



## Duke of Ed Expedition Overview

Somerset is a listed Activity Provider with the Duke of Ed, supporting the ethos and ideals of The Award, and offering Duke of Ed expeditions to school students since the early 1980's.

Students are supported on their journey by our well-established infrastructure, our extensive support network and are accompanied by a qualified Group Leader for the entirety of the expedition.

We offer tent-based journeys from campsite to campsite across all Award levels: Bronze, Silver and Gold!

### Pre-Expedition at Home

- Students will be provided with a Pre-Expedition Logbook and Pre-Journey notes, which need to be completed prior to arriving at Somerset. This is part of your Prep & Training, and will be checked off by your Group Leader.
- Equipment Lists, equipment selection and packing tips will be provided.
- Meal information, food suggestions and ideas will be provided.
- Our online [BLOG](#) provides many useful Fact Sheets Gear Gossip and Expedition Eats.

### Meet at Base Camp prior to your Expedition

- Upon arrival you will meet up with your fellow group members and Group Leader.
- The Group Leader will distribute any gear hired or purchased from Somerset, and run through all your gear and food to ensure it is adequate.
- Gear will also be repacked and waterproofed where appropriate.
- Rucksacks will then be weighed (including full water bottles). To assist with your gear selection and packing at home please use the following weights as a guide:
  - Bronze max 12kg
  - Silver max 14kg
  - Gold max 16kg
  - We recommend packing 2kgs below these limits so you can fit group equipment distributed at camp.
- Any unnecessary or excess items will be stored at Base until the completion of the expedition.
- Tent buddies and team configurations will be worked out based on numbers, genders and friends within the group.
- Maps and Route Planning Sheets will be handed and your group will then write-up your route plan.
- Expedition Logbooks will be provided to be completed on expedition. Don't forget a pen or pencil.
- Further **Prep and Training** such as camp-craft, safety, first aid, food and gear selection and navigation, will be covered in the **Prep and Training Day for Bronze Practice participants**.

For **Silver and Gold Practice participants there is no separate preliminary training day**, but the topics will still be worked through in the first hour after arrival, and continued during the first expedition day and night.

### Returning to Base Camp after your Expedition

- All students end up back at Somerset Base at the end of their expedition to:
  - clean / dry any equipment used for the expedition;
  - wash Trangia stoves, dry tents;
  - sort and return gear;
  - pack up all equipment neatly.
- Debrief with their group and Group Leader.
- Group Leader will sight Logs and note it as being completed to a suitable standard, and that you have fully engaged and successfully completed the AJ.
- Grab any contact details for any new friends as you may like to line-up a future expedition with them.
- Whilst waiting for your lift home, start on some notes for your Journey Log while it is still fresh in your mind.

## Post Expedition

- Students are provided with a link to access photos taken with their group camera.
- Somerset can read and assess and approve your Log or Report.
- And certify your successful attendance in the ORB.
- Details of how to go about this are outlined here [Journey Reports and Assessor Sign-off Instructions](#)
- Link to Duke of Ed Journey Report Templates [Bronze Template](#) | [Silver Template](#) | [Gold Template](#)

### PREPARATION and TRAINING

Our aim is to provide an open environment in which the students gain a solid base of knowledge and skills which can then be further built upon.

Prep & Training is conducted at Somerset Base on the first day of a Bronze Practice. Students learn how to pack their gear correctly and complete a route plan for the expedition. Training covers all areas essential for safety and general well-being whilst on expedition including:

- Planning and preparation of an Expedition;
- Map reading and navigation;
- Basic first aid and safety;
- Food, water and equipment requirements;
- Campcraft;
- How to pack/re-pack their gear correctly.
- Students will also complete a route plan in preparation for their Expedition.

### PRACTICE

The Practice Expedition will take the fundamentals learnt during the Preparation & Training and grounds them in a real-time experience.

Students are given roles throughout the Expedition to improve on the skills they learn during the Training and the Group Leader gives lessons and training along the way.

When they reach their camp-site they are involved in a session that covers all aspects of the camping experience. On the final day students pack up their campsite and head out onto the last leg of their hike.

### QUALIFYING

The Qualifying Expedition has the aim of allowing students to apply the skills they gained during the Preparation & Training and Practice Expedition in a practical setting.

Students are given the responsibility of leadership and ownership of their Expedition with the Group Leader being in a position to simply supervise the Expedition, assess the application of student's skills and step in only for safety or to get students back on track.

All students end up back at Somerset Base Camp at the end of their expedition to clean / dry and sort any gear used for the expedition, pack up all equipment neatly and debrief with their Group Leader.

### COMBO OPTION

The option to stay overnight and complete the Practice and Qualifying Expeditions in the one visit to Camp Somerset is provided for students.



Students participating in their Silver Adventurous Journey at Somerset

## BRONZE

The Bronze Expeditions are the beginning of the passage through the Duke of Edinburgh Adventurous Journeys. The Preliminary Training and Bronze Expeditions are important in laying the foundations of basic navigation, camp-craft and team skills to build on throughout the following Silver and Gold levels.

Students start their Practice mid-morning after finalising their training. They are given roles throughout the expedition to improve on the skills they learnt during the training and the Group Leader gives lessons and training along the way.

Skills learnt and experiences gained are also valuable to students as they emerge from adolescence to adulthood.

## SILVER

The Silver Expedition journeys to campsites more remote than those explored in the Bronze expedition. The Silver Journey is about learning new skills and refreshing the knowledge gained during the Bronze Award. It introduces a new mode of travel and an added challenge, to widen the skills for all participants, and allows different areas of the Colo Valley to be opened up for exploration.

The Group Leader plays more of a supervisory role on the Silver expedition. The Group Leader's more passive role allows for the students to experience a greater sense of self sufficiency and insists on them having a stronger role within the group to ensure its success. It is often found that each individual will discover strengths and weaknesses that the group can share and benefit from or offer encouragement to help overcome.

The canoe leg is not necessarily first, it can also be done after the hiking. You will find out the order upon arrival and be given plenty of time to prepare for whichever mode of travel is first. Before canoeing, students will have a briefing about safety on the river, including information about what to do if the canoe capsizes, how to wear a PFD correctly, and the different strokes used.

The hiking part of the expedition also covers new areas of the Valley. The challenge of the hike explores more difficult terrain, with both tracked and untracked areas covered, providing a greater sense of achievement once completed.

Students learn to work as a team and assist each other. The campsites visited are more remote than those visited at Bronze level. Campsites will have fewer facilities and you may have to dig a hole for toileting.

## GOLD

Gold is the final step towards gaining all Duke of Edinburgh Awards. It is the most challenging expedition, with skills and knowledge gained during the previous levels drawn upon and applied in a more remote setting. It may be the most demanding, but also the most satisfying to complete!

The Group Leader's responsibility is to oversee the expedition and ensure students are on the right track. The Group Leader takes a much more passive during the Gold expedition, particularly the Qualifying, compared to the previous levels. This allows for the students to truly step-up to their full potential and excel.

Gold participants visit some of Somerset's remotely located campsites, more remote and different than those visited at Silver level, with some having no vehicular access, nor toileting facilities (you will have to dig a hole).

Students are expected to apply all the skills and information they have gained throughout their previous expeditions and work as a team to explore both tracked and untracked areas of the Colo Valley and Wollemi National Park.

Students learn to rely on each other for support and to build team morale as well as factor in each individual's strengths and weaknesses. Problem solving is a key role played in this level of expedition and students are expected to focus on achieving the best possible solution.



Students participating in their Adventurous Journey at Somerset