

Duke of Edinburgh Award: A Guide for Youth Members

Are you a Surf Life Saving NSW (SLSNSW) youth member looking to challenge yourself, build valuable life skills, and achieve a globally recognised award? The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award (the Duke of Ed) offers the perfect opportunity - and the ideal place to complete it is within Surf Life Saving.

From patrols and training to leadership and community engagement, Surf Life Saving naturally aligns with every component of the Duke of Ed. This guide shows you how to make the most of your involvement and turn your Surf Life Saving activities into a Duke of Ed achievement.

Why choose Surf Life Saving to do your Duke of Ed?

Surf Life Saving isn't just about keeping beaches safe - it's about developing confidence, resilience, teamwork, and leadership. These are exactly the qualities the Duke of Ed is designed to foster.

By completing the Duke of Ed through Surf Life Saving NSW (SLSNSW), you can:

- Use activities you already love and participate in
- Progress your surf life saving skills
- Gain nationally certified qualifications
- Build leadership experience within your club
- Make a positive impact in your local community
- Work towards an internationally recognised certificate valued by employers and universities



How does Surf Life Saving align with the Sections in the Duke of Ed Framework?

A. Voluntary Service

Your patrol hours are a perfect fit for this section.

Examples include:

- Volunteering on patrol at your local beach
- Assisting with nipper programs
- Supporting club events or community education
- Environmental projects and initiatives (e.g. dune restoration, beach and waterway clean-ups)

Through service, you contribute to keeping your community safe while developing responsibility and commitment.

B. Physical Recreation

Your active involvement in Surf Life Saving makes this section easy to complete.

Activities can include:

- Swimming, board paddling, or surf sports training
- Participating in carnivals and competitions
- Regular fitness training for patrol readiness
- Preparation and training to undertake Bronze, Silver or Gold Medallions (e.g. train to complete the 200m run – 200m ocean swim – 200m run in the required time for the Bronze Medallion)

C. Skills

Surf Life Saving offers countless ways to build and demonstrate new skills.

You could:

- Complete certificates and accreditation like Radio Operator, Surf Rescue, First Aid, IRB Crew, Resuscitation, Bronze Medallion, or UAV Pilot
- Develop leadership by becoming a Young Official or Age Manager
- Gain communication and teamwork skills through training and officiating (e.g. Completing your young officials award)
- As a Registered Training Organisation, SLSNSW also operates an eLearning platform and offers heaps of different online training courses in areas such as: Beach & Water Safety, Emergency Care, Leadership & Patrol Operations, and Community Education

D. Adventurous Journey

An Adventurous Journey is a team challenge in an unfamiliar environment, with an agreed Team Goal.

This section is all about exploration, teamwork, and challenge.

Through Surf Life Saving, you can take part in:

- Overnight club camps, patrol swap weekends, or regional camps
- Coastal treks and paddle expeditions
- Surf Life Saving NSW leadership or development programs
- Outdoor expeditions and training camps

Level	Age	Voluntary Service	Physical Recreation	Skills	Adventurous Journey	Residential Project
Bronze	13+	3 months	3 months	3 months	2 days / 1 night Qualifying Journey	N/A
Silver	15+	6 months	6 months	6 months	3 days / 2 nights for both the Practice and Qualifying Journeys	N/A
Gold	16+	12 months	12 months	12 months	4 days / 3 nights for both the Practice and Qualifying Journeys	5 days / 4 nights Residential Project

How does it work?

Most youth members are already doing most of what is required for the Duke of Ed – just without the recognition!

As you can see from the table above, you could easily satisfy the requirements for the Bronze Level by completing 1 hour per week for 3 months in each of the following:

- Patrol duty, water safety at events, junior mentoring, or gear maintenance (Voluntary Service)
- Training in swimming, fitness or surf sports as preparation for a carnival, maintaining your patrol capability, or doing the Bronze Medallion (Physical Recreation)
- Training (including SLSNSW eLearning courses) for certificates such as First Aid, Resuscitation, Radio Communications, Surf Rescue, or UAV Pilot (Skills)

The final section is the 'Adventurous Journey'. For Bronze, this could be a 2-day/1-night SLS Youth Camp, coastal trek, multi-day board/ski/IRB/kayak between beaches with overnight camping, training camp, or patrol swap weekend with overnight stay. Duke of Ed Users can also work together to plan an Adventurous Journey with activity Assessor's oversight and approval.



Time requirements:

All hours need to be logged in the Online Record Book.

Hours are logged monthly so it doesn't need to be 1-hour each week as long as it's 4 hours every 4-week period.

Duke of Ed activities do not need to be continuous. So don't worry if you need to take a break – your progress is saved. You can pick up where you left off at any time before you reach the Duke of Ed age limit.

With the volunteer Surf Life Saving beach patrol season running from late September to April each year (about 7 months) completing your Bronze (or Silver) Award in a single season is readily achievable.

Depending upon your age, it is recommended that Registered Users commence their Duke of Ed journey at the Bronze Level (which can take a minimum of 3 months to complete). Those skipping Bronze (or Silver) must complete an extra 6 months of regular activity in one of the core sections, so depending on your circumstances it can be quicker and easier to start at Bronze.

I'm keen. How do I get started and what do I have to do?

Follow the steps in the Duke of Ed User Roadmap below:

1. Find a Duke of Ed Centre

Contact your local club and speak to their Duke of Ed Leader. If one doesn't exist, reach out to the Duke of Ed Team at the NSW Office of Sport. Email: dukeofed@sport.nsw.gov.au or Ph. 13 13 02.

Once you're matched with a club that is a Duke of Ed Centre, talk to the Duke of Ed Leader and your parent / guardian about registering for the Duke of Ed.

2. Plan your regular section activities

Use the *Duke of Ed / SLS Activity Mapping* guide to choose what activities you'll use for each Section (Voluntary Service, Physical Recreation, and Skills).

Remember that:

All training for SLS certificates and awards counts. Any time spent training counts towards your hours if it contributes to your ability to pass the qualification. This could include time spent developing both your physical ability and skills if you are working towards achieving your Surf Rescue Certificate or Bronze Medallion.

Each hour may only be used for one Section. Whilst patrolling you might be practicing your lifesaving skills or improving your fitness. If you are using 1 hour for Voluntary Service, you can't use the same hour for developing your Skills or Physical performance.

Months don't have to be consecutive. If you can't quite fulfill all the time requirements in some season, don't worry! You can take a break and resume where you left off next season. Nothing will be erased and you don't have to start from scratch - there is no time limit on completing the Duke of Ed (apart from the age limit).

Direct Entrants and Major Sections. ‘Direct Entrants’ (those skipping Bronze or Silver) must complete an extra 6 months of regular activity in one of the core sections (Voluntary Service, Physical Recreation, or Skills) as per Section 1.8 of the Duke of Ed *Handbook*.

Set “SMART” Goals

Stands for **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**ealistic, and **T**ime-bound.

Examples:

For Voluntary Service: “I will complete 1 hour per week of patrol for 3 months and record each shift in my Online Record Book”.

For Physical Recreation: “I will improve my swimming ability by training for and completing a long-distance swim (over x kilometres) before the end of (date).

For Skills: “I will improve my lifesaving abilities by completing my Surf Rescue Certificate, and First Aid Certificate”.

3. Find regular Section Activity Assessors

Each Section needs an Assessor (like a Patrol Captain, Trainer, or Team Manager) who you can help you set your SMART Goals and confirm your progress.

Once you’ve chosen the activities you’d like to do, speak with the Duke of Ed Leader at your club about finding an Assessor for each Section. They’ll be able to help you find a suitably experienced and/or qualified adult who can mentor you during your activity. The Assessor will be able to sign-off on your effort and final hours in your Online Record Book.

4. Parent/Guardian Consent and Payment

Parent/guardian consent is completed through the Online Record Book - refer to step 5 below.

Registration fees are paid through your SLS Club. Speak with your Duke of Ed Leader if you need assistance.

5. Register your interest

Register your interest and create your participant account via the Online Record Book registration portal [The Duke of Edinburgh’s International Award - Register participant](#)

Choose your Duke of Ed Level

Bronze generally from age 13/14

Silver generally from age 15

Gold generally from age 16

Complete consent requirements.

Participants under 18 need parent / guardian consent. A consent email is automatically sent to your parent/guardian once you’ve registered.

Pay the Registration Fee

Fees are paid through your SLS Club. Refer to the Fee Schedule [Delivering The Duke of Ed | NSW Government](#) Speak with your Duke of Ed Leader if you need any assistance.

2026 Fee Schedule (extract)

Bronze Registration Fee	\$165
Silver Registration Fee	\$175
Gold Registration Fee	\$200
Change of Level	A 6-week grace period applies from the date of registration to allow for any error in Level selection

6. Wait for Registration Approval from your Duke of Ed Leader

Your Duke of Ed Leader will check and approve your registration. Once approved, you'll be able to start recording your activities in your Online Record Book and begin working towards your Award.

7. Set up your Activities in the Online Record Book

Enter your 3 regular Section activity details into the Online Record Book including all Assessor details and a goal that is 'SMART'. Submit to your Duke of Ed Leader for approval.

8. Wait for Activity Approval from your Duke of Ed Leader

Your Duke of Ed Leader must approve your activities (and Assessors) in the Online Record Book before you can start them.

9. Log your Hours in the Online Record Book

Bronze = 1 hour per week in each Section (Voluntary Service, Physical Recreation & Skills) for 3 months

Silver = 1 hour per week in each Section (Voluntary Service, Physical Recreation & Skills) for 6 months

Gold = 1 hour per week in each Section (Voluntary Service, Physical Recreation & Skills) for 12 months (or equivalent fortnightly / monthly timing)

The Online Record Book will automatically calculate your remaining required hours. Hours must be regular, i.e. 1 hour per week, 2 hours per two-week period or 4 hours every four-week period. Include full sentence logs that show how you're progressing towards your SMART goal.

10. Complete an Adventurous Journey with your team

Bronze = 2 days / 1 night (Qualifying Journey)

Silver = 3 days / 2 nights (Practice Journey) & 3 days / 2 nights (Qualifying Journey)

Gold = 4 days / 3 nights (Practice Journey) & 4 days / 3 nights (Qualifying Journey); plus 5 days / 4 nights (Residential Project)

Definitions:

'Team' means 4-10 Duke of Ed Users for Bronze Level, and 4-7 for Silver and Gold Levels (Your Duke of Ed Leader will help to put you in a team if you're not already).

'Practice Journey' means an actual journey, not just a training day or planning exercise. It only applies to Silver and Gold participants. It is intended to help participants develop and demonstrate the skills needed to safely complete the Qualifying Journey.

'Qualifying Journey' means the final expedition where participants plan and complete a team journey in an unfamiliar environment, working towards a team goal.

'Residential Project' means a shared experience away from home where participants live and work with new people towards a common goal. Refer to the project outline for details: [duke-of-ed-gold-residential-project-outline-2019.doc](#)

Your Duke of Ed Leader will oversee the permission, participation, supervision and assessment of your Adventurous Journey.

Upload your completed Qualifying Adventurous Journey Report to the Online Record Book and submit to your Adventurous Journey Assessor for approval. (The “link” is the URL to your Adventurous Journey Report inside the Online Record Book. Open your report and copy the browser link. Follow these steps: 1) Log into the Online Record Book; 2) Go to: Adventurous Journey section; 3) Open your: Qualifying Adventurous Journey; 4) Click into the Journey Report; 5) Once it’s open: Copy the URL from the browser address bar.

11. Review your Duke of Ed Activities against requirements

Use the relevant Duke of Ed User Checklist to confirm you have completed all Section requirements before submitting to your Duke of Ed Leader for approval. Refer to the following link: [NSW Duke of Ed User Plan](#)

12. Await Final Assessment and Sign-off by your Duke of Ed Leader

When you have completed all Section requirements and received all your Assessor reports, submit them to your Duke of Ed Leader for their final review and approval.

13. Assessment and Sign Off by the Award Operating Authority

The Duke of Ed team at the NSW Office of Sport will assess the submission from your Duke of Ed Leader and grant approval for your award if all requirements have been met.

14. Receive your certificate and badge

Your Duke of Ed certificate and badge will be sent to your Surf Life Saving club for presentation at your club’s end of season awards ceremony.

15. Continue to your next Duke of Ed level

Keep your Duke of Ed adventure going! Let your Duke of Ed Leader know if you’ll be back next season to continue your Duke of Ed journey.

Duke of Ed User Roadmaps

More information on the Duke of Ed User Roadmap for Bronze & Silver, and Gold Award Levels is provided below:

[Bronze Silver RoadMap 2024 V2](#)

[Gold Participant RoadMap 2024 V2](#)

Need help?

Surf Life Saving NSW and the Duke’s Team (NSW Office of Sport) are here to help.

If you have any questions about the SLSNSW *Member Participation Pathways* or need help finding a club that offers the Duke of Ed, contact Surf Life Saving NSW memberservices@surflifesaving.com.au

If you have any questions about registration, specific activities or the Online Record Book, contact NSW Office of Sport (Duke of Ed) dukeofed@sport.nsw.gov.au or phone 13 13 0