

The King's Scout Award

A complete, easy-to-follow guide to Scouting's top achievement for Explorer Scouts and Scout Network members.

Ages 16–25

5 Core Requirements

Windsor Castle Recognition

WHAT'S INSIDE THIS GUIDE

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- Choosing DofE Gold vs the 5 KSA Challenges
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What is the King's Scout Award?

The top achievement available to Explorer Scouts and Scout Network members: a demanding, well-rounded programme that develops skills, fitness, service and character.

The King's Scout Award (KSA) sits at the very top of the UK Scouts awards pathway. It brings together nights away camping, structured community and values activities, a personal challenge programme (or an external equivalent), and a final presentation that shares the journey with others.

The award is closely aligned with the **Duke of Edinburgh's Gold Award**, and many of the same activities (expeditions, skills, physical recreation and service) count towards both. Because of this overlap, it's well worth planning to work on both awards side by side.

Who can take part?

- You must be **aged 16 or over** to begin working towards the award.
- All requirements must be **completed before your 25th birthday**.
- You must be an **Explorer Scout or Scout Network member for at least 18 months** in total.
- You must **be a member of the Scout Association** (as an Explorer Scout or Scout Network member) throughout your work on the award.

Good to know

Nights away and activities already counted towards your **Chief Scout's Platinum Award** or **Chief Scout's Diamond Award** can carry over and count towards the King's Scout Award too, so earlier effort is never wasted.



The Award at a Glance

Every candidate must complete five core elements, whichever route they take through the challenge programme.



01 Nights Away

24 nights away as an Explorer Scout or Network member, including at least 12 nights camping.



02 International, Community & Values (ICV) Activities

Six activities in total: two from each of three topic areas.



03 A Personal Challenge Programme

Either the Duke of Edinburgh's Gold Award / Gold Gateway Award, or the five King's Scout Award Challenges.



04 Sign-Off by Assessors

Each requirement is witnessed and signed off by a qualified assessor as you go.



05 Final Presentation & Approval

A presentation to inspire others, followed by final sign-off in the KSA Logbook.

The golden rule

Start your **Logbook and Completion Form** on day one. Recording evidence and getting sign-offs as you go, rather than at the end, is the single biggest time-saver candidates report.



Nights Away & ICV Activities

Nights Away

Complete **24 nights away** as an Explorer Scout or Scout Network member, with a **minimum of 12 nights camping**. Any Scouting nights away count, including nights already credited towards other awards such as the Chief Scout's Platinum or Diamond Award.

International, Community & Values (ICV) Activities

Complete **six ICV activities in total**: two from each of three topic areas on the official ICV list. At least **two activities must come from the KSA-specific ICV list**; the remainder can be drawn from the KSA, Chief Scout's Platinum, or Chief Scout's Diamond ICV lists.

If you already hold...	You already have...	You still need...
Chief Scout's Platinum Award	2 ICV activities counted	4 more activities
Chief Scout's Diamond Award	4 ICV activities counted	2 more activities
Neither award	—	All 6 activities

No double-counting: an activity can't count towards this requirement if you're already using it for any other requirement of the award.

Where to find the ICV lists

The King's Scout Award, Chief Scout's Platinum, and Chief Scout's Diamond ICV activity lists are published alongside the award pages at scouts.org.uk. Check the current list with your Explorer Team Leader or District 14–24 Team Leader before you start, as activities are reviewed periodically.



Presentation, Sign-Off & Approval

The Presentation

As your **final activity**, deliver a presentation covering everything you achieved across the whole award. The goal is to **inspire and motivate others** to attempt the King's Scout Award themselves.

Who can sign off your presentation?

- An adult volunteer from the District 14–24 Team
- A Youth Lead
- A District, County, Region or Area Lead Volunteer
- A District, County, Region or Area Programme Team Member

Ideally this should be someone different from your Award Mentor, and it's good practice to invite a District or County Team member along.

Sign-Off by Assessors

Every requirement needs to be signed off by an assessor who witnessed the activity and can confirm basic evidence. Assessors are typically your **Explorer Team Leader** or your **District 14–24 Team Leader**, but any suitably qualified observer can sign off an activity.

Final Approval

Once everything is complete, a relevant person must give final approval by completing the "**KSA Logbook Approval**" section of the KSA Logbook and Completion Form. See the logbook itself for the full list of who is eligible to approve.



Choose Your Path

For the personal challenge programme, every candidate chooses one of two routes.

OPTION A

External Award

Hold the **Duke of Edinburgh's Gold Award**, or the **Gold Gateway Award**.

A great option if you're already working towards DofE Gold through school, college or another group, with no need to duplicate the effort.

OPTION B

The Five KSA Challenges

Complete all five King's Scout Award challenge areas, run through Scouting itself:

1. Skill
2. Physical Activity
3. Service
4. Expedition
5. Residential

Which should I choose?

If you're not already on the DofE pathway, Option B lets you complete everything within Scouting, coordinated by your Explorer unit or Network. If you are doing DofE Gold anyway, Option A avoids repeating the expedition and residential sections.

The Five Challenges: Skill, Physical Activity & Service



Skill

Develop and demonstrate real progress in an existing skill, or take up a completely new one. This challenge requires **sustained engagement over a designated timeframe** (see the timescales table on page 9): steady, regular practice rather than a single burst of activity.

Physical Activity

Undertake an agreed physical activity programme with clearly defined objectives. As with the Skill challenge, this needs **sustained engagement over a designated timeframe**. Agree your goals with your mentor before you start so progress can be properly assessed.

Service

Provide service to an individual or a community, with proper briefing and training before you begin. A common example is supporting a younger section as a **Young Leader** or general volunteer.

Commitment: 12 months, averaging around **one hour per week**.

Tip: plan Skill, Physical Activity and Service together

Because these three challenges run over months rather than days, start them as early as possible and log progress regularly in your KSA Logbook: little and often is far easier to evidence than trying to reconstruct months of effort at the end.



Challenge 4: Expedition

The most structured of the five challenges, built around three progressive stages.

Stage 1: Training

Before any expedition, demonstrate competency in each of the following:

- First aid (First Response level minimum) and emergency procedures
- Risk assessment and health & safety
- Navigation and route planning
- Campcraft, equipment and hygiene
- Food and cooking
- Country, highway and water sports codes
- Observation, recording and presentation
- Team building
- Proficiency in your chosen mode of travel

Stage 2: Practice Expedition

A minimum **3-day, 2-night** consecutive, self-led expedition by foot, cycle, horse, canoe, boat or dinghy, with camping or simple accommodation (such as bunkhouses). The team must be fully self-sufficient.

Stage 3: Final Expedition

A **4-day, 3-night** consecutive, self-led expedition using the same mode of travel as the practice expedition, in a different area with similar conditions. It should:

- Involve a minimum of **8 hours' activity per day**, at least half of which is journeying
- Ideally use the same team as the practice expedition
- Use camping or simple accommodation, fully self-sufficient



Expedition Requirements & Challenge 5: Residential

Expedition requirements, summarised

- Team size of **4–7** for walking, or **4–8** for tandem-support modes (e.g. cycling, canoeing)
- Work towards a clear team goal, such as a research project, community action, or skill development
- Journeying must be under the team's own physical effort (mobility aids are acceptable)
- A substantial hot meal should be planned each day (the final day is optional)
- Teams are unaccompanied and self-sufficient throughout
- Remote supervision applies: participant welfare remains paramount at all times
- Accommodation should be by camping or other simple accommodation, e.g. bunkhouses. All expeditions should be self-sufficient
- The environment should become progressively more challenging as you build experience — for example, rural, urban, or restricted spaces

Residential

A **5-day, 4-night** residential project in an unfamiliar setting, with shared accommodation (staying with family or friends does not count).

- Minimum of **five participants**, the majority of whom you don't already know
- Must start before noon on day one and finish after 3pm on day four
- Can be split into two blocks within a 12-month period, provided it's the same continuing activity

Suitable options include: training courses, environmental or conservation projects, volunteering placements, activity-based programmes, a World Scout Jamboree, World Scout Moot, Roverway, or similar large-scale events (these cannot also be counted towards another section of the award).

Additional needs: reasonable adjustments can be requested, including time away from activities or attendance with a carer or leader.



Timescales at a Glance

Use this table to plan backwards from your target completion date. Remember, everything must finish before your 25th birthday.

Challenge	Minimum duration	Notes
Skill	6 or 12 months	One of Skill / Physical Activity must run 6 months, the other 12
Physical Activity	6 or 12 months	Averaging roughly one hour per week
Service	12 months	Averaging roughly one hour per week
Expedition	Practice (3 days/2 nights) + Final (4 days/3 nights)	Plus training beforehand
Residential	5 days / 4 nights	May be split into two blocks within 12 months

Extended timeline rule

If you do **not** already hold the **Silver Duke of Edinburgh's Award** or the **Chief Scout's Diamond Award**, add an extra **6 months** to either your Service Challenge or your longer Skill/Physical Activity Challenge, making that element **18 months** in total.

Special Recognition



Windsor Castle Celebration

Award holders approved by UK Headquarters within a calendar year are invited to a celebration event at **Windsor Castle** the following year. This National Day of Celebration and Achievement is normally held on the **Sunday nearest to St George's Day in April**. Holders and their guests join the Chief Scout for an informal parade in the Quadrangle, recognising their achievement.

Full event details are published at scouts.org.uk/windsor closer to the date.

Resources & Further Reading

- King's Scout Award ICV activity list · scouts.org.uk/explorers/kings-scout-award-icv-list
- Chief Scout's Platinum Award ICV list · scouts.org.uk/explorers/chief-scout-s-platinum-award-icv-list
- Chief Scout's Diamond Award ICV list · scouts.org.uk/explorers/chief-scout-s-diamond-award-icv-list
- Duke of Edinburgh's Award information · scouts.org.uk/activities/introduction-to-the-duke-of-edinburgh-s-award
- Gateway Award information · scouts.org.uk/volunteers/running-your-section/programme-guidance/information-for-volunteers/top-awards-for-young-people/gateway-award
- Hill Walker Activity Badge (for foot-based expeditions) · scouts.org.uk/explorers/activity-badges/hill-walker
- Supporting People with Additional Needs · scouts.org.uk/volunteers/inclusion-and-diversity/supporting-those-with-additional-needs-and-neurodiversity
- Reasonable Adjustments Guidance · scouts.org.uk/volunteers/equity-diversity-and-inclusion/including-disabled-people/making-reasonable-adjustments
- Top Award Guidance (logbook help & common mistakes) · scouts.org.uk/top-awards
- KSA Logbook & Completion Form (download) · scouts.org.uk/top-awards/kings-scout-award
- KSA Checklist (download) · scouts.org.uk/top-awards/kings-scout-award



Quick-Reference Checklist

Keep this with your Logbook. Target completion date: _____

🚩 ELIGIBILITY

- ☐ I am 16 or older, and will complete everything before turning 25
- ☐ I have been (or will have been) an Explorer Scout / Network member for 18 months

⬆️ CORE REQUIREMENTS

- ☐ 24 nights away completed, including at least 12 nights camping
- ☐ 6 ICV activities completed (2 per topic area, at least 2 from the KSA list)
- ☐ Chosen my path: **DofE Gold / Gold Gateway** or **the 5 KSA Challenges**

💡 PERSONAL CHALLENGES

- ☐ Skill challenge complete (6 or 12 months, per my timeline)
- ☐ Physical Activity challenge complete (6 or 12 months, per my timeline)
- ☐ Service challenge complete (12 months, ~1 hour/week)

🕒 EXPEDITION & RESIDENTIAL

- ☐ Expedition training completed and signed off
- ☐ Practice expedition completed (3 days / 2 nights)
- ☐ Final expedition completed (4 days / 3 nights)
- ☐ Residential project completed (5 days / 4 nights)

✅ SIGN-OFF & COMPLETION

- ☐ All requirements signed off by a qualified assessor
- ☐ Final presentation delivered to an eligible audience
- ☐ KSA Logbook Approval section completed by an eligible approver



Achieved on: _____ **Approved by:** _____

Questions along the way? Speak to your Explorer Team Leader, your District 14–24 Team Leader, or your Award Mentor.