your Award Program in the ORB

When you log into the ORB, you will be directed to the homepage of your Award. The sections of the Award will be on the left-hand side of the page.

Each section will be color-coded:

- Skills
- Service
- Physical Recreation
- Adventurous Journey
- Gold Residential Project





You will click the plus sign next to each section on the left-hand side of the screen to add your activities. Remember: if you are doing the Award for the first time, you will need to “major” in one section (complete additional time working on that section). You will also need to enter the contact details of your Assessors at this step.

**SMART Goals:** You will enter your SMART goals for each section when you add your activities. Refer to Chapter 2.2 for additional guidance on how to make a SMART goal.

New Activity

Activity Details

Category

Select

Goal

Assessor Details

Title

Select

Name

Email

☐ Choose as Major activity

Major activity means that you have to spent twice much time on this activity compare to others.

SETUP

### 8.3 Log your progress in the ORB

Once you enter all of your activities, your leader will review them and either approve or send them back for revision. Once the activities are approved, you can begin to log the hours you spend working on each section. **The system will only give credit for the minimum hours required by the Award, which equates to one hour weekly or two hours biweekly. You may enter additional hours, but they will not count towards your cumulative total.**

**Add Log** ✕

Description of your progress

Date

Duration (mins)

hh : mm

Add Picture

ADD LOG

**What information should be included in your logs? Refer to Chapter 2.3 for additional guidance!**

## 8.4 Submitting a section for Assessor approval

When you complete all of the required hours for a section, a ‘victory’ window will pop up. If you click out of it, a notification bar will appear at the bottom of your screen each time you click into the activity, prompting you to send the section to your Assessor. Make sure that your Assessor’s email address is entered correctly, include a note to them, and hit the “Send for Approval” button.

Your Assessor will receive an email with a hyperlink in it. When they click on the hyperlink, they will be brought to a new page that has your section summary. Your Assessor will be prompted to add comments about your improvement, challenges, and effort; their qualifications and experience; and their contact information. Your Assessor can approve or reject the section from this page. Their actions and response will be recorded electronically. You do not have to upload anything.

**Assessor report**

Title First Name Last Name

Select

Email Phone

huhl@dukeofed.org

Assessor Report

Please comment on the participants improvement/performance/commitment

My Qualification

My Experience

☐ I certify that as the Assessor of this activity that the participant has met the requirements.

Or don't agree? You can [reject this application](#).

*It is a good idea to be in touch with your Assessor directly about sending this report to them from the ORB. It's possible that the email could go to their Spam folder, so be sure to note that.*

**AJ NOTE:** Each of the three sections of the AJ need to be assessed. The Training and Preparation section is assessed by your Award Leader; the Practice Journey by your AJ Supervisor; and the Qualifying Journey by your AJ Assessor.

## 8.5 Submitting a section for Award Leader approval

Once your Assessor has reviewed the section and approved it, you will be prompted in the ORB to send the section to your Award Leader. Your Award Leader will review the section and either approve it or send it back for revision. If a section needs to be revised, you will receive a notification and a red triangle will appear beside the section. Click on the triangle to see the note from your Award Leader explaining what needs to be changed. It is a good idea to contact your Award Leader directly to discuss. Once the changes have been made, you can re-submit the section for approval.

## 8.6 Submitting your Award for National Office approval

Once all sections have been reviewed and approved by both your Assessors and Award Leader, you will be prompted to send the whole Award forward. It will be reviewed by a staff member at the National Office. If revisions are needed, it will be sent back to you with a note of explanation. Otherwise, it will be approved. You will receive a certificate and medal in the mail; these are sent on a quarterly basis.

## 8.7 Beginning the next level of the Award

After celebrating the accomplishment of completing an Award level, should you choose to move onto the next one, you will be prompted to register for it when you log into the ORB. The registration process will be the same as what is laid out in Chapter 8.1. If you plan to apply for financial assistance for the next Award level, you will again [complete the application form here](#) and wait until you hear from Award USA staff regarding approval prior to registering in the ORB.

## 8.8 Award Alumni Community

The Award Alumni Community is a valued part of Award USA. We continue to expand ways for our alumni to stay engaged. One of the best ways is to become an Award Leader. We also have various opportunities to connect with other alumni internationally, including the biannual International Gold Event, which is a leadership program for the next generation of decision makers and influencers in the Award. You may also join the [Global Award Alumni Network](#) to connect with Award alumni around the world, as well as potentially in your own community!

We hope that you remain active members of the Award family for years to come! Make sure to keep your contact information up to date in the Online Record Book so that we can stay in touch.

# Chapter 9: Expectations & Policies of the Open Award Center

When participating in the Award through the Open Award Center (OAC), participants are expected to adhere to the following expectations and policies:

## Roles and Responsibilities

- OAC participants are responsible for setting up an account in the Online Record Book; participating in activities at least one hour weekly or two hours biweekly in order to work towards each section's SMART goals; logging their hours in the ORB and writing short reflections with each log; participating in all Zoom calls and other check-ins with their Award Leader; and submitting their Award for authorization when it is completed.
- OAC Leaders are responsible for approving activities, SMART goals, and assessors for each Award section; guiding participants through their Award journey; participating in all Zoom calls and other check-ins; and authorizing completed Awards submitted by participants that meet The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award standards.
- Parents are responsible for checking in with their participants to make sure they are supported on their Award journey and reaching out to Award Leaders with any larger questions or concerns that cannot be communicated by their participant.

## Communication

- The participant should have their own email address through which to communicate with their Award Leader.
- Participants will bring any and all questions about the program to their Award Leader. Parents/guardians may bring questions and concerns to the Award Leader when needed, **BUT** in order to establish a mentoring rapport and give young people the learning opportunity to be self-directed through their Award journey, communication should primarily be between the participant and the Award Leader.
- The participant is expected to respond to their Award Leader within 72 hours. Every scheduled Zoom meeting or phone call is mandatory. If a participant is no longer available at the agreed upon time, they must send notification beforehand. If a participant misses more than 3 scheduled meetings/calls within a 3-month period, or does not respond to communications from their Award Leader for a period of at least 9 months, they may be marked inactive in the program and lose their spot in the Open Award Center.

## **Section Activities**

- It is the responsibility of participants to plan and secure access to the activities they choose to complete for each section, and to arrange a qualified assessor for each section.
- In accepting a spot in the Open Award Center, participants accept responsibility for organizing their own Adventurous Journey, either through a Registered Activity Provider or by planning their own that meets Award USA requirements and is approved by their Award Leader.

## **Financial Assistance**

- Financial need should not be a barrier for any Award participant. Award USA offers limited need-based financial assistance that can be used to cover registration fees, activity costs, or Adventurous Journey costs. Participants can apply online [here](#).

## **Award Approvals and Completions**

- The Award Leader approves all sections of the Award. They will inform a participant immediately if their Award is not meeting the standards of The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award, and they reserve the right not to approve an Award if it is substandard.
- All participants have until their 25<sup>th</sup> birthday to complete the Award program. If they need to take a break from their Award, participants must communicate this to their Award Leader. They may be marked inactive and will be required to re-initiate contact with Award USA in order to be added back to the Open Award Center.



# Chapter 10: Additional Resources

## Completing the Award

- [My Award Plan Template](#)
- [Checklist- Completing the Bronze Award](#)
- [Checklist- Completing the Silver Award](#)
- [Checklist- Completing the Gold Award](#)
- [Award Introduction for Assessors](#)
- [Professional Email Communication Guide](#)
- ORB Participant User Guide – Website (access directly through the ORB)
- ORB Participant User Guide – App (access directly through the ORB)
- [How does the ORB count hours?](#)
- [Does this qualify for the Gold Residential Project?](#)
- [Award Journey through the Open Award Center](#)

## Adventurous Journey

- [Guide to the Independent Adventurous Journey](#)
- [Application for the Independent Adventurous Journey](#)
- [Award USA Registered Activity Providers](#)

## International Resources

- [Online Record Book YouTube Tutorials](#)

## Bringing the Award to Your Community

- [Delivering the Award](#)