



GENERAL INFORMATION

- Please ensure you read the *Equipment List* with essential items, recommended items and items not required.
- Any items brought to camp which are not required, (nut products, pocket knives, mobile phones), will be stored at basecamp until the completion of the expedition.
- If you would like to hire or purchase equipment for your expedition, please visit our [online store](#). All equipment will be ready and waiting for you upon arrival at Somerset.
- Somerset Leaders will supply a 'group kit' for the students to carry and use. The following items are included in the group kit, which means you will **not** need to bring them along yourself:
 - Dishwashing liquid, sponges and tea towels.
 - Toilet paper, trowel and hand sanitiser.
 - Knives and chopping boards.
 - Methylated fuel stoves, fuel and matches.
 - Maps, compasses and route planning sheets (you are welcome to bring your own compass).

When you arrive at Somerset



- Your Leader will check that you have all necessary equipment and assist to repack and / or adjust your rucksack.
- For those participants on a school expedition program or attending a Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Preliminary Training and Practice Journey, your Group Leader will conduct a packing session and repack into rucksacks.
- Any gear that you have purchased or hired from Somerset will be allocated and packed at this point.
- Your pack will be weighed to make sure it is not too heavy – including full water bottles.
- Please let your Group Leader know if you are unsure or uncomfortable.

EQUIPMENT SELECTION

Rain Jackets

- It is essential to bring a good quality raincoat with a hood, regardless of the weather forecast. Ponchos or Parkas or coats or raincoat with fabric lining are not suitable. A raincoat which is seam sealed is a good idea.
- The raincoat must be well-fitted but with enough room for clothing underneath.
- The length must be about mid-thigh – anything shorter and clothing gets too wet.
- Your raincoat must be lightweight as you will be carrying it.
- **Somerset has a good quality raincoat available for purchase in a variety of sizes.**

Shoes

- On your Duke of Ed expedition you will be walking over ground that is uneven and often rocky and leafy, therefore **comfort, support** and **grip** are essential features of the shoes you need to bring.
- Please also remember to bring thick, comfortable socks as this helps in the prevention of rubbing and blisters.

- For hiking:
 - Hiking shoes or boots are best as they provide ankle and arch support, and have good grip.
 - Runners / sneakers are fine as long as they are for running or cross-training. Basketball or other flat-sole shoes are not ideal for hiking.
 - Street shoes like Volleys, Rabens, Tigers and Vans are not suitable as they have little to no grip and are often flat-soled.
 - Shoes are likely to be exposed to harsh or dirty wear. Please bring ones that you don't mind spoiling.
- For paddling:
 - 'Aqua' shoes are best as they are flexible, enclosed, lightweight and dry relatively easily.
 - Raben or similar street shoes are fine.
 - Thongs are not suitable as they are not enclosed.
 - Shoes are likely to be exposed to harsh or dirty wear – please bring ones that you don't mind spoiling.



Sleeping Gear

- **Sleeping Bag**
 - Your sleeping bag needs to be a good quality bag, as cheaper bags from department stores are not adequate.
 - Your sleeping bag should be rated 2 – 3 degrees *lower* than the expected temperature (check the tag for a temperature rating). The temperatures at Somerset are usually 1 - 3 degrees hotter in summer and 1 - 3 degrees colder in winter than Sydney. Use the Richmond weather forecast as a good indication.
 - Your sleeping bag should be compact and lightweight (less than 2kg).
 - A compression sack is a great idea as the bag can be 'squashed' to be as small as possible.
 - A sleeping bag liner adds insulation and helps keep the inside of the bag from becoming too dirty or sweaty.
 - Waterproof your sleeping bag in either a dry-bag or a garbage bag (any colour but black).
- **Sleeping Mat**
 - A mat is essential as it provides a layer of insulation between the sleeping bag and the ground and is also more comfortable than the ground.
 - A simple foam mat is adequate and lightweight
 - For more comfort a self-inflating mat is best. It will be heavier than a foam mat.
 - Airbeds or stretchers are not appropriate as they are too heavy.
 - **Somerset has different sleeping bag and mat options available for hire and purchase. For our affordable range of items, please visit our [online store](#).**



Foam Mat OR Self-inflating Mat



Sleeping Bag with Compression sack

FIRST AID, PERSONAL MEDICATION & BLISTER TREATMENT

First Aid Information

- Somerset Leaders carry a comprehensive First Aid Kit and are trained in appropriate levels of Remote Area First Aid.
- The Somerset First Aid Kit contains non-prescription medications – typically paracetamol, antihistamine and Gastrolyte. If you have restrictions on the use of these medications it should be detailed on your medical form, if not, please email to advise and update.
- If you are bringing along your own brand of non-prescription medications to use, please make this known to your Leader on arrival and advise them if you take any whilst on expedition.
- We recommend you bring along your own personal supply of Band-Aids and bite cream in a zip-lock bag.

Asthma Information

- Please ensure that you have noted your severity and treatment plan on our medical form. If not please email to advise and update.
- Please bring your own medications (enough for the duration, plus any spares as appropriate). Please include a copy of instructions and your treatment plan.
- When you have met your Group Leader please make it known to them where in your rucksack your medications are located in case of emergency. Our Groups Leaders carry spacers for use if required.

Allergy Information

- Please ensure you have noted the severity and your treatment plan on our medical form. If not please email to advise and update.
- Please bring your own medications (enough for the duration, plus any spares as appropriate) and a copy of instructions and your treatment plan.
- When you have met your Group Leader please make it known to them where in your rucksack your medications are located in case of emergency.
- **Important** – if you are anaphylactic you are required to bring **2 Epipens** (the second pen is to be carried by your Group Leader). **If you do not have 2 Epipens you will be unable to commence the expedition.**

Other Medical Information

- Please ensure that you have noted any other medical issues. If not please email to advise and update.
- A Somerset staff member may contact you prior to the expedition to obtain further information.

Blister Prevention & Treatment

- **Shoes**
 - Ensure your shoes fit well and have good grip.
 - Do not wear brand new shoes. Shoes must be “broken-in” for at least a week before wearing on expedition.
- **Socks**
 - Wear cotton, wool or specially designed socks that are moisture wicking and padded.
 - Ensure they fit well and don't bunch.
 - Wear thicker than your average socks – sports socks are good.
- **At Campsite**
 - If there is time to ‘air’ your feet at the campsite it is a good idea!
 - Massage your feet and any sore spots.
 - Watch any sore spots. If necessary, pad these with a non-stick dressing to avoid a full-blown blister.
- **Treatment**
 - Band-Aids specifically designed for blisters are great.
 - Standard Band-Aids are okay but not ideal as your shoes still rub against the sore skin.
 - *To make your own blister dressing:* Cut a small ‘donut’ from a non-stick dressing, or your foam mat and make sure the ‘donut’ will fit your blister in the centre hole. Tape or Band-Aid over this ‘donut’ to hold it in place.

HOW TO FIT & PACK YOUR RUCKSACK

A Few Simple Points to Keep in Mind

- Limit what you need – you can add any 'luxury' items later if space and weight permits.
- Layout everything before you start packing.
- Keep things in groups. For example, all clothing together; toiletries & first aid; utensils, cup & bowl; all food together so as everything is at hand when you need to perform a certain task.
- Separately waterproof your sleeping bag in a waterproof stuff sack or in a garbage bag (any colour but black).
- Separately waterproof your clothes in waterproof stuff sacks, zip locks or in plastic bags (any colour but black).
- Refer to pack weights.

Starting to Pack



- Loosen all straps on your pack to open up the inside space as much as possible.
- Place your sleeping bag at the bottom of your pack, squeeze any other lightweight items such as clothing into the gaps.
- Place the heavier items like your tent, food and water in the middle of your pack. This helps to reduce the downward & backward pull on your back, making it more comfortable to carry.
- Place medium weight items like clothing, foam mat or Thermarest (self-inflating mat) around the heavier items.
- Place any items that you may need quick access to such as snacks, maps, rain jacket or first aid items on top or in any side or top pockets.
- Do not hang any items on the outside of your pack – not only will the swinging motion interfere with your walking rhythm and make it harder and more uncomfortable to carry, you risk damaging or losing items which could litter the bush.

Adjusting the Pack to Fit You

Your rucksack will have several straps to adjust your load for greater comfort. Your legs have some of the strongest muscles in your body, so the goal is to adjust your straps so that the majority of the load rests on your hips.

You have four primary adjustment straps and they should be adjusted in the order they are listed below:

1. **Hip-belt** – sits on top of your hip bones
2. **Shoulder straps** – adjustable near your lower ribs
3. **Load-lifter straps** – adjustable at the top of the shoulders
4. **Sternum strap** – sits across your chest, approximately 1 inch below your collar bone

Before you start to adjust your rucksack, make sure it is packed completely (full water bottles included). To get it onto your back, first lift it onto your knee and slip your right arm through the strap. Without swinging, gently transfer the weight onto your back and swiftly loop your left arm through the other strap to finish. Do up the hip-belt buckle so the padding sits on top of your hip bones, and adjust clothing underneath to avoid bunching. Adjust straps 1 and 2 and when they feel comfortable, continue to adjust straps 3 and 4. The final adjustments should feel snug, but not make you feel stiff and tense. You should also feel like your centre of gravity and weight-load is centred at your hips. This means you should feel balanced and not top-heavy.

If you are struggling to get it right, your Group Leader will be able to assist you further upon arrival. Please note: adjusting your rucksack is a dynamic process, which means it will need to be done regularly to accommodate changes in weight and developments of any sore spots over the duration of the expedition.