

Gold Residential Project – Temporary Changes to the Award Requirements

From: Sam Williams, Operations Director	For: National Award Operators (NAOs)
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Introduction

This paper outlines the new Gold Residential Project (GRP) Temporary Changes that have now been approved by International Trustees. This approval follows development and consultation with the International Award Association Working Group on the Award Requirements.

These new temporary changes and volunteer guidance will remain in place, as with the other Temporary Changes, until the 31 July 2021. These changes will be reviewed every quarter by the Working Group, with the next review due to take place in January 2021.

The temporary changes are split in two:

- 1. COVID-19 Panels – Developing national and local solutions to fit public health restrictions.** This guidance is for NAO staff or key volunteers and is not intended to be shared widely with Award Leaders and other volunteers.
- 2. Gold Residential Project (GRP) – Temporary changes and requirements for use during COVID-19 public health restrictions.** This guidance is for Award Leaders and other volunteers and designed to be tailored by NAOs. Please note that NAOs have considerable flexibility to develop and tailor this to fit their context and requirements.

If you require any support with understanding and interpreting what these temporary changes mean for your operations and how you can implement them, please do not hesitate to reach out to your Operations Manager for support.

The Foundation would like to thank all members of the Working Group for their time and support in developing these temporary changes.

1. COVID-19 Panels – Developing national and local solutions to fit public health restrictions

Please note: the following guidance is for National Award Operator staff or key volunteers. It is not designed to be shared widely among Award Leaders and other volunteers (please see next section).

The Foundation and Association Working Group acknowledge that given the changing nature of the pandemic and myriad of challenges faced by Operators, a national or local approach is required to unlock barriers and encourage participation and completion.

In order to support flexibility in the delivery of Gold Residential Projects that comply with relevant public health restrictions, Operators are now encouraged to form a reference panel at national (or where appropriate, sub-national) level to provide new and updated guidance to Award volunteers on how to deliver the GRP in their country or territory. Where possible, we recommend these are formed in conjunction with the existing AJ COVID-19 panels – although we recognise that in practice one panel might be formed to cover all sections.

The purpose of these panels is to identify innovative, relevant solutions and develop national and local guidance to support the delivery of the Award in a safe and appropriate way that comply with country specific public health guidance and specific laws. These panels may make temporary changes to the AJ and GRP requirements as they see fit, assuming they are approved by the Operator's management team. Any temporary changes need to be made within the spirit and philosophy of the existing IAA Operational Guidelines.

The composition of a panel might include individuals with relevant experience of the sorts of environment and conditions Award participants will experience and be well-informed on local health rules or restrictions. Ideas and proposals on AJs and GRPs can be put forward and assessed by this panel against changing public health conditions in that country. Advice and guidance can then be posted and updated by the Operators online or by other means, helping others to make informed decisions about what they can and can't do. The IAF will share example terms of reference and good practice for these panels in due course and as they are formed.

Please note: When Operators make a change, these must be submitted to the Foundation as per the licence requirements. Where required or deemed appropriate, the Association Working Group on Temporary Changes will be consulted to review and agreement before implementation to ensure the Award's global standards are not compromised.

Gold Residential Project (GRP) – Temporary changes and requirements for use during COVID-19 public health restrictions

Please note: The following is proposed as volunteer guidance. As above, National Award Operators have considerable flexibility to develop and tailor this to fit their context and requirements.

Introduction

The following temporary changes to the Gold Residential Project have been introduced to enable young people to complete their Award at the Gold Level. Award Leaders and volunteers are encouraged to work with participants to identify, shape and develop activities that match, as closely as possible, the original aims, ethos and requirements of the Gold Residential Project (see International Handbook for Award Leaders, 2019 edition). They were developed by an international Working Group of National Award Operator and Foundation staff.

Where COVID-19 public health measures restrict and/or limit a participant's ability to live away from home in a residential setting, participants are now able to take part in a Gold Project and should use the guidance provided below to identify and agree activities that meet as many of the original requirements as possible. Whilst the temporary changes enable completion beyond a participant's 25th birthday, this guidance is designed to ensure those young people that want to complete now are able to do so.

Temporary guidance for where COVID-19 public health measures prohibit overnight stays and/or living away from home

Where complying with the central requirement of living away from home in a residential setting is simply not possible due to the pandemic, it is up to the Award Leader to agree the final plan with the National Award Operator and/or the Foundation (depending on the nature of licence that the Award Centre holds).

Where participants and Award Leaders wish to adhere as closely as possible to the original requirements of the section, the following are permitted as temporary changes:

- Participants are able to go home at night to sleep.
- Participants are able to complete some, or all, of their Gold Residential Project virtually – see guidance for a **Gold Project** below.

Delivering an alternative Gold Project without the residential component

Aim

To broaden experience through working and collaborating with others on a social action¹ or research project.

Ethos

The Gold Project gives participants a shared, purposeful experience with people who are not their usual companions, working towards a common goal. It should be an experience that broadens the

¹ Social action is generally regarded as activity that involves people coming together to help improve their lives and solve the problems that are important in their communities. It can include volunteering, giving money, community action or simple neighbourly acts.

participant's outlook and horizons. Where possible, the type of activity should be developed, identified and agreed by the participant and not the adult to encourage creativity and innovation.

Outcomes and benefits

The specific benefits to the participant will obviously depend on the type of Gold Project chosen. The outcomes and benefits include:

- Meeting new people
- Experiencing an unfamiliar environment
- Building new relationships
- Working as part of a team
- Taking responsibility
- Developing communication skills
- Developing confidence
- Showing initiative
- Learning new skills or enhancing existing ones
- Enjoying working with others

Guidance for Leaders

Completion of the **Gold Project** is a requirement to achieve the **Gold Award**. Participants are required to undertake a shared purposeful social action or research project, where the majority of the group are not their usual colleagues or friends and, subject to COVID-19 public health restrictions, they spend some time away from home.

The following should be treated as guidance only and approved by the Award Leader in advance of the activity commencing:

- I. The GP must be undertaken within a group of people where the majority are not previously known to each other.
- II. The GP must have a clear SMART goal, agreed as a group, and designed to address a social challenge for the benefit of others, the community or the environment around them. In some cases, the goal might be agreed as a group, but the activity might be actioned individually once the participant returns home.
- III. Where possible and COVID-19 public health restrictions permit, young people should spend some time away from home. The length and time away should be agreed with the Award Leader and relevant Assessor for the activity chosen. If it is possible to spend time away, the ideal time frame is five days away from home and assumes that a participant will return home each night.
- IV. Where it is not possible to spend any time away from home, the recommended virtual time requirements are:
 - a. The GP should take place over a period of no less than one month and no more than three months.
 - b. A minimum of 30 hours of logged purposeful activity.

The Plan, Do and Review elements of the project should all be delivered in-line with the original requirements as set out in the Handbook.

Example projects

There are numerous ways in which young people can meet the above requirements and make a meaningful difference to others, their community and the environment around them. Award Leaders should encourage young people to research and consider a variety of opportunities and discuss these before commencing any activity. Where possible and practical, we encourage young people to speak with their National Award Operators about international opportunities to collaborate with other participants from other countries.

Examples could include – but are absolutely not limited to – the following:

- Development of an environmental campaign based on a specific issue such as tackling air pollution or addressing littering in your local area or nationwide.
- Online design project to develop solutions to a current research challenges, from reducing plastics in food packaging to innovations in education.
- Organising a response to a local social issue with another charity or NGO and campaigning to make a difference in your local community.

[The Foundation would like suggestions and practical examples from Operators members to include in the final guidance to all Operators. Once published, individual Operators should tailor lists to fit the context / culture and also, where possible, share links to virtual opportunities.]