

SBSA Advancement Demystified:

Advancement Myths – Busted!

2025 October 01

If you have advancement questions, you should:

First, consult the Guide to Advancement (<https://www.scouting.org/resources/guide-to-advancement/>), the current Scouts BSA Requirements book, and [scouting.org](https://www.scouting.org).

Second, contact your unit leadership, unit commissioner, and then district/council advancement administrators.

If the issue cannot be resolved at the local level, contact advancement.team@scouting.org.

Note: Quotes from the Guide to Advancement (GTA) have been italicized in this document. Some words are underlined for emphasis.

Is the Guide to Advancement “just a guide,” or binding?

The Guide to Advancement, 2025 Edition, is the definitive source of advancement policies and procedures in Scouting America. *“No council, committee, district, unit, or individual has the authority to add to, or subtract from, advancement requirements, or deviate from policies in this publication. There are limited exceptions relating only to members with special needs. For details, see Section 10, “Advancement for Members With Special Needs.””* (Inside front cover, GTA.) One must follow the requirements as written, no more and no less. That means that a unit may not establish “extra” requirements nor can a unit leader overlook or waive rank requirements.

If a leader or unit is not following mandated policies, a discussion with the district or council advancement chair would be appropriate. Sometimes a little education is all that is needed. Issues or concerns should be resolved at the lowest appropriate level, whether at the district or council level. If that is not possible, contact Advancement.Team@scouting.org.

Scoutmasters and all other adults associated with Scouting America have to follow the national advancement policy. There may arise instances where a unit leader, committee chair, or other adult fails to follow Scouting America's advancement or other policies. Suppose the individual is made aware of the appropriate Scouting America policy and fails to change their behaviour. In that case, the next step is to seek assistance from the unit committee and the chartered organization representative. The chartered organization is responsible for the unit. The chartered organization representative approves all of the unit adults. When discussing issues/concerns with the unit committee and chartered organization representative, it may help to seek the support and expertise of district and/or council representatives. Unit commissioners should be able to advise the chartered organization representative, troop committee, and troop leaders about Scouting America policies. District executives, district advancement chairs, and their council counterparts can also provide advice and guidance to those at the unit level.

What are the duties and responsibilities of an advancement chair?

The Guide to Advancement (GTA 3.0.0.3) lists the responsibilities of unit advancement coordinators or chairs. Among the 13 responsibilities are supporting and facilitating the unit leader's vision for rank advancement, educating parents, guardians, unit leadership and committee members on appropriate methods to stimulate and encourage advancement, helping plan and facilitate advancement ceremonies, arranging for timely boards of review, maintaining advancement records and backups and learning about Scouting America awards and recognition opportunities that may help deliver a well-rounded unit program. Approval of rank requirements is a unit leader's responsibility. (GTA 3.0.0.3)

GTA 4.2.1.2 specifically states that *"Other non-direct-contact leaders, such as committee members, committee chairs, unit scouter reserves, and college scouter reserves, may not test or pass Scouts on rank requirements."*

What is the definition of "active" participation?

A Scout does not have to attend every troop meeting, campout and activity in order to be considered "active" for advancement purposes. (GTA 4.2.3.1)

"The following three tests determine whether the requirement has been met. The first and second are required, along with either the third or its alternative."

1. The Scout is registered. The youth is registered in the unit for at least the time period indicated in the requirement. It should also be indicated by the youth in some way, through word or action, that the youth considers himself or herself a member. If a youth was supposed to have been registered, but for whatever reason was not, discuss with the local council registrar the possibility of back-registering the youth.

2. The Scout is in good standing. Scouts are considered in "good standing" with a unit as long as they have not been dismissed or suspended for disciplinary reasons. Scouts must also be in good standing with the local council and Scouting America. (In the rare case a youth is not in good standing, communications will have been delivered.)

3. The Scout meets the unit's reasonable expectations; or, if not, a lesser level of activity is explained. If, for the time period required, a Scout or qualifying Venturer or Sea Scout meets those aspects of the unit's pre-established documented expectations that refer to a level of activity, then he or she is considered active and the requirement is met. Time counted as "active" need not be consecutive. Scouts may piece together any time they have been active and still qualify. If a Scout does not meet the unit's reasonable documented expectations, which were communicated in advance, the alternative that follows must be offered.

Alternative to the third test if expectations are not met:

If a Scout has fallen below the unit's activity-oriented expectations, the reason must be other positive endeavors—in or out of Scouting—or noteworthy circumstances that have prevented a higher level of participation.

....

It is reasonable to accept that competition for a Scout's time will become intense, especially as the Scout grows older and wants to take advantage of positive "outside" opportunities. This can make full-time dedication to the unit difficult to balance. A fair leader, therefore, will seek ways to empower the Scout to plan personal growth opportunities both inside and outside Scouting, and consider them part of the overall positive experience for which Scouting America is the driving force." (GTA 4.2.3.1)

One must remember that, for advancement purposes, a Scout needs to only meet the time-based requirement. If a Scout has periods of active participation (currently 4 months for Star and 6 months for Life and Eagle) that fulfill the

requirement, a unit leader cannot deny advancement because a Scout fell short of unit expectations for participation either before or after fulfilling the requirement.

It is also useful to keep in mind that a statistical standard, while attractive to some, has downsides. While a requirement to attend a certain percentage of meetings might compel a youth to show up physically, it doesn't guarantee they will be engaged. Having a disgruntled youth at a Scouting activity can detract from the experience of other youth, and can negatively impact unit recruitment and retention. There have been instances when adults disagree, sometimes strenuously, about whether 64.75% or 73.40% is ideal. Wouldn't it be more beneficial to invest the energy and emotion in delivering a program that engages youth? Time and again, unit leaders have seen that when they deliver a program where youth have fun and enjoy being in the company of their friends, the need for numerical standards declines or even disappears.

How are Scoutmaster Conferences conducted?

"The unit leader (Scoutmaster) conference, regardless of rank or program, is conducted according to the guideline in the Troop Leader Guidebook (volume 1). Note that a Scout must participate, or take part in one; it is not a "test." Requirements do not say the Scout must "pass" a conference. While it makes sense to hold one after other requirements for a rank are met, and in fact part of the unit leader [Scoutmaster] conference can be to confirm that requirements were met, it is not required that it be the last step before the board of review.

The conference is not a retest of the requirements upon which a Scout has been signed off. It is a forum for discussing topics such as ambitions, life purpose, and goals for future achievement, for counseling, and also for obtaining feedback on the unit's program.Some leaders hold more than one along the way, and the Scout must be allowed to count any of them toward the requirement, as long as it was a significant, substantial discussion.

Scoutmaster conferences should be held with a level of privacy acceptable under Scouting America's rules regarding Youth Protection....

While it is intended that the conference be conducted between the unit leader and the Scout, it may sometimes be necessary for the unit leader to designate an assistant unit leader to conduct the conference. For example, if the Scoutmaster is unavailable for an extended period of time or in larger troops where a Scout's advancement would be delayed unnecessarily, then it would be appropriate for an assistant Scoutmaster (21 year old or older) to be designated to conduct the conference." (GTA 4.2.3.5)

Who can approve rank requirements?

"The Scout's unit leader authorizes those who may test and pass the Scout on rank requirements (primary unit leader if the Scout is registered in multiple units). They might include the patrol leader, the senior patrol leader, the unit leader, an assistant unit leader, or another Scout. Other non-direct-contact Leaders, such as committee members, committee chairs, unit Scouter reserves, and college Scouter reserves, may not test or pass Scouts on rank requirements. Merit badge counselors guide Scouts and verify requirements for merit badges. Authorized testers must verify that requirements have actually and personally completed by the Scout, exactly as written." (GTA 4.2.1.2)

Who can sign off on merit badge requirements?

Merit badge requirements can only be approved and signed off by a currently registered leader who has been approved by their district/council for that specific badge. While anyone can teach material (following all safety guidelines), only a merit badge counselor can test and certify that the Scout has individually and personally completed the requirement exactly as written. An approved merit badge counselor can certify completions for Scouts in any district or council in Scouting America, and they determine if work completed before the Scout officially started

the badge (by having a conversation with their unit leader) was acceptable. Scoutmasters are not automatically approved as merit badge counselors for any badge, but can apply for approval for specific merit badges like any other adult leader.

“Any registered Scout, or qualified Venturer or Sea Scout, may work on the requirements for any merit badge at any time. However, before working with a counselor or attending a group or virtual merit badge opportunity, a Scout must meet with their unit leader or their delegate. This is the leader’s opportunity to give guidance on the wisdom of pursuing a selected badge, to advise the Scout on how work might be approached and what may be encountered along the way. It is also the time to provide the names and contact information for one or more approved counselors.” (GTA 7.0.0.3)

“Merit badge counselors must be at least 18 years of age.” GTA 7.0.1.3.

“An approved merit badge counselor may counsel any Scout, including their own son, daughter, ward, or relative.” GTA 7.0.1.4.

“Once satisfied that all the requirements have been met, the merit badge counselor signs the blue card in two places: on the reverse of the Application for Merit Badge (to the left) and on the Applicant’s Record (in the middle). These two parts are returned to the Scout. The approving counselor should retain the part of the card called the Counselor’s Record for at least one year—in case questions are raised later. Once a registered and approved counselor signs that all requirements have been met, the Scout and the unit leader should meet to discuss the Scout’s experience and celebrate their success. Note that this discussion is not to be a retesting on the requirements, as the merit badge counselor has done the testing (GTA 4.2.1.2). The unit leader then signs the Applicant’s Record portion and returns it to the Scout, who should retain it permanently.” (GTA 7.0.0.2)

A Scoutmaster cannot retest or overrule a merit badge counselor's certification, except in the rare case “where it becomes plainly evident that a youth could not have actually and personally fulfilled requirements for a merit badge as written.” For example, a Scout who returns a completion for the Cooking merit badge from a fully online workshop might be gently asked about how they met the requirements. If it turns out they did not, “Under the Limited Recourse provision, it would be understood that the badge was not “taken away”, because it was never actually earned. If they believe the counselor did not uphold BSA standards, this should be reported (using form GTA 11.1.0.0). (GTA 7.0.4.7)

How can a Scout finish a partial merit badge?

Only a district/council-approved and registered merit badge counselor for a specific badge can sign off on requirements for that merit badge. A Scout who did not complete all requirements at summer camp or at a merit badge class can do them on their own later, then show proof of the completed work to a different merit badge counselor for certification (GTA 7.0.3.3).

If a Scout loses their blue card or other proof of completion of some requirements, they can meet with another merit badge counselor and show any documentation they have retained. The second counselor can then certify and sign off on any requirements they are confident were individually and personally completed by the Scout exactly as written (GTA 7.0.3.1).

Can a unit disallow a parent from serving as a merit badge counselor for their own child?

A unit can develop its own policies, such as not allowing a Scout to earn more than a certain number of merit badges with a single counselor (GTA 7.0.0.3). However, any such policy must be communicated in advance and must apply equally to all Scouts in the unit.

Can a Scout have a BOR when they are under investigation for bullying?

One of the requirements to participate in Scouting activities, including a board of review, is that a Scout be in good standing. The Guide to Advancement (4.2.3.1) states that *"Scouts are in good standing with a unit as long as they have not been dismissed or suspended for disciplinary reasons"*. Scouts must also be in good standing with the local council and Scouting America. If there is any reason that a Scout is not in good standing with either the Council or Scouting America, the unit will be notified.

What is the purpose and composition of a board of review?

The purpose of a board of review *"is to determine the quality of the Scout's experience and decide whether the requirements for the rank have been fulfilled."* GTA 8.0.0.1.

"A board of review must consist of no fewer than three members and no more than six, all of whom must be at least 21 years of age. For further specifications, see "Particulars for Tenderfoot Through Life Ranks," 8.0.2.0, and "Particulars for the Eagle Scout Rank," 8.0.3.0. Unit leaders and assistants must not serve on a board of review for a Scout in their own unit. Parents, guardians, or relatives must not serve on a board for their child. The candidate or the candidate's parent(s) or guardian(s), or relative(s) must have no part in selecting any board of review members." (GTA 8.0.0.3).

"Though one reason for a board of review is to help ensure the Scout did what was supposed to have been done to meet the requirements, it must never become a retest or 'examination,' nor a challenge of the Scout's knowledge. In most cases, it should instead be a celebration of accomplishment. Remember, it is more about the journey. A badge recognizes what a Scout has done toward achieving the primary goal of personal growth." (GTA 8.0.1.1)

How often should a unit hold a board of review?

"After completing all the requirements for a rank, except Scout rank, a Scout can request a board of review. The Scout's board of review should happen promptly and not be delayed for reasons unrelated to rank requirements." (GTA 4.2.1.3).

"A Scout must not be denied this opportunity. When a Scout believes that all the requirements for a rank have been completed, including a Scoutmaster conference, a board of review must be scheduled promptly. Unit leadership—or councils or districts in the case of the Eagle Scout rank—for example, do not have authority to expect a Scout to organize one, or to "defer" the Scout, or to ask the Scout to perform beyond the requirements in order to be granted one. Neither can a board of review be denied or delayed due to issues such as uniforming, payment of dues, participation in fundraising activities, etc." (GTA 8.0.0.2)

While there is no numerical definition of "promptly" (i.e. a defined number of days), the board should be held as soon as possible after the Scout completes all rank requirements. It is in everyone's interest to quickly recognize a Scout's achievement and encourage not only further advancement but also retention in the unit and the Scouting program. Achievements can be announced at a unit meeting when earned, then recognized more formally when the patch is presented at a Court of Honor.

Are uniforms required for a board of review?

"It is preferred a Scout be in full field uniform for any board of review. As much of the uniform as the Scout owns should be worn, and it should be as correct as possible, with the badges worn properly. It may be the uniform as typically worn by the Scout's troop, crew, or ship. If wearing all or part of the uniform is impractical for whatever reason, the candidate should be clean and neat in appearance and dressed appropriately, according to the Scout's means, for the milestone marked by the occasion. Regardless of unit, district, or council expectations or rules, boards of review must not reject candidates solely for reasons related to uniforming or attire, as long as they are clean and neat in appearance. Candidates must not be required to purchase uniforming or clothing to participate in a board of review." (GTA 8.0.0.4)

Can a board of review retest skills?

"During the review, board members may refer to the Scouts BSA Handbook, Troop Leader Guidebook, Guide to Advancement, and other such references. The Troop Committee Guidebook has examples of appropriate questions. Board members may ask where skills were learned by the Scout, who the Scout learned from, and what was gained from fulfilling selected requirements. Asking "Tell us about when you learned how to tie a square knot" is appropriate, but "Here is a rope; tie a square knot" is not. Questions about specific rank requirements may only be about the rank under discussion; a Star or Life Scout should not be asked about Tenderfoot requirements. The answers will reveal what was done to earn the rank. It can be determined, then, if this was what the Scout was supposed to do. Discussion of how the Scout has lived the Scout Oath and Scout Law at home, at school, in the unit, and in the community should be included. We must remember, however, that though we have high expectations for our members, as for ourselves, we do not insist on perfection. It is most important that the Scout has a positive attitude, accepts Scouting's ideals, and sets and meets good standards in daily life.

If answers are inconsistent with the Scout Oath or Law, or demonstrate that the Scout failed to meet a requirement, then it is appropriate to suspend the board and reconvene at a later date, when the issue has been addressed. For example, in discussing the Scout's favorite camping experience, it might come out that they never actually "planned and cooked a hot breakfast or lunch" on a campout. If so, the board can be adjourned, the Scout can complete the requirement on the next campout, and then the board can reconvene (as long as the Scout is still eligible). See also 8.0.1.5." (GTA 8.0.1.2)

A board of review is not a retest or "examination" (GTA 8.0.1.1). The Scoutmaster has already certified that the Scout completed the rank requirements when recommending the Scout to the board. The board should focus on the journey, asking the Scout what was learned when completing a requirement or how that might benefit the Scout and others in daily life. Asking a Scout to identify 10 types of plants, use a hand-held GPS unit to find the current location, tie a bowline, or use a compass are all examples of retesting, which is not allowed.

What is the deadline for conducting an Eagle board of review?

For Eagle boards of review, Scouts have 24 months from their eighteenth birthday or the expiration of an approved extension, whichever comes later, to participate in an Eagle board of review. The Eagle board must conform to the requirements of GTA 8.0.3.0. Like other boards of review, an Eagle board consists of no fewer than 3 members and no more than six, all of whom must be over the age of 21. As with other Scout activities, there must be at least two registered adults with current Safeguarding Youth training. An Eagle board also must include at least one council representative not affiliated with the unit. (GTA 8.0.3.0)

Can people who write recommendation letters sit on Eagle Scout boards of review?

Scouts request references (GTA 9.0.1.7). Scouts do not know who will be on their Eagle board of review nor can they have any role in selecting any of the board of review members (GTA 8.0.0.3). When a unit receives a verified Eagle Scout Rank with a prospective board member as one of Scout's references, it is best practice to select other adults to serve on the board. Boards are best composed of impartial adults - neither predisposed against or in favor of the Scout.

Can a Scout use the same activity for two different requirements (double-dipping)?

"At times it may be appropriate for a Scout to apply what was done to meet one requirement toward the completion of another. In deciding whether to allow this, unit leaders or merit badge counselors should consider the following.

When two requirements match up exactly and have the same basic intent—for example, camping nights for Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class ranks and for the Camping merit badge—it is appropriate and permissible, unless it is stated otherwise in the requirements, to use those activities for both the ranks and the merit badge.

Where matching requirements are oriented toward safety, such as those related to first aid or CPR, the person signing off the requirements should be satisfied the Scout remembers what was learned from the previous experience.

Some requirements may have the appearance of aligning, but upon further examination differ. These seemingly similar requirements usually have nuances intended to create quite different experiences. The Communication and Citizenship in the Community merit badges are a good example. Each requires the Scout to attend a public meeting, but that is where the similarity ends. For Communication, the Scout is asked to practice active listening skills during the meeting and present an objective report that includes all points of view. For Citizenship in the Community, the Scout is asked to examine differences in opinions and then to defend one side. The Scout may attend the same public meeting, but to pass the requirements for both merit badges the Scout must actively listen and prepare a report, and also examine differences in opinion and defend one side.

Counting service hours for school or elsewhere in the community and also for advancement is not considered double-counting since the hours are counted only once for advancement purposes." (GTA 4.2.3.6)

What are the policies for advancing from Life to Eagle?

Policies that guide Life Scouts working on the Eagle rank can be found in Section 9 of the Guide to Advancement.

Eagle Scout Court of Honor requirements?

Scouting America recommends that courts of honor be held regularly [GTA 3.0.0.3], but allows units to establish how they will recognize youth for their advancement, including the rank of Eagle.

Are Eagle Scout candidates required to request letters of reference?

"The Scout is responsible for requesting references from the four people listed on the application - this is a valuable life skill. Councils choose the method [letter, email, online form, etc.] and where submitted. Electronic submissions are allowed only if confidentiality at all stages is guaranteed." (GTA 9.0.1.7) This clarification was part of the January 2025 edition of the Guide to Advancement.

GTA 9.0.1.3 addresses letters of reference: [Eagle Scout applications] *Must list names and contact information for four people who are willing to serve as references for the Eagle candidate. These may be Scout leaders, teachers, employers, coaches, other Scouts, etc. References do not need to be 21 or older.*

Can Life Scouts turn in their application for Eagle after they have turned 18, providing that everything except for the BOR is complete?

GTA 9.0.1.1 outlines the requirements that must be completed before the 18th birthday. Filling out the application and obtaining adult signatures (GTA 9.0.1.3 and 9.0.1.4) is not required to be completed (and dated) before the Scout's 18th birthday.

Is there an update planned for the Eagle project workbook?

Scouting America reviews all documents, including the Eagle Scout Service Project workbook, regularly. Scouting America recently published a survey requesting feedback regarding the most recent edition of the Eagle Scout Service Project workbook, and a small task force is reviewing the survey results. There is currently no deadline for the publication of an updated edition. *The most current workbook available at the time the Scout starts planning the project must be used. It can be found at www.scouting.org/advancement (GTA 9.0.1.2).* Until a new edition is published, Scouts should continue using the current version available on the Scouting America website.

Who approves an Eagle Scout Service Project proposal?

GTA 9.0.2.7 speaks to the Eagle Scout Service Project Proposal approval. The Five Tests of an Acceptable Eagle Scout Service Project help guide scouts and those responsible for approving the Eagle Scout Service project. The proposal serves as an overview, as well as the initial stages of planning. It shows the unit leader and any representatives of a unit committee, council, or district that the following tests can be met.

1. The project provides sufficient opportunity to meet the requirement.
2. The project appears to be feasible.
3. Safety issues will be addressed.
4. Action steps for further detailed planning are included.

5. The Scout is on the right track with a reasonable chance for a positive experience.

"The detail required for a proposal depends on project complexity. It must be enough to provide a level of confidence for a council or district reviewer that the above tests can be met, but not so much that—based on the possibility a proposal can be rejected—it does not respect the time it takes to prepare. The unit committee is responsible for an approval of the proposal. It is acceptable for a troop, crew, or ship committee to designate representative(s) to act on its behalf. The form for preparing a proposal appears in the Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook, No. 512-927." (GTA 9.0.2.7))

Completing it will represent an introductory learning experience, a reasonable time investment, and also provide the information needed for approval. The candidate must not be required to submit more than is described there, or more than is necessary to establish that a project can meet the above tests.

The Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook, No. 521-927 Proposal Page H identifies the five signatures required for the Approval of the Eagle Scout Service Project. The candidate signs their promise to execute this Eagle Scout Service project. The four approval signatures include the Unit Leader, Unit Committee, Beneficiary and finally the Council or District (As directed by the Council as to whether the approval will be at a District or Council level).

Can Scouts use AI for merit badge work?

"Generative artificial intelligence and other tools (spell checkers, grammar checkers, autofill, etc.) may be used by a Scout to assist with written requirements, but their use must be fully disclosed to the person reviewing the work, and the final output must be the Scout's own original work." (GTA 5.0.8.0)

How Is a "Month" Defined?

"A month is a month regardless of how many days it has. It is not defined as 30 days or four weeks. February 2 up to and including August 1, or August 31 up to and including February 28 (or 29th if a leap year) are examples of six-month periods. Six months does not mean 180 days." (GTA page 2)

Can a Scout work on earning the rank of Eagle Scout after their 18th birthday?

"If a Scout foresees that due to no fault or choice of his or her own, it will be impossible to complete the Eagle Scout rank requirements before age 18, they may apply for a limited time extension. See "Process for Requesting and Reviewing a Time Extension," GTA 9.0.4.1. The application must be sufficiently detailed that it can be reviewed without any other information. These should be granted very rarely and are reserved only for Life Scouts working on Eagle." If granted, the extension provides a pseudo-18th birthday by which all requirements must be completed. (GTA 9.0.4.0 Time Extensions)

A Scout with disabilities which qualify them for Registration Beyond the Age of Eligibility (RBAE) may also work on earning the rank of Eagle Scout after their 18th birthday. See GTA 10.2.0.0 for more information.

Must requirements be done in troop settings or can they be done independently?

Scouts BSA is not Cub Scouts. Both adult leaders and youth leaders may approve advancement in Scouts BSA (GTA 4.2.0.0). As Scouts work together, learning occurs on both sides as they take turns playing teacher and student. Parents or guardians are involved at home, encouraging, mentoring, and supporting, but they do not sign for rank advancement requirements. The only exception is if they are registered leaders and have been authorized by the unit leader to approve advancement, or they are Lone Scout friends and counselors (see "Lone Scouting," 5.0.3.0). Even then, an authorized person other than the Scout's own parent/guardian should certify their accomplishments (GTA 4.2.0.0). If a Scout or parent/guardian sees an opportunity for advancement, consistent with Scouting America policy, that is independent of the troop setting (i.e. a summer camp, activity with another troop, council or district camporee, high adventure trek, etc.), the Scout should first discuss the situation with the unit leader. It is the unit leader (GTA 4.2.1.2) who authorizes those who may test and pass the Scout on rank requirements. Getting the unit leader's approval before undertaking advancement in independent settings will prevent misunderstandings.

Is Scoutbook+ the official record-keeping method of Scouts BSA?

"Reporting advancement is a requirement of Scouting America, and entering it directly into the Scouting America system through Scoutbook Plus or another internet portal is the most straightforward way to get it done." (GTA 6.0.0.0) For merit badges and blue cards, "Councils are encouraged to take advantage of innovations such as Scouting America's Scoutbook Plus system, spreadsheets, etc. Units and other councils must accept these alternative forms of documentation as long as it provides the information necessary to track and record the Scout's progress and all steps of the merit badge process were followed." (GTA 7.0.0.2)

Does Assistant Patrol Leader count as a position of responsibility?

No. *"The position must be listed in the position of responsibility requirement shown on the Advancement and Awards web page found at www.scouting.org/programs/scouts-bsa/advancement-and-awards/." (GTA 4.2.3.4.1)*

Who tracks/updates/approves a Scout's advancement when the Scout is dual registered in 2 troops?

"Dual Registration. If a Scout has multiple registrations with different units, advancement records should be maintained in only one of the units." (GTA 6.0.0.4.)

Can merit badges earned before Star and Life be used for merit badge requirements in rank?

Yes. *"All requirements for Star, Life, and Eagle, except for those related to merit badges, must be fulfilled after the successful completion of a board of review for the previous rank."* (GTA 4.2.0.1.)

What if a Scout earned requirements years ago but never had a board of review?

It should be performed ASAP.

What can be done if a leader lets a Scout go unregistered and now his advancements don't match?

If the Scout thought they were registered, contact the council registrar to determine options.

For Scout through First Class ranks, are there any official policies on when merit badge requirements can fulfill rank requirements?

Rank requirements and merit badge requirements are independent, and cannot be substituted for each other. Whether it is a merit badge or a rank requirement, *"Authorized testers must verify that requirements have actually and personally completed by the Scout, exactly as written."* (GTA 4.2.1.2)

Can you backdate any rank or badges because a Scout was out sick?

No. Dates for Scouts BSA requirements must be recorded as the date they were completed.

Does the Swimming merit badge have to be completed for the First class rank?

No, the Swimming merit badge requirements are independent of the First Class rank requirements. There may be an overlap. Please see the above questions on official policies on when merit badge requirements can fulfill rank requirements and use the same activity for two different requirements.

Does “under the auspices of Scouting” allow family-based activities?

No. “Under the auspices of Scouting” was language that was chosen deliberately [for [outdoor awards](#)]. It means that the Scout participating in the activities did it as part of one of the following:

1. Any Scouts BSA troop activity (e.g., Scouts BSA)
2. Any Scouting America-sanctioned individual activity (e.g., provisional summer camp, OA overnight with camping, camp staff, etc.)
3. Any activity undertaken as part of the referenced merit badge(s) for the badge or medal.

*A “Scouts BSA troop activity” may include some individual efforts not part of the group: e.g., a pre-conditioning exercise where all unit members commit to and actually ride their bikes X miles a week prior to a big troop bike ride. It is **not** meant to include activities that the Scout undertakes that are unrelated to Scouting — e.g., family or church group camping, running as part of the school cross-country team, etc.*

In some cases, an individual Scout could work toward a Scouting award and that could be counted at the discretion of the Scoutmaster. Such periods of time should be relatively short and focused on the award in question.”

Does a Scout need to wait 24 hours before demonstrating a skill again?

No, the Guide to Advancement does not impose a time limit or a limitation on the frequency of demonstrating skills.