

Virtual Bronze Exploration (VBE) Requirements

The Virtual Bronze Exploration (VBE) is a new temporary option (COVID-19 period, initially to Dec 2020) for completing the Adventurous Journey (AJ). This document has been developed for National Award Operators (NAO) to guide the implementation and use of the VBE in a country or territory. The document includes an overview of who can use the VBE, the requirements that must be fulfilled by participants completing a VBE, guidance for ensuring the NAO can access Google Classroom (the template) for its licensed Award Centres and how the VBE can be delivered as part of a 'traditional' AJ.

Who can use the VBE?

The VBE is designed for Bronze level participants who are part of an Award Centre and who are not able to participate in a traditional AJ. Participants of an Award Centre at the Silver or Gold level may use the VBE to complete the Preparation & Training component of the AJ.

The requirements

A proof of concept and pilot was developed and from this a template (using Google Classroom) was developed and the following requirements have been identified and approved by the International Award Foundation (IAF). It is intended to closely align to the published purpose, ethos and education outcomes for the AJ as stipulated in the International Handbook for Award Leaders (2019 edition) Section 8 [repeated below]

Award Centres and their Award Leaders may approve their Participants undertaking a VBE that they have customised or tailored, subject to all the following requirements being met.

	REQUIREMENTS	MIN. TIME
1.	<p>The VBE will have 5 stages.</p> <p>Stage 1: Preparation and training</p> <p>Stage 2: Planning</p> <p>Stage 3: Practice</p> <p>Stage 4: Journey & Physical Activity</p> <p>Stage 5: Research Project</p> <p>The format established by the Australia and Canada NAOs (using Google Classroom) and approved by the IAF will act as a template and minimum standard.</p> <p>General Requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. To be completed within a 5-week period ii. The VBE to be facilitated and supervised by an AJ Assessor or AJ Supervisor approved by the Award Centre/Award Leader iii. The VBE must be logged on ORB and all documentation to be uploaded onto the ORB 	

2.	2.1 Complete virtual/cyber training based on the 4 topics and resource material provided in the VBE Package (Google Classroom) i. Team Communication ii. Wellbeing and cyber responsibility – “Safe From Harm” iii. Research skills and project management iv. Physical Preparation (Min. 2 x 20 min Cardio physical activities)	1.0 hr 40 mins
	2.2 Complete field based AJ training on the following topics: i. Trip Planning ii. Equipment iii. Route planning, navigation and mapping iv. First aid and Risk management v. Camp-craft	1.5 hrs
	2.3 Complete a Training Assessment for each of the Training Topics	1.0 hr
3.	Complete and document a detailed planning process to become familiar with: i. the virtual journey video format, ii. the Pre-Viewing Tasks, iii. the Team Challenges, iv. Full day meal plan (for the virtual journey) and meal preparation (min. one cooked meal), v. Physical activity selection, vi. Research project selection and completion.	1 hr
4.	Pre-viewing and route preparation tasks Allocated virtual journeys should be pre-viewed by specified team members (documented in the planning template) and discussed by the team (20 mins per route plus discussion time)	1.5 hrs
5.	Complete a Practice Session with a minimum: i. 1 video journey (not to be used for the qualifying journey), ii. 1 team challenge, iii. 30 mins testing of the selected & agreed physical challenge, iv. Assessment of the research project. Minimum 1 team discussion and 1 hour of individual research.	3.5 hrs
6.	Complete a Virtual Qualifying Journey with the following minimum requirements: i. 3 virtual journey videos with a minimum total of 2 hours of viewing, ii. Min 4 Team Challenges - 1 hour for all discussion and write up, iii. 3 hours of physical activity with the benchmark being 15,000 steps or a similar challenge suitable to the group’s capacity, iv. Complete feedback report after each video of 250 words each, v. Cook one “joint” meal (lunch or dinner). 1 hr	8 hrs
7.	Complete a team research project with the following minimum features: i. To be completed within 10 days of the Virtual Qualifying Journey, ii. Preparation to include learning about Action Research, iii. The topic to be familiar to all the team members so that each can bring some experiential learning to the team discussions,	5 hrs

	iv. Team members will undertake their own research (min 2 hours), v. The team will meet at least 3 times for at least 30 minutes, vi. A final report to be prepared as a team in a format agreed with the VBE Assessor.	
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Total Hours: 23+ hours

How NAOs can access and manage Google Classroom for licensed Award Centres

To be able to manage the VBE Google Classroom, an NAO must have either a G-Suite for Non-Profits or G-Suite for Education. This will enable the NAO to be able to share and manage classrooms for different types of licensed Award Centres, including schools, universities, and youth organisations. In certain instances, the NAO will need to whitelist domains for licensed Award Centres and ensure that the Award Centre IT administrators whitelist the NAO domain too (see guidance link below). The majority of NAOs will qualify for a G-Suite for Non-Profits (depending on legal entity status) and applications can take up to 2 – 3 weeks to be approved. The IAF can provide support in this application process.

Once the NAO has set up a G-Suite account, the IAF will need log-in details to be able to copy across the master VBE Classroom to the NAO account. Unfortunately, there is no way this can be done automatically. Once the NAO has the master classroom, it can be replicated and passed on to licensed Award Centres and their Award Leaders for use with Award participants. Each Award Centre will have a dedicated Class that is managed by the NAO and Award Leaders can be invited to be ‘co-teachers’ by the NAO to manage the VBE and invite participants.

Google has lots of useful information and guidance for managing groups on Google Classroom. The links below provide the core information for managing access to and replicating the classroom for licensed Award Centres:

- Invite students: <https://support.google.com/edu/classroom/answer/6020282>
- Add a co-teacher: <https://support.google.com/edu/classroom/answer/6190760>
- Copy a class: <https://support.google.com/edu/classroom/answer/9093680>
- Classroom limits: <https://support.google.com/edu/classroom/answer/7300976>
- Class membership configuration and whitelist a domain: <https://support.google.com/edu/classroom/answer/6173514>

Delivering a hybrid VBE, including a traditional AJ

Where public health restrictions are sufficiently ‘relaxed’ and outdoor education in small groups is allowed, the VBE can be used as a hybrid tool with an outdoor / traditional AJ and used to replace the preparation, training and practice stages associated with the traditional AJ.

In this context, it is recommended that Stages 1 – 3 are completed using the Google Classroom templates and then Stages 4 and 5 delivered as per a ‘normal’ AJ.

Depending on the restrictions in a country and territory, Award Centres may not be able to deliver an AJ that is fully compliant with all the 15 Requirements in the International Handbook for Award. For instance, journeying with a group outside a household and taking part in activity with a family member might be required.

In reality, the blend of how much will be virtual and how much will be ‘traditional’ will come down to what is appropriate in the context of the Award Centre and this should be discussed with the relevant National Award Operator and/or International Award Foundation.

Purpose, ethos and educational outcomes of the AJ section

The following is a direct extract from the Handbook:

Purpose of the Adventurous Journey

To encourage a spirit of adventure and discovery as well as develop leadership, team skills and decision making, whilst undertaking a self-sufficient journey in a small team. This is the only section of the Award that must be undertaken in a team – developing group work skills and team building are a key component to completing this section.

Ethos

The Adventurous Journey provides participants with a unique, challenging and memorable experience. The journey, with a clear and agreed aim (refer to paragraph 8.6 for an explanation of an ‘aim’), must be undertaken in a small group in an unfamiliar environment, requiring determination and perseverance, thus providing a sense of independence, self-sufficiency and discovery. The key elements of the Adventurous Journey are teamwork in planning and undertaking Practice and Qualifying Journeys against the background of real challenges posed by an unfamiliar environment.

Outcomes and benefits

- Working as part of a team
- Understanding group dynamics, the participant’s own role and the role of others in a team
- Enhancing leadership skills
- Improving planning and organisational ability, and attention to detail
- Learning to make real decisions and accept real consequences
- Obtaining a sense of achievement and satisfaction by overcoming challenges and obstacles
- Developing self-reliance and independence
- Developing health and fitness
- Experiencing and appreciating the outdoor environment
- Gaining the appropriate knowledge and skills to journey safely in that environment
- Exercising imagination and creativity by choosing their own journey
- Improving their investigating, reviewing and presentational skills