THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S
INTERNATIONAL AWARD
MALTA
Discovering Success on Your Own Terms
Achievable Guiding Principle
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#WORLD READY

Why Achievability Matters

The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award (the Award) is grounded in the belief that every young person has the potential to succeed. And success shouldn't look the same for everyone. That's why the Award embraces achievability as one of its core principles. It's not about perfection or pressure; it's about progress that is meaningful to you.

In today's world, where comparison and high expectations can feel overwhelming, the Award offers a refreshing alternative. Here, there are no gold standards set by others; only goals that reflect who you are, what you care about, and how you want to grow. It empowers participants to design a programme that fits their life, celebrates their efforts, and makes space for real, personal achievement.

What Achievability Really Looks Like

When young people take on a new challenge, what often holds them back isn't a lack of ability; it's the belief that the challenge is out of reach. The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award flips that mindset. It doesn't ask, *"Can you keep up?"* It asks, *"What's possible for you, right now?"* And then it builds from there.

Achievability is about empowerment. It's about designing an experience that pushes participants gently beyond their comfort zone, while still respecting their unique pace, limitations, and realities. Whether someone is dealing with a chronic condition, managing school stress, or simply unsure where to begin, the Award adapts. And that adaptability doesn't lower the bar; it clears the path.

Here's how achievability plays out in real terms:

Starting from Where You Are: Every participant begins with their current reality; no comparisons, no shortcuts, just a willingness to grow from their own starting point.

Setting Realistic Goals: The best goals are those that stretch you just enough to make you stronger; without breaking your spirit or balance.

Making Adjustments: If life throws a curveball, you're allowed to shift direction. The Award encourages flexibility without guilt.

Taking It One Step at a Time: Whether you complete your Award in months or take longer, every step is valid. Progress is measured by persistence, not pace.

Real Stories, Real Achievement: Ryan's Experience

Ryan, a 16-year-old participant from Marsaxlokk, lives with a hearing impairment. At first, the idea of joining the Award felt intimidating. He worried about communication during the Adventurous Journey and whether he would be able to participate fully.

After opening up to his Award Leader, Ryan learned that the Award wasn't about fitting into someone else's expectations. It was about creating a version of success that made sense for him. Together, they worked on a plan that included practical adjustments, peer support, and a mindset of flexibility.

For his Skills section, Ryan chose to deepen his Maltese Sign Language knowledge. What began as a personal goal became a powerful tool for connection—he even held lunchtime sessions to teach classmates basic signs. In his Voluntary Service, Ryan joined an accessibility campaign at school, helping design inclusive posters and awareness videos.

But the Adventurous Journey became his greatest source of pride. His team came together, adapting communication strategies and building a sense of shared support. With hand signals, regular check-ins, and mutual encouragement, Ryan not only participated, he thrived.

"I thought I'd be the one holding others back," Ryan shared. "But instead, I realised I had something valuable to offer. I didn't have to change who I was to succeed."

By the end of his Award, Ryan had achieved more than a certificate. He had grown in confidence, found his voice, and proved that success is about creating your own path; not following someone else's.

For Participants: You Define Success

Think About What Matters: Choose activities that align with your values, interests, and goals; not anyone else's expectations. When something means something to you, the motivation becomes real and lasting.

Make Adjustments When Needed: Life doesn't always go as planned, and that's okay. The Award is designed to be flexible, so you can adapt your plan without losing momentum.

Focus on Progress, Not Perfection: Every step forward counts, even the small ones. Growth isn't about getting everything right; it's about showing up and giving your best.

Ask for Help: Reaching out isn't a sign of weakness; it's a strength. Leaders and mentors are there to walk with you, guide you, and cheer you on.

For Leaders and Mentors: Supporting Achievability

Start With Empathy: Take time to genuinely understand each participant's background, confidence level, and life circumstances. When young people feel seen and heard, they're more likely to engage meaningfully and believe in their own potential.

Encourage Adaptation: Not every plan will work on the first try; and that's okay. Help participants reframe change not as failure, but as smart, thoughtful problem-solving.

Celebrate Effort Over Outcome: Recognise the hours of practice, the small acts of persistence, and the courage to keep showing up. These quiet wins are the foundation of personal growth and often matter more than ticking a final box.

Build Confidence Gently: Support their progress with encouragement that focuses on what they're doing well. Remind them that growth is often gradual, and that steady progress is both valid and powerful.

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Closing Thought

Achievability isn't about lowering the bar; it's about making meaningful success possible. When young people believe the Award is within reach, they don't just participate; they rise, they adapt, and they grow stronger. Because when the path makes space for who you are, every step forward becomes a powerful win.

Up Next in the Series: Development

In the next blog, we'll dive into how the Award is more than just activities and achievements; it's a platform for holistic development. We'll explore how each part of the Award nurtures emotional, social, and personal growth, helping young people build the kind of character, perspective, and resilience that will serve them for life. Stay with us on this journey of transformation.

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