

Educational Supportability Assessment

Information Leaflet

Please read this information before completing ESAR (OES form 101)

What is ‘Confirmation of Educational Supportability’ and why is it required?

All children **aged 0-18** years of age require confirmation of educational supportability before accompanying their parent on an overseas assignment. Defence Children Services’ (DCS) educational supportability assessment is part of the overarching MOD Assessment of Supportability Overseas (MASO) process¹. To gain confirmation of educational supportability, a child must be supportable in the overseas location.

Confirmation of educational supportability is required:

- so the overseas Local Command and school/setting are able to consider whether appropriate support and educational provision is available to meet the individual needs of all children;
- so schools and settings have early knowledge of a child’s needs, to prepare for, and ensure, a smooth transition;
- so parents have the chance to consider the variability of provision in overseas locations, to make informed choices and not be disadvantaged as the result of an overseas assignment.

Do all children require Confirmation of Educational Supportability?

All accompanying children from 0-18 years, moving to any overseas location, require confirmation of educational supportability. This includes children not yet in education.

If a child is **not** accompanying parents on an overseas assignment and is accessing educational provision in the UK, confirmation of educational supportability is not required. For example, if a child is at boarding school in the UK or residing with a guardian.

Confirmation of educational supportability also forms part of the overall overseas assignment procedures co-ordinated through the Families Section and/or DBS. They will seek evidence that ‘Confirmation of Educational Supportability’ has been given prior to completing all necessary arrangements. Parents are encouraged to engage with the process at the earliest possible time to avoid unnecessary delays to assignments.

Finding a school place

In most locations it is important to have a confirmed school place before an assessment of supportability can take place. This is so that provision in the receiving country can be considered.

¹ Chapter 2A of JSP770; Tri-Service Operational and Non-Operational Welfare Policy, JSP 342 and EHE DIN regarding educational supportability overseas.

In some location, such as the USA, a school place will not be offered before families arrive in location. In these circumstances, information about your address and school district will enable DCS to process your application.

Important - it is the parents' responsibility to source a school place in the overseas location.

Locations supported by DCS schools/settings: If a child will be attending a DCS school/setting, parents are to make contact with the school directly and follow their admissions process (including educational supportability assessment). Further information can be found on each DCS school/setting's website.

All other locations: The MOD do not approve independent schools overseas. If the assignment is to an overseas area **not** supported by a DCS school/setting, Service personnel should liaise with the gaining command and/or the current role incumbent. They may have advice on schools in the area and/or provide details of where service children have attended in the past.

Please note:

- The impact of different education systems
You will need to fully research the local educational provision in the location of your overseas assignment and ensure you are content that the provision on offer is suitable for your child's needs. Many schools overseas (which are not MOD-provided DCS schools) will follow a different curriculum to the UK. Therefore, it is important that you are aware of any curriculum differences. Please be aware that year group ages may also vary as well as school starting ages.
- The impact of transitional phases of education during and after an assignment
This may include moves from Early Years provision to Primary School, Primary School to Secondary School or Secondary to Post 16 Education. You will also need to consider the educational impact of transition back to the English education system (or devolved administration equivalent) at the end of assignment. This includes transfer into a critical stage of education course which may include public examinations.

If you require further guidance, contact the OES team⁴ directly.

How to start the process

Once parents have chosen a school (where this is possible), the first step is for them to complete the Education Supportability Assessment Request ESAR (OES Form 101) which can be obtained by contacting the Families Section² or DBS³ or online via the gov.uk website. Individual forms need to be completed for each accompanying child aged 0-18. Parents are to ensure the form is fully completed, dated, and signed by the **Serving/Civilian Person**. Educational supportability assessments cannot be processed without this information.

² UKSTRATCOM-DefSp-DSCOM-FamSec@mod.gov.uk

³ DBSCivPers-ResourcingTeam1@mod.gov.uk

Next steps

Locations supported by MOD-provided DCS schools/settings: If the assignment is to an overseas area supported by DCS schools/settings (including 0-3 year-olds - Early Years, and 3-5 year olds - Foundation Stage), the ESAR (OES Form 101) must be sent directly to the school/setting, (*unless you are transferring from Northern Ireland*), see individual school website for further details.

If you are transferring from **Northern Ireland** all forms must be returned to the Overseas Education & Supportability (OES) team at RC-DCS-HQ-OES@mod.gov.uk.

For school age children (5-18), you will also need to request that your child's current school complete OES Form 102 and return this to the DCS school/setting directly (cc'd parents – for information).

For non-school age children (0-5), you will need to request that your child's current provision (child minder, nursery or early years setting) complete OES Form 103 and return to the DCS school/setting (cc'd parents – for information). If your child is currently not attending any provision, then you as the parent complete this form and return it to the DCS school/setting as above.

All other locations: If the assignment is to an overseas area **not** supported by a DCS school/setting then the ESAR (OES Form 101) must be sent directly to the OES team⁴.

For school age children (5-18) you will need to request that your child's current school complete OES Form 102 and return this to the OES team⁴ (cc'd parents – for information).

For non-school age children (0-5) you will need to request that your child's current provision (e.g., child minder, nursery or early years setting) complete OES form 103 and return to the OES team⁴ (cc'd parents – for information). If your child is currently not attending any provision, then you as the parent complete this form and return it to the OES team⁴.

These forms are requested to establish current academic progress and any additional support being provided. We use this information to assess and confirm educational supportability overseas.

Elective Home Education (EHE): If you are currently home educating or wish to do so in the overseas assignment location, you are required to make contact with the OES team, and they will arrange an EHE Advisory Discussion between parents and an OES Education Adviser.

Parents will also need to complete the ESAR (OES Form 101) and send it directly to the OES team⁴. If parents state that they are intending to electively home educate whilst overseas, then an education MASO will be initiated (Defence Instruction Notice 2021DIN01-134).⁵

⁴ RC-DCS-HQ-OES@mod.gov.uk

⁵ [2021DIN01-134](#)

For school age children (5-18), currently attending school you will need to request that your child's current school complete OES Form 102 and return this to the OES team⁴ (cc'd parents – for information).

For school age children (5-18), currently in EHE OES Form 104 will need to be completed by the parent with the prime responsibility for coordinating and delivering EHE. The form should be returned to the OES team⁴.

For non-school age children (0-5) you will need to request that your child's current provision (e.g., child minder, nursery or early years setting) complete OES Form 103 and return this to the OES team⁴ (cc'd parents – for information). If your child is currently not attending any provision, then the parent completes this form and returns it to the OES team⁴.

These forms are requested to establish current academic progress and any additional support being provided. We use this information to assess and confirm educational supportability overseas.

Will additional information be required?

Further information may be requested directly by the MOD-provided school/setting or OES team depending on the child's individual needs and their current stage of education. What additional information is required will be determined once the ESAR (OES Form 101) and OES forms 102, 103 or 104 (or equivalent) and all accompanying documents have been received. The DCS school/setting or OES team may contact parents or the current school to gather additional information, as needed.

What sort of information will be considered as part of the Educational Supportability Assessment?

We will look at all the information provided by your child's current school to make an informed assessment of educational supportability. This may include, but is not limited to, assessment records, school reports, information about any additional needs your child has, safeguarding records and any reports from external agencies involved with your child.

All this information helps us to build a rounded picture of the support your child may need in the overseas location. It also helps the overseas command to ascertain whether additional agencies, such as social care or medical professionals, need to be involved in the wider supportability assessment.

We will also look at the impact on your child if your posting coincides with a Critical Stage of their Education (e.g., GCSE or A-Level). How this will impact on their opportunity to complete internationally recognised qualifications needs to be considered carefully. It is very challenging to transfer schools mid-way through an examination programme due to differences in qualifications and curriculums and can have an impact on whether your child will be able to gain the qualifications they will need in later life.

The MOD assumes responsibility for entitled family members when moving overseas and needs to ensure best safeguarding practice is followed, where possible. If a school holds safeguarding records for your child, DCS may facilitate the transfer of these records, where appropriate, to the new school.

How far in advance of an assignment can the process for gaining confirmation of educational supportability start?

Confirmation of educational supportability will be issued **no more than 6 months** prior to an assignment. Children's additional needs may change significantly within this timeframe, which may impact their educational supportability. If there are exceptional circumstances, please contact the DCS school/setting or OES team⁴ directly.

How long does the Educational Supportability Assessment take?

Confirmation of educational supportability can take up to 12 weeks in total, depending on individual circumstances.

As long as parents engage in the process early, with the required information fully completed and submitted, 'Confirmation of Educational Supportability' should take no longer than 3 weeks for the majority of children. For children requiring a MASO, this may take up to an additional 9 weeks.

N.B. During school closure periods (e.g., summer holidays) Educational Supportability Assessments may take longer than described above.

Why would a MASO be required?

Beyond UK borders, different countries, states and regions may have their own regulations governing both EHE and SEND provision. This may mean that the level of provision available in Local Authorities or UK schools is not always as readily available in all overseas Local Commands and areas.

Therefore, a MOD Assessment of Supportability Overseas (MASO) may be required in exceptional circumstances. For example, if a child:

- has specialist level of needs,
- has involvement from other agencies e.g., health or social care,
- has an Educational Health Care Plan (or equivalent),
- is or potentially will be accessing Elective Home Education (EHE).

MASOs will be raised through the OES team and will involve multi-agency Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) and Local Commands. For additional information about MASOs please see the MASO Leaflet 107.

It is important to note: Education, Health & Care Applications/Assessments Plans (and/or equivalent devolved administration statutory plans) are not maintained overseas. You may wish to engage with the SENDCo at your current school to discuss the implications of this for your child.