

## Expedition Approval Policy for D of E Expeditions on Foot

### Leaders Qualifications

Bedford Modern School believes that the best way of proving the competence of leaders is by them undertaking National Governing Body Qualifications that have an assessment element such as Basic Expedition Leader (BEL), Countryside Leader Award (CLA), Hill and Moorland Leader (HML) and Mountain Leader (ML) etc.

A system of internal assessment for D of E leaders without NGB awards is in place within the Direct Licensed Centre (DLC). This internal assessment does not replace NGB qualifications and will be monitored on a regular basis by the DLC Manager, Dr Hayley Yuille. The DLC gives full encouragement/support for staff to attend NGB awards. Non-qualified leaders should be the exception rather than the rule.

The leader's qualifications need to be matched to the terrain in which the expedition teams will be working and for simplicity this terrain has been split into three distinct categories.

Terrain Level	Description of Terrain	NGB Qualification	Internal Verification	First Aid required
Level 1	Terrain that is <600 metres in height, and not more than 30 minutes on foot from a public road or habitation where it would be reasonable to get help. Walking should be mainly on footpaths with clearly identifiable features and landmarks. Areas enclosed by well-defined geographical or man-made boundaries such as classified roads.	Basic Expedition Leader (BEL)  Countryside Leader Award (CLA)  Lowland Leader Award (LLA)	Experience of Bronze Expeditions along with Local knowledge of the area and with the ability to read OS maps competently.  New staff are mentored for 2 expeditions by experienced staff / Technical advisor and have demonstrated they are competent navigators. This is signed off by the DLC Manager or Technical Expert	8-hour first aid course
Level 2	Terrain that includes open, uncultivated, non-mountainous, high or remote country known variously as upland, moor, bog, fell, hill or down. Areas enclosed by well-defined geographical or man-made boundaries such as classified roads. (Areas that merge with mountain regions and	Hill and Moorland Leader (HML)	Experience of D of E expeditions in this area and terrain.  Show and maintain safe practice during expeditions and have good navigational skills	16-hour first aid course

	<p>do not have well defined boundaries are excluded.)</p> <p>Areas of remoteness that are easily exited in a few hours, returning to a refuge or an accessible road.</p> <p>Areas where movement on steep or rocky terrain is not required (in either a planned or unplanned situation)</p>		<p>New staff are mentored for 2 expeditions. They will have received formal instruction or can demonstrate knowledge of mountain conditions and are able to navigate in inclement weather. This is signed off by the DLC Manager or Technical Expert</p>	
Level 3	<p>Any terrain including that above where there are no clear boundaries and are classed as mountainous or where steep or rocky terrain may be encountered.</p>	<p>Mountain Leader (ML)</p>	<p>Experience of D of E expeditions in this area and terrain – log book evidence to demonstrate knowledge of the area. Show and maintain safe practice of the following during expeditions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group management</li> <li>• Navigation</li> <li>• Access and the environment</li> <li>• Hazards (including steep ground and rivers) and emergency procedures</li> <li>• Equipment</li> <li>• Expedition skills</li> <li>• Weather</li> <li>• Background knowledge</li> </ul> <p>This is signed off by the DLC Manager or Technical Expert</p>	<p>16-hour first aid course</p>

## **Scope of Qualifications**

All of the above are for operation in summer conditions only. Any DofE Leaders planning expedition Training or Expeditions outside of these conditions must receive approval from the DLC's Outdoor Education Coordinator / Technical Expert and the School EVC (Mr Price). Leaders should be aware that in some parts of the UK winter conditions can be experienced in most months of the year.

A Group Leader wishing to conduct the expedition in a new area should either conduct a recce, have documented evidence of prior experience in the area (walking logbook entries) or this experience is sourced externally from an alternative Activity Provider (AAP).

A good example would be running a Gold expedition in the Cairngorms – a recce would be required prior to taking a group into this area in order that the technical aspects of the region could be correctly assessed, and control measures put in place that reduce the risk to "as Low as Reasonably Practical".

## **Internal Assessment**

Bedford Modern School offers the opportunity for leaders to be internally assessed for technical competency by our Technical Expert.

However, competency is monitored on a regular basis and if necessary further opportunities for staff to improve their map reading / navigational skills can be offered. Staff are also encouraged, but it is not mandatory to achieve their Lowland Leader or Mountain Leader qualifications. The DofE Manager holds a working list of staff experience/qualifications, including First aid, Minibus driving and NGB/DofE qualifications held.

## **Expedition Roles**

The Expedition Supervisor is the person who has the legal responsibility for the expedition team or teams. They will have been assessed as competent and will take responsibility for the teams in the field.

An Expedition Helper is someone who may support the Expedition Supervisor but has not been assessed as competent to supervise a team. They may not take responsibility for the safety of the team.

An Expedition Assessor has completed the EAAS/Expedition Skills Module (ESM) course, and a supported assessment. They are approved by Bedford Modern School and are registered with the DLC as an assessor, or are directly approved with DofE as assessors external to BMS. They do not take responsibility for the health and safety of the participants in the field.

## **Expedition Supervisors Course**

Bedford Modern School recognises that NGB qualifications are aimed at those working directly with people in the outdoors; they do not cover remotely supervising expedition teams. For this reason, Bedford Modern School ensures that all staff acting as an Expedition Supervisor will have undertaken the Expedition Supervisors course and have gained the required experience prior to leading a trip.

Remote supervision is a process that has to begin with supervisors gradually withdrawing their support from the teams during the training sessions and practice expeditions until the Supervisor is confident that the teams have sufficient competency and confidence to journey alone in their chosen environment.

## **Ratios of Adults to Young People.**

There must be a minimum of two adults with any D or E Expedition that takes place. Where there are both male and female participants then it is advisable to have a leader of each sex.

When training novice teams, an Expedition Supervisor may lead up to three Bronze level Expedition teams with the support of one expedition helper, providing they are within the same contained geographical area, or in close proximity. For example, on the same route but separated in time, or on parallel routes close together, in close enough contact for the Expedition Supervisor to be able to assist if necessary.

If there are sufficient Expedition helpers, the Expedition Supervisor will be able to 'float' between the teams.

Where students have specific needs, staffing ratios will be adjusted to meet their required needs.

For the supervision of competent teams on final practice and qualifying expeditions, Expedition Helpers should be able to look after themselves, deal with any incidents and provide assistance to the team should they need it. Expedition Supervisors are reminded that they should deploy Expedition Helpers to tasks for which they are competent.

Where more than two expedition teams go out the ratio of staff to young people must be as follows:

There must be one member of staff per expedition team for the Bronze training walk, some may be helpers, all will have basic in-house training. Expedition Supervisors will be floating for support.

- There must be two members of staff for three independent expedition teams at Bronze level, and one member of staff for each independent expedition team at Silver and Gold levels.
- An Expedition Supervisor may supervise up to three Bronze teams with the support of other Expedition Helpers. (See information above), or two Silver or Gold groups with the support of other Expedition Helpers.
- In terrain 2 and 3 Expedition Helpers must be qualified to a minimum of terrain 1.

For example:

- 5 Gold teams working in Terrain 3 must have a minimum of 3 ML or Level 3 leaders and 2 Expedition Helpers who must be qualified to a minimum of Level 1.
- 6 Silver teams working in Terrain 2 must have a minimum of 3 pairs of leaders. Staff pairing must reflect their experience of terrain and ideally gender. Any inexperienced staff member will always be paired with an experienced member of staff.
- 3 Bronze teams working in Terrain 1 must have a minimum of one BEL or CLA leaders or Level 1 leaders and one Expedition Helper.

## **Number of Participants per Expedition Group**

D of E states that no group can be larger than 7 and no less than 4. BMS groups will be no less than 5 for Silver and Gold groups, so that if for any reason a participant comes off an expedition the integrity of the group will not be jeopardised.

## **Assessing Ratios**

Assessors can now know the participants in a group removing the need to employ an external assessor. A supervisor can also assess a group at Bronze level.

## **First Aid**

All Expedition Supervisors must have a valid first aid certificate of the appropriate duration at all times. A Gold or Silver expedition trip must contain at least one designated first aider with the 16-hour course. 8-hour and 16-hour first aid qualifications must include as a minimum CPR, Bleeding, Shock, Drowning, Hypo and Hyperthermia, Broken Bones and other minor injuries.

## **Safety**

Tracking devices will be used for remote supervision so that the Award Leader can track groups in real time. At least one wrapped and sealed mobile phone will be carried per group, only to be accessed in emergency situations.

## **Recruitment of Volunteers (New Staff)**

Bedford Modern School will require a copy of all relevant outdoor qualifications. It is the Licencing Organisation's policy to undertake a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check on all volunteers, and volunteers will be required to provide two referees. However, as the DLC is a school all staff have the DBS check automatically.

## **Notification of intention to run D of E Expeditions or Training**

The DLC is also a Centre and so all D of E Expedition forms are automatically produced and approved by the School's EVC.

Training for supervisors going on expedition will be available for any volunteers and staff.

Expeditions will be approved by the D of E Manager at Bedford Modern School who will use the matrix of qualifications and terrain to decide on the appropriateness of the planned expedition. Any expeditions that do not fall within the matrix, or where leader's qualifications do not match the requirements of the terrain will be referred to the DLC's Technical Expert.

## **Participant Places**

It is a requirement of the Licenced Organisation that all young people on an expedition have purchased a participation place, this ensures that young people are registered with the Licenced Organisation and are covered by the Licenced Organisation's insurance.

## **The Delivery of Expeditions and Training**

D of E Leaders delivering Expeditions and Training must follow the appropriate policies of the Licenced Organisation and the guidance as laid down in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Handbook, Programme planners and Expedition Guide.

If numbers exceed the suitability for internal expedition training, The Licenced Organisation will use an AAP.

## **Assessors**

Bedford Modern School ensures that expeditions are assessed only by those who have competency in assessing and competency in the mode of travel.

All those wishing to assess an expedition for Bedford Modern School must be accredited assessors with the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. An enhanced DBS check is required for all assessors. Technical competence to assess at Gold will be determined by the same criteria as for supervisors, or in individual cases by the Technical Expert. Currently Bedford Modern School does have some Accredited D of E Assessors and they can be used to assess our own Bronze, Silver and Gold groups.

## **Selection for Participation**

The Award Leaders for Bronze, Silver and Gold have the right not to take any student on expedition if they have not made significant progress in the other sections. This will be made clear in letters to parents.

## **Review**

This policy will be reviewed every year by the DLC Manager and EVC with support from an appropriately trained Mountain Leader.

**Dr H Yuille  
D of E Manager**

**Mr M Price  
EVC**

**January 2026  
Review date February 2027**