**Expedition FAQ’s**

**Kit**

# What kit do I need? What happens if I forget anything?

For the kit that you need, please refer to the Expedition Preparation Guide. There is a kit checklist that you can use to check that you have everything. We do supply essential group kit so you will not need these items. We do have a small amount of spare kit, and we may be able to visit a shop before your expedition starts. Be aware that you will not be able to go out on expedition if you are not properly equipped.

# Why can’t I wear trainers or approach shoes?

Walking boots give ankle support and good grip. This is essential for safety when carrying an expedition pack. They are also more likely to keep your feet dry and comfortable when walking in the hills.

# Without boots you will not be able to take part in the expedition.

Your boots **must** cover your ankle bone.

# Do I need any other footwear?

You will need some indoor shoes to wear around the house at Pendarren House. You may take these on expedition with you to wear at the campsite. You must wear your boots whilst cooking and must not walk around barefoot.

# Can I wear shorts?

You can wear shorts if you wish, but our recommendation would be long trousers. Long trousers prevent cuts and scratches from vegetation. Protect against insects and sunburn. Are more appropriate due to temperatures generally being lower on the hill tops.

# Why do I need a hat and gloves?

Even though your expedition may take place in summer, the temperature is generally lower on hill tops and it can still be very cold there and overnight.

# Why can’t I wear cotton?

Cotton absorbs water and becomes cold and uncomfortable when wet. A better option would be a synthetic (wicking) t-shirt and a fleece. Woolly jumpers are also warmer than cotton when wet.

# How many spare clothes do I need?

For a Gold expedition, the minimum is an entire change of clothes (including underwear). You may prefer to take more. You will also need a spare warm jumper. You should make sure that you have at least one spare pair of socks, but you can take a new pair for every day if you want to.

# Can I bring a mobile phone?

Yes, having a phone on expedition is essential in an emergency. For this reason you should make sure it is fully charged and protected from water. You must avoid using it other than in an emergency or to contact your instructor.

# Can I bring a camera?

Yes. We recommend bringing a camera – it’s a great way to remember your expedition and may be useful depending on the aim of your expedition. Make sure it is protected from water / impact though!

# Do I need walking poles?

They are not essential, although many participants find them helpful. When used properly they let you take some of the weight off your legs. They may be particularly good if you have ankle / knee / hip problems.

# Do I need gaiters?

Gaiters are tubes of waterproof material that fit over the bottom of your trousers and the top of your boots. They can help to keep your lower legs and feet dry in wild country, but they aren’t essential.

# Do I need to bring money?

Yes. You may need money for showers at the campsite or to buy small items that you have forgotten before the start of the expedition. Having some change may be useful in an emergency too.

# Are my personal items insured on expedition?

They may be insured through your house insurance, or through travel insurance if you choose it. They are not insured through Pendarren House or through the DofE

**Will I have to pay for borrowed kit that I have lost or damaged?**

Accidents happen. If something is lost or broken by accident e.g. you needed to use your shelter in an emergency and it was damaged, we won’t charge you. If we believe that something was broken because you misused it or didn’t look after it, then we may charge you.

**Food and Water**

# How much water should I carry?

2 litres. Although you will need to drink more when you get to the campsite to stay hydrated. As you need to be self-sufficient you should aim to carry all of the water you need for the day. In hot weather we may meet you with extra water. You will be able to get more water at the campsite at the end of the day.

# Will I need to purify water?

You will be able to get clean drinking water at the campsite. If you do need to purify water, this will be done by boiling it, and you will be prepared and trained for this beforehand.

# How should I carry my water?

Plastic bottles are cheap, and adequate, but are difficult to access while walking. A platypus (or similar) hydration bladder allows you to drink on the move. Although it is difficult to see how much water is gone. If you choose a hydration bladder, please carry 1 litre in a separate bottle. This is so that you can’t accidentally drink it all before lunch time.

# How will I cook at the campsite?

You will use a Trangia stove. These have a burner, stand, 2 pans, a lid, and a handle. You will be trained in using them before you need to cook. You cannot fry, roast, oven cook or toast food using a Trangia, so careful menu choice is needed. Boil in the bag works well.

# What food should I not bring?

Anything that needs to be kept in the fridge will go off on expedition and may cause food poisoning. Avoid meat, fish, and poultry. You will also need to avoid foods that other group members are allergic to – we will let you know if there is anything to be avoided for this reason.

**Camping**

# What will the tent be like?

Your tent will be fairly small, so that it is light enough to carry. There will be space for 2 or 3 people to sleep, with a small covered area to keep your bags and waterproofs in.

# What will the campsite be like?

That depends on the campsite. They can range from a field with shelter, toilets, showers and other facilities, to basic camping with no showers. You will not be at the same campsite on two nights. If you need to wild camp there will be no facilities, and we will cover hygiene during training.

# Will I have showers and toilets?

There will be toilets at campsites (but not wild camps). There are showers at Pendarren house, so you will be able to shower before and after the expedition. There may not be showers at every campsite. At Gold DofE level most campsites will not have showers. Gold level expeditions expects participants to be more resilient and able to survive using simple campsites.

# Do I need to bring toilet roll?

Yes. Toilet roll may not be provided at all campsites. Remember to keep it waterproofed in your bag, and don’t leave any in the countryside.

**Medical and Illness**

# I have a medical condition / injury, can I still take part?

We will make every effort to include you in the expedition. The expedition at gold level is very strenuous. Depending on the condition, we may need to consider if it is safe for you to take part if you are not fully fit. We may advise you to wait until you are fully fit.

Under certain circumstances we may be able to gain exemption from the 20 conditions from the D of E. This will allow us to assist you to take part.

# What happens if I’m ill or injured on an expedition?

You should tell your instructor straight away. Your instructor will assist you with first aid / get medical attention for you. If you are unable to continue with the expedition, we will arrange for you to get home safely.

# Why do I have to fill in a medical form?

Your instructor is responsible for your safety on expedition. They cannot look after you unless they know about any medical issues you may have. The information that you give is confidential. It will be handed on to medical professionals in the case of an emergency and it helps us to make sure that the expedition is safe and enjoyable for you.

**Staying in touch**

# Can I bring my phone?

Yes, although it should be for emergency use only. Please make sure it is charged, protected from the elements, and has plenty of credit.

# Will I be able to talk to friends and family when I’m on an expedition?

Your phone is kept for emergency use and for contacting your instructor if you need to. You need to save your battery and credit for this. You will be in an area with poor signal, which could cause family to worry if they try to call but can’t get through.

# We are lost, who should I call?

You should call your instructor, who will help you get back on track. Do not call parents or friends as they are unlikely to be able to help and will be worried for you. We will be making regular checks on your progress to keep you safe and make sure you succeed. If you can’t get through to your instructor, keep trying (signal can be poor in the hills). Or send them a text message / voicemail. Put where you think you are and what the problem is.

**The course and expedition**

# If I drop out do I get a refund?

No. Within 6 weeks of the course your payment is non-refundable. By this point we have committed fully to the course and associated expenses and so cannot refund you.

# What happens if I drop out before the end?

If you drop out before the end, we cannot sign you off to go on to your Qualifying Expedition. You will need to repeat all or part of your expedition.

# Can I fail a Practice Expedition?

No. We occasionally recommend that a participant undergoes more training before moving on to the qualifying expedition. This is to give you the best possible chance of succeeding on the qualifying expedition, not to penalise you on the Practice Expedition.

# What happens if I drop out of a Qualifying Expedition?

You will need to repeat the whole expedition.

# Can I fail a Qualifying Expedition?

You can’t fail an expedition, but not everyone completes it successfully first time. You have until your 25th birthday to try again. We may ask a participant to leave an expedition if we believe they pose a danger to themselves or to others. There is still a chance to have another go.

# How far do I have to walk?

Gold expeditions require 8 hours of planned activity per day. This is roughly 20Km walking per day.

# How fit do I have to be?

The expedition is meant to be a challenge so it will be hard work, but the fitter you are the more you will enjoy it. You should be capable of walking 20km per day for 4 days in mountainous terrain carrying a rucksack. If you have any medical conditions that affect your ability to do this, it is very important that you tell us so that we can keep you and your team safe. Expedition training should be about endurance. Walking to school or the shops, carrying a rucksack and wearing in your boots is ideal training.

# Will it be hard?

It is meant to be a challenge, so you will find it hard at times. That said, you will have your team around you to help out when things are tough and you are there to help them when the roles are reversed. In the end, the good memories will far outweigh the bad ones.

# What is an open expedition?

An open expedition is one that individuals can sign up to, so you don’t need to find a team before starting on your award.

# I haven’t done Bronze or Silver; can I go straight to Gold?

Yes, if you meet the requirements (see <http://www.dofe.org/go/timescales/>[)](http://www.dofe.org/go/timescales/)) you can go straight to Gold.

# Can I bring extra kit to leave at Pendarren?

Yes, you can leave a small bag here with items that you don’t want to carry.

# What happens on the course?

Arriving around lunchtime on the first day. The first couple of days are based around the Centre, preparing for the expedition, and learning the skills you will need. The expedition will last for 4 days, with 3 overnight camps. Finishing at the Centre for shower, a night in a bed, a chance to review the expedition and discuss the next stage. Departing around midday the next day.

# What happens if I / you cancel?

If you cancel, your deposit is non-refundable, and within 6 weeks of the course, the whole fee is non-refundable. This is to cover the costs that we have incurred by booking campsites / allocating staff etc. at this point. You can take out travel insurance policies to protect your payment in this case.

If we cancel, we will refund your payment. This would be in exceptional circumstances such as dangerous weather conditions or very low course numbers.

In the case of low course numbers, we may increase the fee per person to cover our costs, but we will not do this without the consent of all participants.