

## The Award Programme

The Award is a global framework for non-formal education, which challenges young people aged 14-24 to dream big, celebrate their achievements and make a difference in their world.

Our vision is to reach more young people from diverse backgrounds and equip them as individuals to succeed in life.

Our long-term ambition is that every eligible young person will have the opportunity to participate in the Award.

### Guiding Principles

There are ten guiding principles that underpin the philosophy of the Award.

They are designed to ensure that a young person has a meaningful and purposeful journey through their Award, as well as ensuring that the impact of achieving their Award provides a lasting personal legacy. The Award's guiding principles are as follows:



1. **Individual** - Individuals design their own programme, which can be tailored to suit their personal circumstances, choices and local provision. They start at whichever level suits them best and they can take as long as they wish (within the age limit) to achieve their Award.



2. **Non-competitive** - Doing their Award is a personal challenge and not a competition against others. Every participant's programme is tailor-made to reflect their individual starting point, abilities and interests.



3. **Achievable** - An Award is achievable by any individual who chooses to take up the challenge, regardless of ability, gender, background or location, with the right guidance and inspiration.



4. **Voluntary** - Whilst the Award may be offered within school, college, work time, custody or extracurricular activity, individuals choose to do a programme and must commit a substantial amount of their free time to undertake their activities.



5. **Developmental** - Participating in their Award programme fosters personal and social development. Individuals gain valuable experiences and life skills, grow in confidence and become more aware of their environment and community, transforming them into responsible young adults.



6. **Balanced** - The Award provides a balanced framework to develop the individual's mind, body and community spirit by engaging them in four activities at **Bronze** and **Silver** levels, and five activities at **Gold** level.



7. **Progressive** - At each level, the Award demands progressively more time, commitment and responsibility from the participant.



8. **Inspirational** - The Award inspires individuals to exceed their expectations. They are encouraged to set their own challenges and goals before starting an activity, aim for these goals and by showing improvement, will move towards achieving an Award.



9. **Persistence** - The Award requires persistence and cannot be completed with a short burst of enthusiasm. Participants are encouraged to continue with activities and to maintain their interest beyond their programme requirements.



10. **Enjoyable** - Participants and Leaders should find the Award enjoyable, fulfilling and rewarding.

## Codes for Award Operators

In addition to the ten guiding principles, there are three criteria to which all Award licence holders must adhere. These criteria relate to the Award's Operational Principles, Code of Practice and Reciprocal Participation.

### The Operational Principles

- Participants must be between 14 and 24 years of age.
- The basic structure of the Award consists of the four mandatory sections: **Voluntary Service**, **Skills**, **Physical Recreation** and **Adventurous Journey**.
- There are three levels of Award: **Bronze** (for those aged 14 or over) \*, **Silver** (for those aged 15 or over) and **Gold** (for those aged 16 or over).
- The minimum period of participation for direct entrants to qualify for an Award is six months for **Bronze**, 12 months for **Silver**, and 18 months for a **Gold** Award.
- At **Gold** level, participants must undertake a **Gold Residential Project** away from home.

\*Based on direct entrant requirements. In Mauritius, The Award Office allows young people doing their Award at school to start their Award before their 14th birthday. This allows young people to start their Award journey together with their peers. Under these circumstances the young person must be older than 13.

### The Code of Practice

All operators and deliverers of the Award must:

- Maintain comparable standards of operating practice as advised by The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award.
- Manage the Award fairly and impartially in all respects.
- Ensure that the Award is open to all, subject to the age parameters.

### Reciprocal Participation

- All Award Operators agree, in so far as it is possible under individual national laws, to allow participants from any other licensed Operators to transfer their participation to them and to recognise the validity of achievements recorded by other Award Operators or Partners.

## The Award Framework

The Award Framework is the enduring structure of the Award that has changed little since its inception in 1956. A summary of the Award Framework’s levels and sections is shown below:

### The Levels



#### Bronze

For those over 14 years.  
6 months minimum participation.



#### Silver

For those over 15 years.  
12 months minimum participation.



#### Gold

For those over 16 years.  
18 months minimum participation.

### The Sections

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.

### Participant’s time requirement

Participants must persist for at least these minimum periods to achieve the required standards:

	Physical Recreation	Skills	Voluntary Service	Direct entrants	Adventurous Journey
Bronze	3 months / 13 weeks	3 months / 13 weeks	3 months / 13 weeks	<b>All participants must do an extra 3 months</b> in one of the following: Physical Recreation; or Skills; or Voluntary Service	2 days + 1 night
Silver	6 months / 26 weeks	6 months / 26 weeks	6 months / 26 weeks	<b>Non Bronze holders must do an extra 6 months</b> in one of the following: Physical Recreation; or Skills; or Voluntary Service	3 days + 2 nights
Gold*	12 months / 52 weeks	12 months / 52 weeks	12 months / 52 weeks	<b>Non Silver holders must do an extra 6 months</b> 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

## Award Outcomes

The Award can play a vital role in providing opportunities for young people to develop essential universal life skills, complementing their formal education or things they are learning in the workplace. This enables them to grow in confidence and in their ability to contribute positively to their communities. The Award's success and flexibility is evidenced by the fact that it has spread to more than 130 countries and territories.

Drawing on previous research undertaken on the Award and other youth organisations and existing research and recommendations on the outcomes of non-formal education, the Foundation has developed a description for the outcomes of the Award for young people. It has been found that the Award helps young people develop the following personal, social and emotional capabilities:



### 1. Confidence

Self-reliance, self-esteem, self-efficacy, capacity to act in one's own interest and need, self-belief and ability to shape your own life and the world around you.



### 2. Resilience and determination

Self-disciplined, self-management, self-motivated, focused, having a sense of purpose, persistent, self-controlled etc.



### 3. Relationships and leadership

Motivating others, valuing and contributing to team working, negotiating, establishing positive relationships, interpreting others, managing conflict, empathising etc.



### 4. Creativity and adaptability

Imagining alternative ways of doing things, applying learning in new contexts, enterprising, innovating, remaining open to new ideas, reading situations correctly and adapting as required.



### 5. Planning and problem solving

Navigating resources, organising, setting and achieving goals; decision making, researching, analysing, critical thinking, questioning and challenging, evaluating risks, reliability.



### 6. Managing feelings

Reviewing, self-awareness, self-control, reflecting, self-regulating, self accepting etc.



### 7. Communication

Explaining, expressing, presenting, listening, questioning, using different ways of communicating.



### 8. Personal and social well-being

A person's state of mind, relationship with the world around them and the fulfilment they get from life: well-being, life satisfaction.



### 9. Civic competence

The ability and willingness to engage in active participation, based on an attitude of trust in other people, in all the contexts of social life: school, local community, working place, recreational activities.



### 10. Intercultural competence








Ability to operate in different cultural settings (of different ages, skills, religions, languages, etc.) and adaptability to changing circumstances and ability to sense and respond to new contexts.

## Award Impacts

The Award has developed a number of impact measures by examining existing research and evidence on its effectiveness as a youth development programme. Much of this evidence is based on young people's own reports of how doing their Award has transformed their outlook.

It also takes into account the views of employers, educational institutions, parents and youth leaders. The impact measures have been benchmarked against international frameworks such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and against the development objectives of regional and international organisations such as the Commonwealth Youth Programme.

The Award's seven impact measures are:

-  **1. Improved employability and earning potential**  
Increase in employability and earning potential due to improved life skills.
-  **2. Improved physical health and fitness**  
Improved physical health due to increased long-term participation in physical activities.
-  **3. Improved mental health and emotional wellbeing**  
Improved mental health and emotional wellbeing due to increased social interaction, self-confidence, enhanced life skills and sense of purpose.
-  **4. Increased engagement with charitable and community causes**  
Increased engagement with charitable and community causes directly, through the **Voluntary Service** section of the Award, and indirectly, through increased likelihood of long-term participation in volunteering and other forms of community and local participation.
-  **5. Improved environmental impact**  
Increase in positive, or reduction in negative, environmental impacts as a result of behaviour change resulting from being more aware of environmental issues and having increased connection with and compassion for nature.
-  **6. Increased social cohesion**  
Increased social inclusion and community cohesion, not specifically captured by the other impacts in the framework. This encompasses the resources and relationships provided by people and society, including skills, knowledge, wellbeing, relationships, shared values and institutions.
-  **7. Reduced offending**  
Reduction in first-term off ending and reduction in reoffending by young off enders, due to long-term increased levels of physical activity, improved life skills, increased social inclusion and improved social skills resulting from increased levels of social interaction.