

Merit Badge Frequently Asked Questions

Here are some of the key [Boy Scout Requirements](#) #33216 (BSR) and [Advancement Policies](#) #33088 (AP).

Who can earn a merit badge? Do you need to be a certain rank or age?

- "[Merit badges](#) ... are for registered [Boy Scouts](#), [Varsity Scouts](#), or qualified [Venturers](#)." - [BSR p. 5](#)
- "Any Boy Scout may earn any merit badge at any time. You don't need to have had rank advancement to be eligible." - [BSR p. 22](#)

When can you start? Do any requires need prior approval before you start?

- "Unless otherwise specified, work for a requirement can be started at any time." - [BSR p. 22](#)
- Some [Merit Badge Requirements Require Prior Approval](#).

Where are the answers? Do you need to read the merit badge book? Where can you buy one?

- The merit badge pamphlets (book) are full-color quick references with the answers, photos, and diagrams you need.
- "You should read the merit badge pamphlet on the subject." - [BSR p. 22](#)
- Merit badge pamphlets are at [your local Scout Shop](#) or you can buy them online at: <http://www.scoutstuff.org/>.

What are worksheets? Are they required?

- [Merit Badge Worksheets](#) are optional tools to help organize your work & include needed logs, diagrams, & checklists.

Do you need a buddy?

- "You must have another person with you at each meeting with the [merit badge counselor](#)." - [BSR p. 22](#)

How much do I do? How are you tested? Can a counselor add or remove requirements?

- "You are expected to meet the requirements as they are stated—no more and no less." - [BSR p. 23](#)
- "In the end, the Scout must be reviewed individually by the counselor to ensure completion of the badges requirements."
- [AP p. 26](#)
- "Each counselor must maintain the exact standards as outlined in the merit badge requirements -- nothing deleted, nothing added..." - [AP p.34](#)

How do you get credit? Can you get partial credit? How long do you have to finish?

- "When the counselor is satisfied that you have met each requirement, he or she will sign your application." - [BSR p. 23](#)
- "Partial completion of merit badges should be credited to a Scout on the Application for Merit Badge..." - [AP p.34](#)
- "There is no time limit for completion of merit badges other than age 18." - [AP p.34](#)

Does a counselor "cover" the requirements or does each Scout do each requirement himself?

- "You are expected to meet the requirements as they are stated -- no more and no less. You are expected to do exactly what is stated in the requirements. If it says "show or demonstrate," that is what you must do." - [BSR p. 23](#)
- "In the end, the Scout must be reviewed individually by the counselor to ensure completion of the badges requirements."
- [AP p. 26](#)

Can you modify requirements for a Scout with Special Needs? Who certifies Special Needs?

- "Merit badges are awarded only when all requirements are met as stated." - [AP p.41](#)
- "Certification must be given by the appropriate local council..." - [AP p.42](#)

What are the qualifications to be a counselor? Do you have to register again? Who approves you?

- **Qualified:** "They must be men and women of good character, age 18 or older, and recognized as having the skills and education in the subjects for which they are to serve as merit badge counselors, as well as the ability to work with Scout-age boys." [AP p. 13](#)
- **Registered:** "All Merit badge counselors must...register as a merit badge counselor..." (Code 42) - [AP pp.13-14](#)
- **Approved:** "...they must be approved...for each specific merit badge." - [AP p. 13](#)
- **Trained:** "in the aims of Scouting and in advancement procedures." [AP p.34](#) See [Merit badge Counselor Orientation](#).
"All volunteers are expected to complete [Youth Protection training](#)...within 90 days..." - [Adult Leader Application 28-501](#)

BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA MERIT BADGE BLUE CARD PROCESS

- BEFORE** a Scout starts working on a merit badge, he should obtain a **Blue Card** from the Troop Advancement Coordinator or Scoutmaster. The Scout should fill out the Name, Address and City, Troop, Troop number, District and Council (Westmoreland Fayette).
- On the back of the **Blue Card** on the **Applicant's Record** section of the card, the Scout needs to fill out his name and the name of the Merit Badge he will be working on.
- The Scout also needs to fill in the Merit Badge name on the first piece of the back page.
- Once all of this is filled out, the Scout needs to have the Scoutmaster sign and date the bottom of the **Application for Merit Badge** section. This part of the **Blue Card** is kept by the Scoutmaster or Advancement Chair for their records, once the merit badge is completed.
- The Scout is then ready to work with a Merit Badge Counselor to complete the requirements of the merit badge. The Counselor will fill in, date, and initial the requirements section of the card as each requirement is completed; however some Counselors will just write **COMPLETE** on this section of the card.
- The Counselor should fill in their information in the first section on the back of the **Blue Card** with their Name, Address, Phone Number, and sign and Date upon completion.
- The Counselor should also fill in the completed date and sign the **applicant's record** portion of the card.
- The third portion of the **Blue Card** should be kept by the Counselor for their records, however some do not remove and keep it.
- Once the merit badge is completed and the **Blue Card** is signed by the Counselor, the Scout needs to bring it back to the Scoutmaster to have the completed **Applicant's Record** portion signed off.
- Once all signatures are obtained, the Scout turns in both remaining portions of the **Blue Card** to the Advancement Chair; who will keep the **application for merit badge** piece for the Troop's records and return the **Applicant's Record** along with the Merit Badge itself to the Scout at the next **Court of Honor**. Scouts should retain all their portions of their **Blue Cards** as they can be requested by the **Eagle Board of Review**.

Information for Applicant

- A merit badge application can be approved only by a registered merit badge counselor.
- You must have a buddy with you (Scout buddy system) at each meeting with the merit badge counselor.
- Turn in your approved application to your unit leader. You will be awarded the merit badge emblem and certificate at a suitable occasion.

Information for Counselor

- Merit badge applications must be signed in advance by the applicant's unit leader.
- The Scout must have the buddy (Scout buddy system) in attendance at all instructional sessions.
- You may not change any requirement, but you may share your knowledge or experience that will make the counseling more interesting and valuable.

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APPLICATION FOR MERIT BADGE

Name: Scout's name
 Address: & address
 City: _____
☒ Troop Scout ☐ Explorer
 of _____ Troop _____ No. 97
 Council: Los Amigos
Orange County
 and is qualified to begin working for merit
 badge. Scoutmaster or Advancement Chair
 signs & dates before giving to scout.
 Date: _____ Signature of Unit Leader _____

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Reverse Sides

APPLICANT'S RECORD

Name: Scout's Name
 has given me his completed application for the
Official Badge Title
 Merit Badge
 Completed on Counselor's date by
Counselor's signature
 Signature of Counselor

COUNSELOR'S RECORD

Applicant: Scout's Name
☒ Troop ☐ Team Unit number 97
☐ Explorer
Official Badge Title
 Merit Badge
 Date Completed: Counselor's date
 Remarks: _____

Official Badge Title
Merit Badge
 Name of Scout: _____
 Date: _____
 Signature of Scoutmaster: _____
 Signature of Advancement Chair: _____
 Filled out after card is turned in to Advancements
 Certificate and badge presented: _____
 Applicant will turn in this portion to his unit leader for record posting.

NOTE TO BOY SCOUT, SCOUTMASTER, OR EXPLORER: Retain this copy for your permanent records.

It is suggested that the counselor keep this record for at least 1 year in case any question is raised later in regard to this award.

Merit Badge Program Quiz Answers

1. **False.** A counselor may be approved for as many badges as he or she is qualified. Since this is up to the members of the approving body to decide, they also may decide how many merit badges they feel it is necessary for a counselor to coach based upon need within the district or council.
2. **False.** A duly approved counselor may counsel any Scout who contacts him or her through proper procedures. However, it is suggested that wherever possible, Scouts should experience a variety of adult contacts and therefore, should use a diverse group of counselors.
3. **False.** All counselors must be approved by the district/council advancement committee.
4. **True.** Even volunteers who serve in multiple positions must fill out another form and show registration as a merit badge counselor.
5. **False.** A Scout may earn as many badges from a counselor as the counselor is qualified and approved to coach. However, since it is in the Scout's best interest that he experience a diversity of adult contacts, it is not in the spirit of the program to do so unless conditions warrant.
6. **False.** Counselor approvals are for one year only.
7. **False.** There is no time limit except that all requirements work must be completed before the Scout's 18th birthday.
8. **False.** No additions or deletions are permitted. The requirements are to be completed exactly as written. However, a counselor may share additional information or resources in the hope of encouraging the Scout to challenge himself.
9. **False.** There must always be a third person present, but it may be any other adult familiar to the Scout, a Scout's parent, or a Scout's "buddy." Common sense dictates that two adult counselors alone with only one Scout should be avoided.
10. **False.** No additions or deletions are permitted. The requirements are to be completed exactly as written.
11. **True.**
12. **True.** The *Boy Scout Requirements* book is revised annually and reflects any changes that have been made, whereas the merit badge pamphlets are not revised annually and may be outdated.