THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S
INTERNATIONAL AWARD
MALTA
Discovering Your Own Path
Individual Principle
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#WORLD READY

Why Individual Choice Matters

One of the most empowering parts of the Award is how it places you, the participant, in control. No two people are the same, some are outgoing and thrive in group settings, others are quieter and prefer to work independently. Some juggle school, work, or family responsibilities. Others live in smaller towns or villages, with limited access to certain activities. The Award recognises this diversity and offers a flexible structure that adapts to individual needs and aspirations.

Rather than requiring everyone to follow the same path, the Award encourages participants to design a journey that reflects who they are and what they care about. It's about choice. You can select the level that feels right for you, being Bronze, Silver, or Gold and choose activities that align with your passions. Whether you love sports, music, animals, nature, or tech, your Award can reflect your interests. This isn't about fitting in, it's about creating a programme that fits you.

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What Makes the Experience Individual

Every participant begins the Award with a unique background and that's exactly what makes it so special. Some may arrive with a clear idea of what they want to achieve, while others are exploring different interests for the first time. The Award respects and supports both ends of that spectrum. It doesn't require you to fit a specific mould; instead, it invites you to build an experience that reflects who you are and what matters to you.

Within the Award, this flexibility is particularly valuable. With participants living in varied environments, from busy towns like Birkirkara to quieter areas like Żebbuġ (Gozo), access to opportunities may differ. The Award structure is designed to adapt, not limit. Whether you're more comfortable learning independently, balancing school and part-time work, or dealing with other personal realities, the Award provides space to grow in a way that works for you. Therefore, here is a simple step by step on how to go about the Award.

Choose Your Starting Level: Whether you begin at Bronze, Silver, or Gold, you start at the level that suits your readiness and confidence.

Set Your Own Goals: Your activities should reflect your passions, hobbies, and strengths not anyone else's expectations.

Progress at Your Own Pace: There's no deadline for growth. The Award encourages steady progress on your terms.

Adapt to Your Reality: From academic demands to health needs, family duties or living in remote areas, your personal situation is taken into account and supported.

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What It Teaches You

Designing your own Award experience teaches you far more than the individual activities you choose. It encourages self-awareness, decision-making and confidence.

When you take ownership of your goals, you develop a stronger sense of who you are and what motivates you. It also teaches you how to be accountable not to a system, but to yourself. That kind of personal responsibility carries through into all areas of life, from school to future careers and relationships.

The Award becomes a personal journey of discovery, where success is defined by your own progress.

A Leader's Role in Fostering Commitment

Award Leaders and mentors play a vital role in creating an environment where individuality is not only accepted but celebrated. Their support can make all the difference to a young person trying to navigate their own path.

By encouraging creative choices, asking the right questions, and helping participants reflect on their growth, Leaders ensure that the Award stays flexible and relevant. Most importantly, they remind young people that their voice matters; that their unique ideas, challenges, and goals are valid.

In doing so, Leaders become enablers of confidence, curiosity, and personal growth. No two Award journeys are the same and that's something to be proud of.

Real Stories: Aiden's Personal Route

Aiden, a participant from a quiet village in Gozo, initially felt uncertain about joining the Award. With no major youth clubs in his locality and limited transport links, he assumed the Award might not suit his situation. But with the support of his Award Leader, Aiden discovered he could shape the experience around his life.

For Physical Recreation, he took up solo cycling along Gozo's scenic coastal routes. For Skills, he committed to improving his photography; capturing the island's landscapes and wildlife through his lens. And for Voluntary Service, he began assisting elderly neighbours with weekly errands and digital literacy, helping them connect with loved ones online.

None of his choices were conventional but every one of them reflected his reality, interests, and values. "I used to think I needed to be part of a big group or club to join the Award," Aiden said. "But I realised it's about making it yours. The flexibility allowed me to do something that actually fit my life and that made it all the more meaningful."

"I didn't think I could do the Award because I didn't fit the 'normal' mould," he said. "But I realised I could build something that fit me. That made all the difference."

For Participants: Embrace Your Uniqueness

Follow Your Passions: Choose activities that truly interest you even if they're not the most common or popular ones. Whether it's marine biology, graphic design, or hiking the Maltese countryside, your engagement and enjoyment will fuel your progress.

Make it Personal: Your Award goals should reflect what you want to achieve, not what others expect of you. Setting challenges that matter to you makes the process more motivating and rewarding.

Start Where You Are: You don't need to be an expert to begin. The Award is about growth, not perfection. Starting with what's accessible or familiar allows you to build confidence step by step.

Own Your Experience: Your Award path is unique to you. Embrace your choices, take responsibility for your progress, and feel proud of what you're building not because it matches anyone else's, but because it's yours.

For Leaders and Mentors: Supporting Individuals

Encourage Exploration: Give participants room to try out ideas and activities. Allowing them to explore options before settling on a final plan helps them find what resonates most.

Stay Open-Minded: Not every Award experience will look traditional—and that's okay. Support creative and non-standard choices that still meet the Award's intent and values.

Focus on Progress, Not Comparison: Help participants understand that success looks different for everyone. What counts is how far they've come, not how they compare to others.

Adapt with Empathy: Some participants might face additional challenges or restrictions. Be ready to adapt the programme's structure to fit their reality—whether that means adjusting timelines, methods, or expectations—while still keeping it meaningful and fair.

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Coming up next: Enjoyable and Rewarding

In our next blog, we'll explore how fun, fulfilment and purpose are woven into the Award experience and why enjoying the process is just as important as compelting it.

Stay tuned!

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