

# 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](#)