

What is the Duke of Edinburgh's Award?

There are three levels of programme you can do which, when you've successfully completed, lead to a Bronze, Silver or Gold Duke of Edinburgh's Award. The main differences between them are the minimum length of time it takes to complete them, how challenging it is and the minimum age you can start. Don't forget, you have until your 25th birthday to complete whichever level you're working on and achieve an Award.

Depending on your age, you are free to start at any level but most people prefer to try for Bronze and work upwards. There are age restrictions for each one so it makes sense to build yourself up rather than dive in at the deep end.

Lots more information can be found on the DofE website: <http://www.dofe.org>

How long does each award take?

The table below shows the different age restrictions and time requirements for each level.

Level	Minimum age (and year group 2018-19)	Minimum period of participation by:	
		Direct entrants	Previous level Award holders
Bronze	13+ (Y9)	6 months	n/a
Silver	14+ (Y10 & Y11)	12 months	6 months
Gold	16+ (Y12)	18 months	12 months

Direct entrants are young people starting their DofE programme at either Silver or Gold level, who have not achieved the previous level of Award.

What are the sections?

You achieve an Award by completing a personal programme of activities in four sections (five if you're going for Gold).

These sections are:

- **Volunteering** - helping someone, your community or the environment
- **Physical** - becoming fitter through sport, dance or fitness activities
- **Skills** - developing existing talents or trying something new
- **Expedition** - planning, training for and completing an adventurous journey
- **Residential** (Gold only) - staying and working away from home as part of a team

We've put the length of time in months - you need to show regular activity and commitment during this time of at least an hour a week. You can't achieve an Award in a short burst of enthusiasm over one weekend!

Remember, all activities for a DoE programme must be completed by your 25th birthday.

The Bronze Award

You need to be at least 13 years old to start a Bronze programme and in Year 9 at school.

A Bronze DofE programme has 4 sections: Volunteering, Physical, Skills and Expedition, and you must do a minimum of 3 months activity for each of the Volunteering, Physical and Skills sections, and plan, train for and do a 2 day (1 night) Expedition, after having completed a training and practice expedition. You also have to spend an extra three months on one of the Volunteering, Physical or Skills sections. It's your choice which section you do

The Silver Award

You need to be at least 14 to start doing a Silver DofE programme and in Year 10 or Year 11 at school (for 2018-19). Again, it has four sections: Volunteering, Physical, Skills and Expedition. You need to do at least 6 months Volunteering and a minimum of 6 months on either Physical or Skills and 3 months on the other. It's up to you which one you do for longer. The Expedition section involves planning, training and undertaking a 3 day/2 night expedition, as well as a training and practice expedition.

The Gold Award

Once you hit 16 you can start a Gold DofE programme. Note that you can enrol for your Gold Award once you have completed your Silver Award and are 16, even if you are not yet in Year 12, although you will not be able to do your expedition until you are in Year 12. You have to spend 12 months on the Volunteering section. For Physical and Skills, you must spend 12 months on one and six months on the other - you decide which way round.

The big difference at Gold level, is you also have to do a Residential section - staying away from home for a minimum of five days/four nights, doing a shared activity with people you don't know. It's great fun and a real chance to do something different. That section is not organised via the school, but is a participant's responsibility to organise.