



The Compass Award

Frequently Asked Questions

Award Requirements

Q. Can I start the Award before I am 10 years old?

A. No. Students must be 10 years of age to be included in the insurance cover.

Q. I am in Year 7 and I wish to commence the Award. Do I have to work through Levels 1 and 2 before I start Level 3?

A. No. You can go straight into Level 3, although you can do levels 1 and 2 if you have time.

Q. Is there a special starting date?

A. No. You can commence the Award at any date, but obviously, if you wish to complete a level within the school year, the sooner you start, the better.

Q. When do I have to finish?

A. You should aim to complete Level 4 by your 14th birthday.

Q. Can I do two levels at the one time?

A. No. You must complete one level at a time. Generally you should aim to complete one level each year, so that by the time you are 14, you are old enough to start your Duke of Edinburgh's Award Bronze level.

Q. Does the time I've spent on Level 3 count towards the time I will have to spend on activities in Level 4?

A. No. Each level is separate.

Q. I've lost my book. What should I do about getting a new one?

A. Contact the Award office, so that a replacement can be sent to you. There is a fee for replacement books.

Sections of the Award - General

Q. Can I complete activities I choose in class or during school time?

A. The aim of the Award is to challenge you and to extend your skills and build confidence. You will need to go outside your day to day 'comfort zone'. Therefore whilst you may use a school activity you should demonstrate that you have done something extra in your own time.

Q. Do the activities have to be done via a club or outside school organisation?

A. No, you can join a team or do it on your own, concentrate on something you're already doing or try something completely different - it's up to you.

Q. Can I do the same activities from for each Level of the Award?

A. You can stay with the same activity, but you should be setting harder goals and work on improving and building on skills. However, the spirit of the Award is to try new things and seek new challenges and you should always look on each new level as an opportunity to commence something new.



Sections of the Award - General (continued)

Q. Can I change the activity half way through a level?

A. You are encouraged to stick at something as long as possible. However, if the activity is proving too difficult, you may change. We want you to have fun, but before you change, discuss the matter with your teacher and parents. There may be a way of modifying the first activity so that you can complete the requirements.

Q. Can I count one activity for different parts of the Award?

A. Yes, but only if you set different goals within that activity, placing a different emphasis on each section so you don't double count any time you spend on the activity. However, you are strongly urged to try something new, which offers different challenges.

Q. How do I tell if my activity is counted as Volunteering rather than a Hobby/Skill?

A. The important element of Volunteering, is that you are helping someone else. The Hobbies/Skill section is for you to improve something for yourself.

Q. How do I tell if my activity is counted as Physical Activity or a Hobby/Skill?

A. Physical Activity should increase your heart rate or physical strength, whereas a Skill increases your knowledge and understanding. It is a more passive activity.

Sections of the Award - Specific

Q. Is ballet (or any type of dancing) counted as a Hobby/Skill or Physical Activity?

A. The performance of dance is Physical Recreation, as you are becoming fitter through your involvement and increasing your heart rate. To be included as a Skill your efforts would need to be more passive; you could concentrate on the theory or history of ballet or choreography.

Q. Is yoga a Hobby/Skill or Physical Activity?

A. Because you are increasing your heart rate and becoming fitter it counts as a Physical Activity. However, as for ballet, if you study the history behind yoga it would then be a Skill.

Q. Can I volunteer at a friends shop and count it towards my Volunteering or Hobbies/Skill Section?

A. No, it can't be counted for either section because it is benefitting the business and not the community.

Q. Can I count umpiring as Volunteering?

A. Yes, as long as you are not being paid for doing it.

Q. Can I count umpiring as Physical Activity?

A. Yes, if the purpose of doing it is to increase your fitness level and it is done without payment.

Q. Is learning to handball or kick a football Physical Activity or Hobby/Skill?

A. Even though you are learning a new skill it is still a Physical Activity, because you are getting active and increasing your heart rate.

Q. Can I count the LOTE subject I am learning at school as my Hobby?

A. Yes, but you would need to go beyond the classroom and homework activities set by your teacher and do extra activities in your own time.



Assessors

Q. Who can be my Assessor?

A. It should be someone over the age of 18 who has special knowledge or experience of your activity and can report on your progress.

Q. Can my parents or brother/sister be my Assessors?

A. It is recommended that you go beyond your family whenever possible. However, for some activities your parents may be the only choice because they have been with you as an escort on an excursion or walk.

Q. Can my peers be my Assessors?

A. No, but they may be involved with your instruction.

Exploration (specific to Level 4 - 2 days & 1 night expedition)

Q. Can I count camping with my family?

A. Yes, provided that you take on a major role in leading and organising the activity and that your parents have a suitable level of experience.

Q. Can I stay in a caravan park or youth hostel?

A. Yes, however it is recommended that you experience living in a tent.

Q. Do school camps count?

A. Yes they can, provided they meet the Award requirements and you play a significant part in the planning, training and preparation. A school camp, where you stay in huts and eat meals prepared for you, would not qualify.

Q. Is traveling from school to the camp destination counted in the time requirement?

A. No. The activity commences when you start walking with your pack, get into a kayak or hop on a bike.

Q. Who is in charge of the expedition?

A. The exploration must be supervised by an adult who accepts responsibility of the group while on the exploration. The Award office expects that the leader or instructor properly prepares you for the expedition by providing training beforehand. If there is concern about safety, the adult has the right to call off the trip until conditions or circumstances improve. On the trip you and your peers may decide to elect a Participant leader, who can help make decisions like where to set up tents & when to eat. If your parents are not accompanying you, you will need to get parent permission forms signed.

Q. What do I need to do for my report/reflection?

A. You need to write brief details about the purpose and results of the trip in your Record Book. You may also choose or be asked to provide an additional report/reflection such as a written or oral report or you may choose to draw pictures or take photos. Remember that your trip should not just be a journey, but a specific mission to learn something new about a location, the history or geography.

Changing schools

Q. What should I do if I change schools?

A. You can continue to complete the requirements of The Compass Award at another school which is operating the program. If you change schools, please ask your Coordinator to contact Awards Victoria so that your records can be amended. It may also be possible to complete The Award as an Independent Participant. You are always welcome to seek advice from Awards Victoria.





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