

## Continuing the Award in the context of COVID-19: Temporary Changes and Further Guidance

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<b>Reference:</b> Ref: CV-004	<b>For more information:</b> Your Regional Office/Operations Manager

### 1. Introduction

This guide is the outcome of a review conducted in April 2020 by the *Association Working Group to Review Award Requirements in the context of COVID-19*, composed of twenty-two Operator representatives and three International Award Foundation (IAF) staff. The group assessed a list of challenges and issues submitted by colleagues from across the Association. The aim of the review was to identify a common global approach for supporting the continued completion of Awards during self-isolation and social distancing measures imposed during the COVID-19 global pandemic.

The advice contained in this guidance falls under two distinct categories

- Temporary changes to Award Requirements recognised by the IAF.**  
 The temporary changes outlined in this guidance were identified by the Working Group as solutions to the myriad of challenges created by COVID-19. They are designed to mitigate interruption to Awards Gained during the pandemic, protect the participant experience and – as far as possible - maintain the educational outcomes intended for each Section of the Award.

When choosing a course of action for participants we ask that all Operators encourage Award Leaders to prioritise protecting the Award experience. Any deviation from the existing Award Requirements should be only where necessary. The changes should therefore be regarded as a last resort by Operators, and the option chosen should always be one that provides the least disruption for participants.

These changes are sub-divided as follows:

- Age requirements**
  - Voluntary Service**
  - Adventurous Journeys**
- Further guidance and clarification on existing Award Requirements.**  
 Most of the content of this guidance is not new. It simply reflects information already contained in the International Handbook for Award Leaders (7<sup>th</sup> ed., 2019) and/or the Operational Guidelines. Therefore the 'further guidance' in this guide aims to give clarity on how some of the existing Award Requirements can be interpreted or implemented by Operators and Award Centres to help address the challenges we are now facing.

We recognise that for some Operators, where the Award Requirements have been interpreted differently in the past, some of what is detailed here may seem like a change to the requirements and may require adjustments to existing processes.

It is worth noting that the changes outlined in this paper are not compulsory. Operators should consider the implementation of these measures based on their context and where relevant.

A summary of this Guide will be published on the IAF website in due course. This summary will be designed and written in a way that is suitable for Award Leaders and participants. For further support in relation to these or any other Award Requirement, please contact the Foundation to discuss further.

## 2. Timeframe: 1 May – 31 December 2020

All the temporary changes will apply for an initial period of eight months, from 1 May – 31 December 2020.

The IAF will continue to review the situation and make further changes based on evidence, should the need arise and case be made by Operators. These temporary changes will be reviewed by the IAF in August, following a short consultation with the Working Group and might be extended.

## 3. Temporary Changes to existing Award Requirements recognised by the IAF

### ➤ Age Requirements

Agreed Temporary Change	Award Requirement (source)	Rationale	Boundaries for implementation and Award level
<p><b>For all participants due to reach their 25<sup>th</sup> birthday in the remainder of 2020; an extension will be applied enabling them to complete their Award.</b></p> <p>The specific change includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No requirement to apply for an extension to the Foundation or National Office.</li> <li>Extension is provided on the basis that the participant cannot complete due to COVID19.</li> <li>Participants will be allowed to continue logging activities <u>until December 31<sup>st</sup> 2021.</u></li> </ul>	<p>The Award is available to young people between the ages of 14 and 24. If a participant is unable to complete their Award before their 25<sup>th</sup> birthday because of illness, accident or other unavoidable circumstances, application for an extension needs to be made by the participant's Award Operator to the relevant national office or to the Foundation[...]</p> <p>- Operational Guidelines</p>	<p>Lockdown/isolation/social distancing measures are deemed circumstances beyond the control of participants in all affected jurisdictions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This relates to any participant whose 25<sup>th</sup> birthday falls in April – December 2020.</li> <li>The extension is a blanket extension for all affected participants until 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021. Participants should be encouraged to continue their Award activities without interruption, where at all possible. Applicable to all levels of the Award.</li> </ul>

## ➤ Voluntary Service

The COVID-19 pandemic represents a real opportunity for Award participants to make a meaningful difference in their communities through the Voluntary Service Section. Further to the information listed below Operators are reminded of the guidance under *'Further guidance and clarification of existing requirements'* – participants are allowed to change their activity; and/or change Assessor; and/or revise their SMART Goal throughout their Section to adapt to the situation.

Where it is safe for them to do so, you may wish to encourage your participants to take active roles in responding to the COVID-19 crisis in their country. Please see the AwardCommunity.org for further ideas and examples of best practice from other Operators.

Agreed Temporary Change	Award Requirement (source)	Rationale	Boundaries for implementation and Award level
<p><b>Voluntary Service Section – Participants can now volunteer for family members as part of their Award activities.</b></p> <p>If a participant's Voluntary Service activity becomes untenable, and volunteering online/remotely is not possible, they may change their activity to volunteering within the home, with other members of the family/living unit.</p> <p><b><u>As with existing guidance, the Assessor for the section must not be a family member.</u></b></p>	<p>Voluntary Service activity to be conducted in the community – contributing to community causes supporting people, the environment or animals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>International Handbook for Award Leaders (7<sup>th</sup> ed) page 54, sections 5.2, 5.3</li> <li>Operational Guidelines</li> </ul>	<p>If a participant has exhausted all opportunities to conduct an alternative voluntary role outside their home; they may continue their Voluntary Service by volunteering for family members – e.g. tutoring a younger sibling.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applicable only in jurisdictions where there are ongoing lockdown/isolation/social distancing measures in place; and where the NAO/OP has adopted this derogation.</li> <li>This option is intended as a last resort. Please see IAF 'further guidance', for alternative ways to support participants to continue their Voluntary Service.</li> <li>The participant must receive prior consent from their Award Leader; and must identify a suitable Section Assessor.</li> <li><b><u>Regular chores or other regular household responsibilities do not suffice.</u></b></li> <li>The Voluntary Service hours must be structured, logged and evidenced; and the SMART Goal will need to be reviewed for appropriateness.</li> <li>Applicable to all levels of the Award.</li> </ul>

## ➤ Adventurous Journeys

For many Operators, the Adventurous Journey (AJ) is the Section most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, we have identified several possible changes or options for Operators and Award Centres to adopt, to make this section of the Award feasible within a country's COVID-19 public health restrictions.

Where possible, preference should be given to delaying the AJ until such time as it is feasible to complete it. Where postponement of AJs presents a challenge for an Operator or Award Centre – either due to capacity later in the year or pressure from participants to complete in the coming months – the temporary changes detailed below allow for alternative options as follows:

- Virtual Bronze Exploration
- Deferring the Qualifying AJ for Bronze participants, to support participants to keep up their momentum by moving on to Silver. In this instance, the subsequent Practice Journey at Silver level will count as the Qualifying Bronze AJ.
- Waiving the Bronze Practice Journey and/or re-assigning a previous Practice Journey as the Qualifying Journey

The further guidance and the temporary changes detailed in this paper allow for flexibility, while maintaining standards for safety as well as learning outcomes, in particular the teamwork and leadership skills that are at the core of the purpose of an AJ. Operators should determine which of the temporary changes they will make available to their Award Centres, based on the conditions in their individual country and/or territory.

As always, Award Centres must conduct the necessary planning and risk management to determine the best course of action; and Adults delivering the Award may need to adjust routes or re-plan in accordance with isolation or social distancing measures. Even with the temporary changes in place, some Award Centres may not be able to offer opportunities to complete the Adventurous Journey Section in their present circumstances.

Agreed Temporary Change(s)	Award Requirement (source)	Rationale	Boundaries for implementation
<b>The requirement for a Bronze Practice Journey can be waived <u>OR</u> where a Practice has been completed count as the Bronze Qualifying Journey.</b>	<p>Adventurous Journey 15 Requirements: Requirement #5. All participants must undertake a minimum of one Practice Journey per level.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- International Handbook for Award Leaders (7<sup>th</sup> ed) page 83, section 8.8</li> </ul>	<p>Where delivering AJs is difficult or impossible in the current environment, the preferred solution remains to postpone AJs (including all 15 Requirements) until such time as they are feasible.</p> <p>The Practice AJ is intended as part of the process of preparing, training and learning for young people doing their AJ; should the adults delivering the Award feel confident that the learning outcomes are being achieved in the absence of a Practice Journey; and that</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicable only in jurisdictions where there are ongoing lockdown/isolation/social distancing measures in place; and where the NAO/OP has adopted this derogation.</li> <li>• Applicable only for AJs at Bronze level.</li> <li>• This option is intended as a last resort. Please see IAF guidance on alternative options for the Adventurous Journey Section.</li> <li>• This should be done in the following circumstances only: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Award Coordinator / Leader is confident that the group is able to do a Qualifying Journey, based on: a thorough health and safety risk assessment of the AJ; the team demonstrating acquisition of the required knowledge and skills from training and preparation; and</li> </ol> </li> </ul>

		sufficient health and safety risk mitigation actions have been taken, the adults delivering the Award can choose to waive the Practice Journey.	<p>the team having successfully come together to establish their roles and norms.</p> <p>2. If a standard Practice Journey was already completed by the team, and the Supervisor believes that the AJ 15 Requirements were met and the learning outcomes for the group and individuals were achieved on that trip, that Practice Journey can be considered the Qualifying Journey.</p>
<p><b>Implementation of the Virtual Bronze Exploration (VBE).</b></p> <p><i><b>NB:</b> This is still in development and full details will be shared in due course. It is intended to be operational by the end of May.</i></p>	<p>Adventurous Journey section.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- International Handbook for Award Leaders (7<sup>th</sup> ed) pages 76 – 103</li> </ul>	<p>Where there is no prospect of delivering a practice or qualifying AJ and there is a desire from the participants to complete Bronze in the coming months.</p> <p>Designed for licensed organisations needing to complete Bronze participants in order to recruit the next cohort of Bronze. Will mitigate impact of organising both Bronze and Silver AJs later on in the year.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The VBE should be seen as a last resort.</li> <li>• Applicable only at Bronze level.</li> <li>• Applicable only in jurisdictions where there are ongoing lockdown/isolation/social distancing measures in place; and where the NAO/OP has adopted this derogation.</li> <li>• Designed primarily for those young people needing to complete Bronze in the coming months.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Participants continue to Silver and are then awarded their Bronze once the Silver practice AJ is completed.</b></p> <p><i><b>NB:</b> This change will mean that Bronze participants do not need to do complete a Bronze AJ to complete Bronze. This will take the pressure off organisations later on in the year who cannot run multiple Bronzer and</i></p>	<p>Adventurous Journey section.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- International Handbook for Award Leaders (7<sup>th</sup> ed) pages 76 – 103</li> </ul>	<p>The Silver Practice counting as the Bronze qualifier is to be used specifically where participants want to continue to the next level, but the Operator / Award Centre does not have the capacity to run additional Bronze and Silver AJs later on in the year without limiting impact on new entrants. See further guidance below for</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As above.</li> <li>• Participants would commence Silver before completing Bronze [see additional guidance] and be awarded their Bronze on completion of their Silver practice journey.</li> <li>• Where applicable – use planning and preparation platform of the VBE for the final stages of Bronze activity.</li> </ul>

<i>Silver AJs at the same time.</i>		<p>guidance on continuing to the next level.</p> <p>Should also be used to incentivise young people to progress to Silver.</p>	
<b>AJs may be organised in a familiar environment.</b>	<p>Adventurous Journey 15 Requirements: Requirement #7. The environment chosen must be unfamiliar to all participants.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- International Handbook for Award Leaders (7<sup>th</sup> ed) page 84, section 8.8</li> </ul>	<p>Where delivering AJs is difficult or impossible in the current environment, the preferred solution remains to postpone AJs (including all 15 Requirements) until such time as they are feasible.</p> <p>This allowance is intended for jurisdictions where AJs can be conducted while social distancing is in place. It will address safety concerns and limitations on travel; and is most likely to be suited to AJs conducted as urban explorations. Participants will still be able to accomplish key learning outcomes, such as teamwork and leadership skills.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicable only in jurisdictions where there are ongoing lockdown/isolation/social distancing measures in place; and where the NAO/OP has adopted this derogation.</li> <li>• This option is intended as a last resort. Please see IAF 'further guidance' on alternative options for the Adventurous Journey Section.</li> <li>• Applicable to all levels of the Award.</li> </ul>
<b>It is permitted for participants to use a home, school gym, etc. as accommodation during Adventurous Journeys; or for a group's accommodation to be physically separated, e.g. participants all sleep in separate tents or accommodation.</b>	<p>Adventurous Journey 15 Requirements: Requirement #12. Accommodation must be in portable tents or simple self-catering accommodation such as hostels or huts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- International Handbook for Award Leaders (7<sup>th</sup> ed)</li> </ul>	<p>Where delivering AJs is difficult or impossible in the current environment, the preferred solution remains to postpone AJs (including all 15 Requirements) until such time as they are feasible.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As above.</li> </ul>

-	ed) page 85, section 8.8	<p>This allowance is intended for jurisdictions where AJs can be conducted while social distancing is in place. It will address safety concerns and limitations on travel; and is most likely to be suited to AJs conducted as urban explorations.</p> <p>In addition, it caters for when some social-distancing measures are lifted but where young people are not allowed to share sleeping accommodation due to hygiene reasons.</p>	
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#### 4. Further guidance and clarity on existing Award Requirements

Operators have asked about the flexibility within the existing the Award Requirements. In this section of the guide, we provide further guidance on how these Requirements can be interpreted and implemented in different settings. This guidance should explain the flexibility that is built into the Award Framework and is captured in the International Handbook for Award Leaders (7<sup>th</sup> ed., 2019). **The guidance should not be regarded as changes, as it is reaffirming existing policy.**

Topic	Section(s) affected	Guidance
Assessors/ Award Assessors / Section Assessors	All	<p>Assessors cannot be family members:</p> <p><i>Assessors will often be known by the participant but they must not be an immediate relative.</i></p> <p>This requirement remains. However, operators may wish to convey to Award Centres the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Anybody, other than a family member, who knows the subject better than the participant can act as Section Assessor.</li> <li>- The Section Assessor does not have to be present in the room while the participant is doing their activity.</li> <li>- Nor does the Section Assessor have to be actively providing instruction to the participant (although commonly they are doing so)</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Assessor can keep track of a participant's progress remotely, with updates from the participant. In this case, a participant should keep photo / video / diary evidence of them doing their loggable hours of activity.</li> <li>- Where an existing Assessor has become uncontactable, the participant can change Assessor mid-way through a Section.</li> <li>- If a participant changes their Section activity mid-way through the Section, they will likely need to change their Assessor too.</li> <li>- Award Leaders should be flexible in helping participants to identify a new Assessor – in some cases, an Award Leader may be able to act as Assessor themselves if appropriate, or in some cases some NAO/OP staff make themselves available to act as Assessors.</li> <li>- Please ensure your staff, Award Leaders and other adults delivering the Award continue to operate in accordance with local safeguarding and child protection legislation.</li> <li>- For more information on the role of Assessors, please see the International Handbook for Award Leaders (7<sup>th</sup> ed., 2019) pages 41 – 45.</li> </ul>
<b>Retaining participants / Continuing to the next Level</b>	All	<p>Participants <b>are</b> currently allowed to register for and move on to the next Level of the Award without completing all sections at their current Level:</p> <p><i>Participants should be encouraged to complete all sections of their current Award level before progressing to another level.[...] If it proves difficult to complete the whole Award in a reasonable time, then they may start a section at the next level provided they:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>have completed that section in their current level;</i></li> <li>- <i>have reached the minimum age of entry for the new level, and;</i></li> <li>- <i>are not working on all three levels at the same time.</i></li> </ul> <p>Participants who are prevented from completing a Section(/s) of their Award due to COVID-19 restrictions, should be encouraged to register for and to start their activities at the next Level of the Award, before returning to finish the outstanding activity at their current Level when feasible to do so.</p> <p>For example: where a participant cannot do their Qualifying AJ at Bronze Level but they have finished all their other Sections; they can register and begin working towards their Silver Award, logging their activities under Skill, Voluntary Service and Physical Recreation. When restrictions have eased, the participant can then do their Qualifying Bronze AJ and achieve their Bronze Award before moving on to work on their Silver AJ.</p>
<b>Minimum age requirements</b>	All	<p>The minimum age requirements for beginning each level of the Award are 14, 15 and 16 years of age respectively.</p> <p>However, since the update to the Operational Guidelines published in July 2018, there is some flexibility built into the Award framework in this regard:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>At Bronze level</b> – <i>discretion is allowed if a young person, who is younger than 14, is part of a peer group where the majority are 14 or older and wishes to start their Bronze with their peers. Under such circumstances the participant must have reached their 13th birthday.</i></li> </ol>



		<p>II. <b>At Silver level</b> – young people who have completed their Bronze level may start their Silver level without a delay being imposed, even though they are not yet 15.</p> <p>III. <b>At Gold level</b> – no activities can be counted before a participant's 16th birthday to ensure it is more of an adult challenge.</p> <p>Operators who have not previously adjusted their minimum age requirements may wish to do so now, to support continued engagement from current and future participants at all levels and align with the changes made in 2018.</p>
<b>Breaks in activity for an extended period</b>	All	<p>Participants are allowed to take a break in their activity:</p> <p><i>Subject to the maximum age limit, participants can take as long as they want to complete their Award</i></p> <p><i>on average, participants must spend at least one hour, in a single period, per week on their chosen activity.[...] If a participant has a break for an extended period of time due to illness, studies or other important reason, then they will need to extend the minimum overall time taken to complete their Award.</i></p> <p>You may wish to remind your Award Leaders and/or participants that, should it be necessary, a participant can allow for a gap in their activity logs for a Section(/s). This simply means, once they resume activity, they will need to persist for an extended period until they have logged the required amount of hours and shown sufficient progress towards their SMART Goal.</p> <p>Remember, the Award is referred to as a marathon, not a sprint!</p>
<b>Changing Activities</b>	Skill/ Physical Recreation / Voluntary Service	<p>Participants are allowed to change their choice of activity mid-way through a Section:</p> <p><i>If the initial choice of activity proves to be unsuitable, participants may choose another activity and count the time spent towards their overall minimum time requirement. This needs to be done in consultation with their Award Leader who should use judgement on how often this can happen.</i></p> <p>Therefore, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, participants should be allowed to change their chosen activity in any Section if their original activity is not suitable to continue from home or under social distancing. This may require them to change their SMART Goal and/or their choice of Assessor too. Award Leaders should continue to recognise previously logged hours that related to the participant's original activity; and if appropriate allow them to switch back to their original activity once lockdown/social distancing is over, if they wish.</p>
<b>Change of Major Section for Direct Entrants</b>	Skill/ Physical Recreation / 	<p>All participants at Bronze level, and those who are Direct Entrants at Silver and Gold may change their choice of 'Major' Section:</p> <p><i>Bronze:</i></p>

	Voluntary Service	<p><i>All participants must do an extra 3 months in one of the following: Physical Recreation; or Skills; or Voluntary Service</i></p> <p><i>Silver / Gold: All participants must do an extra 6 months in one of the following: Physical Recreation; or Skills; or Voluntary Service</i></p> <p>Operators may allow participants to change their choice of Major Section, if continuing activity at home in an alternative Section is more feasible. In this case, the SMART Goal in each relevant section should be reviewed for suitability.</p>
<b>Voluntary Service in the Community</b>	Voluntary Service	<p>Voluntary Service activities, working with a local, national or global community organisation on a cause supporting people, the environment or animals - can be done from home.</p> <p>COVID19 represents an opportunity to use the Voluntary Service Section to make a meaningful difference in communities. Participants should be encouraged to continue engaging with community organisations; volunteering by doing roles that do not require the participant to attend a public location. These activities could be conducted online or offline.</p> <p>For more information on Voluntary Service, see the International Handbook for Award Leaders.</p> <p>Please ensure Voluntary Service continues to be carried out in accordance with national legislation, and that any participant who volunteers with children or vulnerable adults has signed the relevant Safeguarding Code of Conduct.</p>

## 5. Clarity on other challenges raised by Operators

There are a number of recommendations that were submitted by the Working Group and/or colleagues across the Association to the IAF that have not been approved. The reason for these not being approved was that they did not specifically address the short-term challenges associated with COVID-19 and were therefore considered 'beyond scope'.

For full transparency, and to avoid further recommendations on these topics, these were as follows:

- I. **Age-range for Gold Level** – as previously advised by International Trustees, the minimum age-range for continuing or direct at Gold is 16. This will not change in light of COVID-19 and the view of the IAF is that any young person wishing to progress to Gold will do so when they are able to. There is no time pressure.
- II. **Changes to the Gold Residential Project** – particularly the requirement to take part in an activity away from home. Any change was regarded as beyond scope due to the time-limited nature of COVID-19, the other changes regarding extension of age-range and need to protect the educational outcomes.
- III. **Changes to Supervision and Assessment and size of groups for Adventurous Journeys** – it was felt that the other changes were sufficient and where AJs can be delivered 'normally' there is no need to change these requirements.
- IV. **Changes to the allowed regularity of logged hours** – it was felt that, with the other changes and with clarity on how participants can continue their activities in each Section from home, there is no need to allow for condensed logging of hours within short periods of time once isolation measures have eased.

## 6. Next steps, ongoing review and consultation

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The IAF is committed to ensuring that it supports licensed Operators to continue to deliver the Award and stay relevant to the young people they support. The Award requirements will therefore continue to be reviewed in light of COVID19 and Operators should be encouraged to submit ideas and suggestions to the IAF. In particular, the team are actively investigating further options for alternative ways of delivering the AH. Any potential changes requested by colleagues consulted on with the Working Group.

A short summary of the changes and additional guidance will be published on the [intward.org](https://intward.org) website in due course. This summary will be designed and written in a way that is suitable for Award Leaders and participants.