



Silver DofE Paddling Expedition Guide

This guide will help you prepare for your DofE practice and qualifying expeditions. Being prepared will ensure you get the most out of your DofE experience.



Hello!

Welcome to the Silver Paddling Expedition Section of your Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Congratulations for signing up - you are going to have an amazing time! Off Grid Adventures will be running your practice and qualifying expeditions and this guide will help you to prepare so that you have a fantastic experience in the outdoors. The expeditions will enable you to experience some wonderful scenery as well help develop your team work, navigation and campcraft. The expeditions are designed to be fun and enjoyable as well as enabling you to learn new skills along the way. We hope by the end of your qualifying expedition you will want to do more paddling in the future and perhaps go on to do your Gold!

What's it all about?

For the Silver Expedition Section of your DofE Award you need to plan, train for and complete an unaccompanied, self-reliant expedition with an agreed aim (a project whilst on expedition). You may have already completed your Bronze Award (well done!) and the Silver DofE Award is the next step up. The Silver Expedition Section is longer and tougher than Bronze. You have also chosen a different mode of transport (paddling) but it is just as rewarding. Plus, you get to spend longer with your friends outdoors!

Your training will start on your practice expedition where you will cover all aspects of how to safely paddle your boat as a team. You will learn about rivers and how to keep safe as well as how to capsize! As well as specifics for paddling, you will also be learning about expedition food, dry bag packing, first aid, emergency procedures, river navigation, route planning and camp craft skills. In fact, everything you need to know to prepare you for your qualifying expedition. Your team will also be asked to come up with an aim or project to do whilst on your qualifying expedition (your instructor will talk about this in your training), which you will have to present to your assessor on the last day. Finally, you will participate in a qualifying expedition where you will demonstrate to your assessor everything you have learned. The assessor will use the DofE 20 Conditions to ensure that you and your team have successfully passed your assessment. Have a read of them on the next page to know what you are expected to do. You can also find the DofE 20 Conditions at www.dofe.org/20conditions



The 20 Conditions of the Expedition section

DofE qualifying expedition conditions	
Planning the expedition	1 The team must plan and organise the expedition; all members of the team should be able to describe the role they have played in planning.
	2 The expedition must have an aim. The aim can be set by the Leader at Bronze level only.
	3 All participants must be within the qualifying age of the programme level and at the same Award level (i.e. not have completed the same or higher level of expedition).
	4 There must be between four and seven participants in a team (eight for modes of travel which have tandem)
	5 The expedition should take place in the recommended environment. <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; margin-top: 5px;"> <div style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 2px; width: 30%;"> Bronze: Expeditions should be in normal rural countryside – familiar and local to groups. </div> <div style="border: 1px solid grey; padding: 2px; width: 30%;"> Silver: Expeditions should be in normal rural, open countryside or forest – unfamiliar to groups. </div> <div style="border: 1px solid gold; padding: 2px; width: 30%;"> Gold: Expeditions should be in wild country (remote from habitation) which is unfamiliar to groups. </div> </div>
	6 Accommodation must be by camping or other simple self-catering accommodation (e.g. camping barns or bunkhouses).
	7 The expedition must be of the correct duration and meet the minimum hours of planned activity. <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; margin-top: 5px;"> <div style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 2px; width: 30%;"> Bronze: A minimum of 2 days, 1 night; 6 hours planned activity each day. </div> <div style="border: 1px solid grey; padding: 2px; width: 30%;"> Silver: A minimum of 3 days, 2 nights; 7 hours planned activity each day. </div> <div style="border: 1px solid gold; padding: 2px; width: 30%;"> Gold: A minimum of 4 days, 3 nights; 8 hours planned activity each day. </div> </div>
	8 All expeditions must be supervised by an adult (the Expedition Supervisor) who is able to accept responsibility for the safety of the team.
	9 Assessment must be by an accredited Assessor. At Bronze level only, the Assessor may also be the Expedition Supervisor.
	10 Expeditions will usually take place between the end of March and the end of October. They may take place outside this period, if so, non-camping accommodation options should be considered.
Training and practice	11 Participants must be adequately trained to safely undertake a remotely supervised expedition in the environment in which they will be operating. <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; margin-top: 5px;"> <div style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 2px; width: 30%;"> Bronze: Teams must complete the required training. </div> <div style="border: 1px solid grey; padding: 2px; width: 30%;"> Silver: Teams must complete the required training and a practice expedition of a minimum 2 days, 2 nights. </div> <div style="border: 1px solid gold; padding: 2px; width: 30%;"> Gold: Teams must complete the required training and a practice expedition of a minimum 2 days, 2 nights </div> </div>
	12 All expeditions must be by the participants' own physical effort, without motorised or outside assistance. Mobility aids may be used where appropriate to the needs of the participant.
During the expedition	13 All expeditions must be unaccompanied and self-sufficient. The team must be properly equipped, and supervision must be carried out remotely.
	14 Teams must possess the necessary physical fitness, first aid and expedition skills required to complete their expedition safely.
	15 Groups must adhere to a mobile phone use policy as agreed with their Expedition Supervisor and Assessor. This agreement should also include use of other electronic equipment.
	16 Participants must behave responsibly with respect for their team members, Leaders, the public and animals.
	17 Groups must understand and adhere to the Countryside /Scottish Outdoor Access, Highway and Water Sports Codes (as appropriate).
	18 Participants must plan an appropriate expedition menu, including cooking and eating a substantial hot meal on each day. This is optional on the final day.
Post expedition	19 Participants must actively participate in a debrief with their Assessor at the end of the expedition.
	20 At Silver and Gold level, a presentation must be prepared and delivered after the expedition.

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This guide

This guide will give you information about what to bring, how to pack and what is the best expedition food. We also cover how your supervision will work when you are on expedition. Attached to this guide will be the dates for your practice and qualifying expeditions as well as where they start and finish. If you have any specific questions about the expeditions then please speak to your DofE Manager at school.

Image consent

Off Grid Adventures may on occasion take photographs or video footage of the expeditions in which you may feature. By agreeing to participate in the expedition you are agreeing to these photographs and videos possibly being used for our website or marketing purposes. If you or your parent/guardian do not want your image to be used, please inform us in writing (email address is below) before the expedition starts.

Medical information

It is important that the expedition team leader and instructors are aware of any medical needs you have that are relevant to the expedition. We ask the school to share this information with us on the morning of both expeditions to ensure we have full knowledge of any condition that may affect how you participate. We are usually able to make adaptations. If you take medication, we ask you to bring this and keep it in the top of your rucksack. If you use an auto-injector, the instructor will ask you to explain how it is used to them and the rest of your team in case of an emergency. If there is anything you feel the instructor should know that is not on your medical form, please inform them on the morning of the expedition. The school shares the medical information but we do not hold any medical information about you. Please see our privacy policy at offgridadventures.co.uk for more information about how we deal with personal records.

Communication and electronic devices

In order for your expedition to be self-reliant (Condition 13) we don't allow you to bring your phones on either expedition. You have to rely on your navigation and each other instead! Phones are expensive and if they get broken or lost we are unable to look for them. As the expeditions are all about being part of a team, we don't allow devices that play music (e.g. an ipod). If you want to take photos for your project, bring a traditional camera. You need to bring a watch on expedition but please don't bring a GPS compatible watch as this would mean you are not self-reliant. By the way, participants have told us that they have really enjoyed being away from their screens for this short time! We do give each team an emergency phone and teach you how to use it and when to

use it. If your parent/guardian needs to contact you in an emergency, they can contact the school's duty staff who will send a message to you.

Supervision

Being ready for the qualifying expedition means that your team is self-sufficient: they can navigate unaccompanied between checkpoints, put up and take down a tent, carry their own equipment and cook a meal. Your training prepares you for that. Following your training sessions,, your instructor will be supporting you and your team to make decisions about your expedition. The instructor will shadow you at first on the water and then when they feel confident of your competency, they will enable you to paddle further between checkpoints (where an instructor will meet you and check in with the team). At the end of the practice expedition, your instructor needs to be confident that your team can complete their qualifying expedition. On the qualifying expedition there will be the team leader (supervisor), who is there to support you, and the assessor (who assesses whether you have met the DofE 20 Conditions). The assessor will offer guidance if necessary. The assessors and team leader will meet you at agreed checkpoints along your planned route and will be at your campsite to observe your campcraft. You will also be reminded how to use the emergency phone. The team leader and assessors will have a good idea of where the team is and how they are progressing. This is called 'remote supervision': it allows the team to get on with the expedition with minimal intervention.



What equipment do you need?

It is important to remember that everything you bring with you - you have to carry yourself in your canoe for the whole expedition! Our comprehensive kit list identifies everything you need but you can save space with lightweight materials and packing carefully.

Group kit

Your team will be provided with boats, buoyancy aids, tents and Trangia stoves for cooking. Your instructor will train you how to put up and take down your tents and how to use the stove safely. Off Grid Adventures also provides you with maps and compasses. You are welcome to bring your own compass too but show it to your instructor before using it.

Personal kit

The kit outlined below is recommended by the DofE. Please read through it carefully. You can use the kit list to check off each item. Off Grid Adventures does hire out dry bags, roll mats and sleeping bags if you don't want to buy them (see your DofE manager for details). However, if you buy them you could get plenty of use out of them if you go paddling and camping in the future.

Dry bags

On expedition, you will be storing in your boat your own kit plus all your food plus part of a tent or a cooking stove. Therefore, you have to make sure your dry bag or bags are big enough to do this. You can use one big bag and a smaller dry bag for things you need to access easily such as personal medication and lunch. When everything is packed they shouldn't weigh more than a quarter of your own body weight. Therefore, if you weigh 50kg, your dry bags shouldn't weigh more than 12.5kg. When packing the bag, you need to push your kit down to get air out of the bag. You can leave a little air in it in case it goes overboard as this will help it to float. Make sure you leave room at the top to fold the bag over the thick strip of plastic and clip the ends together.



Sleeping mat

You can buy a mat that rolls up - these are light but bulky. Or buy a mat that self inflates - these are comfy and pack down small but they can be heavy. There are no air pumps so avoid the 'mattress' style sleeping mats. Avoid yoga mats as they won't last outside and are very thin.

Sleeping bag



A good night's sleep is essential on expeditions so make sure your sleeping bag is warm and comfortable. It also needs to pack down small. Think about the location of your expedition and the time of year - the label will tell you the right season (2-3 seasons) for that sleeping bag. You can buy a sleeping bag liner in case it does get colder. There are loads of options but the DofE recommends the mummy-shaped Vango Nitestar, Latitude, Ultralite Pro, Olympus Pro, and Zenith sleeping bags. You don't need a pillow - you can use your fleece!

Footwear

Good footwear will make any expedition much more enjoyable. There are several options when paddling:

- Old Trainers with a pair of waterproof socks (i.e. Sealskinz socks) work well
- Wellington boots are a suitable option for canoeing
- Water shoes are fine but they need to have a substantial sole to protect your feet from

sharp objects

- It is important that the footwear must be able to stay on your feet if you were to capsize or get in the water.

You can also bring a pair of trainers, sliders or crocs for wearing around camp but you can only wear trainers when cooking for safety reasons. In addition, bring two or three pairs of warm socks to keep your feet warm around camp and in bed. Sealskinz waterproof socks are great for keeping your feet warm and dry when paddling.

Waterproofs

Waterproof jackets and trousers protect you from the wind, rain and cold. They are essential.

- Make sure they ARE waterproof and not shower proof - check they are waterproofed with Gore-Tex or a polyurethane (PU) lining
- The jacket should have a hood
- Use waterproof trousers which have wide legs or zipped trousers which make them easier to put on/take off over boots.

Clothes

Expedition clothing should be warm but lightweight. Layers are the key to a successful expedition. Thermal base layers and fleeces work well. Avoid cotton (including jeans) as it doesn't keep you warm, it gets heavy when wet and takes ages to dry. Walking trousers are preferable to leggings because they are lightweight and dry quickly. Participants always regret bringing thick hoodies because they are heavy and don't dry. Use our kit list to guide you. Hats are important - woolly in Spring and Autumn and a sun hat in the summer. You can also wear them in bed to keep warm. Bring a swimming costume to wear whilst paddling and a towel.

Water carriers

You need to be drinking two litres of water per day on expedition. We recommend using two one litre bottles made of clear and hard-wearing plastic. You can pack them on the outside of your rucksack in each pocket. This makes them easily accessible and you can see how much water you have left. Some people prefer 'bladder water systems' but these are in your rucksack so you cannot see how much water you have drunk. They can also leak. Avoid 'gym style' two litre bottles because they don't fit in a rucksack pocket and they are heavy.



Eating utensils

Bring a plastic bowl for food and a mug for drinks. Bring a spork or a lightweight knife, fork and spoon set. If you need a knife to prepare your food, make sure you



only use it at the campsite under your instructor's supervision. **Penknives are not allowed and will be removed and returned to you at the end of the expedition.**

First Aid Kit

Your own personal, small first aid kit is really useful. Buy a basic kit or create one yourself. We suggest you include the following: blister plasters, ordinary plasters, cleansing wipes, bandage, sterile dressing, small scissors and plastic gloves. Always bring your personal medication too.

Washbag

This should contain essentials such as soap, toothbrush and toothpaste, deodorant and sanitary products. Nothing else is needed.

Other stuff

A **watch** is really important because it is a navigation aid for working out your route timings and checkpoints. Borrow a watch if you don't have one - remember that you won't have your phone. Bring a **torch** - preferably a head torch but any is fine, just remember to check the batteries! Most new rucksacks include a **whistle** to attract attention. **Sun cream** is essential. You will be out all day and you never know when the sun is going to come out.



Shop discounts!

Every young person who is planning to do their DofE Expedition can save money on expedition stuff at most outdoor shops (see below) both in store and online. Just tell them you are doing DofE and they will usually give you a discount. Show them your card and tell them you are doing DofE and they will usually give you a discount. If they don't - go somewhere else!

 GOoutdoors.co.uk	 Blacks.co.uk	 Millets.co.uk	 Ultimateoutdoors.com	 Tiso.com
Extra 10% off the GO Outdoors Discount Card price. Inspiring everyone to get outdoors, for less... and love it as much as we do.	15% off the current selling price. Includes reduced price items. Proud to be a part of your outdoor life.	15% off the current selling price. Includes reduced price items. The destination for family adventure.	15% off the current selling price. Includes reduced price items. The number one destination for all things outdoors.	15% off the retail price. Scotland's leading specialist retailer for outdoor clothing, camping equipment and climbing gear.
Always show your DofE Card or Voucher. You'll get the best savings and help support young people to do their DofE.				

Dry bag packing

The way you pack your dry bag is important. You will get training on this at school or on the practice but it is good to know in advance. Remember to leave room for part of the tent or stove on expedition. You WILL be carrying one of these items - unless you have an exemption for medical reasons. Pack clothing and food in separate dry bags or thick plastic bags. This will keep your stuff dry and help you find things. Pack essential items such as lunch, water, snacks, personal meds, first aid kit and waterproofs somewhere accessible such as the top of your dry bag. Items such as dinner, sleeping bag and spare clothes - can be packed lower down.

What food should you bring?

Bringing the right amount and type of food on your expedition is key to making it successful and enjoyable. The table below shows you what meals you need to pack.

Silver Training/Practice Expedition			
Day 1	n/a	Lunch	Dinner
Day 2	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
Day 3	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
Day 4	Breakfast	Lunch	

Silver Qualifying Expedition			
Day 1	n/a	Lunch	Dinner
Day 2	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
Day 3	Breakfast	Lunch	n/a

Working as a team is part of meeting the DofE's 20 conditions and this can include menu planning. Once you are in your team, talk about what meals you could prepare together. This way, each of you could bring part of a meal rather than everyone bringing a big pack of pasta for example. Preparing a meal as part of a team is really enjoyable and it also means less waste and less packaging. By the way, this team didn't carry their own table and chairs - they found them!



Expedition food

Expedition food should be high in slow-release energy. You need about 2500 calories each day as a minimum. The days are long, your brain is working hard and so are your feet! Below are some ideas for expedition food but check out the DofE website too. We strongly recommend that you try out the food you want to bring before you go on the expedition. You may not like it and will have to bring something else.



Please don't bring nuts or nut-based food. Nuts can have serious implications for those around you. We are unable to guarantee a nut-free expedition as so many products say 'traces of nuts' but we ask you to avoid bringing the obvious such as peanut butter, Nutella, pesto (it has pine nuts), nut-based energy bars and nuts! If you have any food allergies, make sure this is evident on your medical form and let us know about your medication.

Breakfast

Breakfast is essential because it gives you the energy you need to get going. Breakfast high in calories is important. Porridge oats are our top tip because oats are high in slow-release energy. After a night of camping, porridge warms you up too. Add dried fruits and seeds for an energy boost. Alternative breakfast options are chocolate-filled crepes or high-energy breakfast bars - but these only provide a short energy boost. Hot chocolate also provides warmth and calories to start your day. Bacon and sausages are not advisable because they can go off in hot weather.



Lunch

Sandwiches, rolls or wraps are great for lunch. Fill them with a protein such as hummus, salami, chicken or cheese and salad. They are easy to carry and low waste. Bean or chickpea salad in a small tupperware provides protein and carbohydrates to fill you up. You won't be able to boil water at lunchtime for heating your lunch. You can cook food at the camp for lunch but remember that thermos flasks are heavy to carry. You can have a hot breakfast and dinner.



Dinner

You must have one hot meal a day and this is usually dinner on our expeditions. Why not plan a meal with your team before the expedition and try it out? It is enjoyable to cook with others and enables you to share the weight of ingredients and cost.

Groups options include:

- Dried pasta, sauce and cheese. There are many types of pasta and they all take different lengths of time to cook. Check out the label and agree to buy the same type. Also check if someone needs gluten free. You need about 100g per person. There are lots of pasta sauces - avoid pesto because it contains nuts! Grate cheese at home and bring it with you. Or bring some dried sausage like chorizo or pepperami to add to the pot - it has a high calorie count.
- Pre-cooked lentils and a sauce work well.
- Boil in the bag rice and a sauce with cheese or dried sausage.
- Tortellini and ravioli with a sauce and cheese is another option.

Solo options

If you prefer to just bring a meal for yourself you could choose:

- Wayfayrer style, or equivalent, survival meals provide you with all the energy you need. Choose ones where you put the bag in hot water to heat rather than those where you have to add boiling water to the bag which can be tricky and could risk burning your hands.
- Avoid pasta and sauce in one. They are cheap but not very nutritious. Also, check the label - it often says add milk - participants said they don't taste great without it!
- Avoid pot noodles - they have a low calorie count, contribute to more waste and don't fill you up!



Snacks

Snacks to graze on are a great way to keep your energy levels high. Great snacks to bring are energy bars, malt loaf, dried fruits and seeds and chocolate bars (except on a hot day!). Crisps take up room! Don't forget your sweets - a good pick-me-up but not to be relied on for the whole expedition!



Washing up



After breakfast and dinner you will be expected to scrub your own bowls and utensils as well as the stoves and pans. Pads that contain soap such as Brillo pads are the best way to do this and they take up little room. A tea-towel for drying up is handy. Arrange with your team who could bring these items.

Reducing waste

We are committed to reducing waste on our expeditions and so are the campsites we use. Many of these are run by volunteer Scouts and Guides. As a result, they usually don't have bins because there are no staff to put them out for collection regularly. The campsites expect you to take your rubbish home with you. This will help you to think about packaging if you know you have to bring it home. It also takes up precious room in your rucksack. To reduce waste, try our top tips:

- Test food at home before the expedition. If you don't like it, you can bring something else. There are no bins to leave leftover food so plan your food and portions carefully.
- Bring fruit with a skin on - cut up fruit in a plastic box takes up room and you have to bring the box home.
- Bring lunch in a tupperware box (it is reusable - you could use it as your bowl for dinner!), plastic bags (you can reuse) or tinfoil. Avoid shop bought sandwiches with lots of packaging.
- Agree dinner as a team and share out the ingredients, this avoids everyone bringing a bag of pasta and then having to bring the extra home.
- Choose Wayfayrer-style meals over pot noodles because they take less room.
- Choose recyclable pots and packaging that you can bring home and put in your home recycling bin.
- Choose snacks that can pack down such as energy bars.



up

REMEMBER, YOU WILL BE BRINGING HOME YOUR PACKAGING!



Silver Paddling Expedition Kit List

Item	I've got it...	It's packed...
Personal medication		
Dry bag (60-70 litre) and an optional smaller dry bag		
1 pair of trainers or water shoes or wellingtons		
2-3 pairs of warm socks		
2-3 t-shirts		
1 fleece top or similar (no hoodies)		
2-3 pairs of walking trousers or long shorts (NOT jeans)		
Underwear		
Nightwear (teddy optional)		
Swimming costume and towel		
Flip-flops/trainers/sliders etc. (optional for campsite use after cooking)		
Warm hat or sun hat depending on date of expedition		
Gloves for paddling (optional)		
Waterproof jacket		
Waterproof over-trousers		
Sleeping bag		
Sleeping mat		
Whistle (sometimes these are built into the rucksack chest strap)		
Torch (hand held or head torch) and spare batteries		
Basic First Aid kit		
Expedition food (including snacks)		
Two water bottles (enough for 2 litres)		
Knife, fork, spoon or Spork NO PENKNIVES		
Bowl and mug		
Box of long matches (in waterproof bag) - avoid storm matches		
Wash kit/personal hygiene items, small towel		
Notebook and pen/pencil for your aim/project		
Watch (not GPS compatible)		
Sunglasses		
Sun Cream		
Soap filled pads for washing up		
Bin bag to take home your personal rubbish		