

GUIDANCE FOR
AWARD LEADERS



AWARD FLEXIBILITIES



**The Duke of Edinburgh's International
Award USA**



To ensure Award Leaders can support all Participants, we have outlined potential flexibilities that may be used. Many flexibilities have been shared previously, but here, they are formalized with a process for when and how to use them.

When using Award flexibilities, please remember that activity section outcomes, setting SMART goals, and helping Participants meet the spirit of the Award should always be prioritized. Flexibilities may be used on an individual or group basis depending on the situation.

Please reach out to our Program Team member for more information.

FLEXIBILITY 1:

AJ GROUP SIZE

Overview

Group size of all AJs is 4-8 young people to ensure all team members are actively involved and working together. If this is not possible based on the type of journey being completed, please reach out to your Program Team member.

Process

A note must be placed in the ORB within the AJ event or on the Participant's account explaining the reasoning behind the change in group size.

Examples of Use

1. AJ activity/mode of travel where group size needs to be larger to safely complete the Team Goal, e.g. tall ship sailing, research team, winter camping, etc.
2. One or more team members have to withdraw or cannot complete the journey due to unforeseen circumstances which affects the overall group size.

FLEXIBILITY 2:

MOTORIZED MODE OF TRANSPORT

Overview

If motorized transportation is used on the journey, such as mobility aids, e-bikes, public transportation, etc., it should be incorporated into the Team Goal and agreed upon with the Supervisor/Assessor. Motorized transportation that is used to get to a starting point or from an end point cannot count towards Purposeful Activity time.

Process

A note must be placed in the ORB within the Adventurous Journey or on the Participants' accounts explaining why the group needs to use motorized transportation to achieve their journey.

Examples of Use

1. Trips being done where the team goal includes use of motorized transportation such as public transportation, mobility aids, or e-bikes.
2. Available campsites/sleeping locations are not close to the journey location due to environmental conditions or regional regulations.



FLEXIBILITY 3: **BRONZE PRACTICE JOURNEY WAIVER**

Overview

This flexibility can be applied to enable full participation in the Adventurous Journey when not possible otherwise. Leaders must ensure the Participants are ready to safely undertake their Qualifying Journey.

In addition to the Practice Journey being waived and only a Qualifying Journey being completed at this Level, this flexibility can be applied to enable a a Bronze Practice Journey, where completed, to count as the Bronze Qualifying Journey if that can no longer be completed after the fact.

Process

The Award Leader should confirm their intention with their Program Team member, informing them of the cohort that will be using this flexibility and an explanation of why. The Award Leader should set up an AJ event for the Practice Journey waiver that includes this explanation and add it to the Participants' accounts, with their own information listed in the AJ Supervisor place so they can provide the required assessor report to confirm the waiver.

Examples of Use

1. Participants are unable to attend the Award Center's regularly planned AJ due to injury, sickness, scheduling, etc.
2. Regional restrictions/environmental emergencies make it impossible to complete the planned journey.
3. Capacity/available dates within an Award Center make it impossible to include a Bronze Practice Journey within 12 months of a cohort registering.

FLEXIBILITY 4: VIRTUAL GOLD PROJECT

Overview

Participants may complete some or all of the Gold Project virtually. If the Gold Project is extremely difficult or impossible for the Participant to complete, they may use this flexibility. Participants must meet the minimum time requirement of 5 days and 4 nights, and be involved with a purposeful Gold Project activity for an average of 8 hours/day.

Process

This flexibility should only be used in exceptional circumstances with pre-approval from the Award Leader. If approved, the Participant must note this flexibility with an explanation of why it was used in the ORB to ensure a smooth Award Authorization process.

Examples of Use

1. Medical condition, disability, or cultural/religious beliefs that make it difficult/impossible to stay away from home.
2. Restricted opportunities based on region, living conditions, and/or financial circumstances.

ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE ON EXISTING AWARD REQUIREMENTS

Award Assessors

An overview of the Activity Assessor's role and expectations can be [here](#).
Reminders regarding Assessors:

- **Assessors cannot be immediate family members.**
- Assessors are adults (over 18 years old) who know the subject better than the Participant and can act as a mentor to the Participant throughout their activity.
- Participant progress can be tracked remotely by the Assessor, and check-ins can be done virtually.
- If an existing Assessor has become unreachable, the Participant may change Assessors midway through the section.
- Award Leaders may be able to act as an Assessor themselves if they are knowledgeable in the activity.

Definition of “Outside the Classroom” for Activity Selection

Award activities should take place substantially in the Participant’s own time, generally outside of compulsory activities undertaken in school. The definition for “substantially” in this case is a minimum of 50% of the activity counting towards the Award must occur outside of these scheduled/ compulsory times. This can be assessed on an individual basis, taking into consideration the needs and capacity of each Participant.

Award Time Commitment

The regular time commitment for the Award is a minimum of one hour per week. However, the Award Leader has discretion to allow activities that are best completed in larger blocks of time, e.g. two (2) hours per two-week period, three (3) hours per three-week period, or four (4) hours per four-week period. Larger blocks of time would typically be most appropriate for Participants living with mobility restrictions or for activities requiring access to facilities not readily available on a weekly basis. Examples might include monthly volunteering on an environmental project or biweekly visits to senior citizens in one’s community.

Continuing to the Next Level

Participants should be encouraged to complete all sections of their current Award Level before progressing to another Level. If it proves difficult to complete the whole Award in a reasonable time, particularly the Adventurous Journey section, then they may start the next Level provided they have:

- Completed the physical recreation, skills, and voluntary service sections at their current Level.
- Are not working on all three Levels at the same time.

Before continuing to the next Level, Participants will need to complete the registration process and pay any required registration fees.

Changing Activities

Participants are allowed to change their choice of activity or major mid-way through a section if the initial choice of activity proves to be unsuitable. This needs to be done in consultation with their Award Leader who should use judgment on how often this can happen. All hours that have already been recorded will continue to count towards the Participants’ overall requirements.

Changing of a Major Section for Direct Entrants

All direct entrants must complete a major section. The major requires Participants to do an extra 13 weeks at Bronze and an extra 26 weeks at Silver and Gold in one activity section. Participants may choose to change this when working on their Award. If a Participant changes their Major section, the SMART Goal in each relevant section should be reviewed for suitability.

While delivering the Award, proper risk management and youth protection policies and procedures should be followed by all.