

The Unit Committee's Guide to the Eagle Board of Review Great Southwest Council

The Eagle Board of Review is the final step in a young man's trail to Eagle. It is extremely important that the Unit Advancement Chairman ensure that all the requirements are completed and all information the Scout submits to the Council for Verification are True and Correct. Redoing the application and reobtaining signatures because of errors, delays the scheduling of a Board of Review. The specific steps are listed below.

1. Complete the Eagle Scout Rank Application form as neatly as possible. This document becomes a part of the Scout's permanent record. Correct spelling and grammar are essential. Ensure that all dates are correct and that the scout has completed all requirements.
2. Pay close attention to requirement 6 on the Application. It is essential that the Scoutmaster's conference occur prior to the scout's 18th birthday.
3. The Signed Statement of Ambitions and Life Purpose requires a thoughtful essay by the scout. Generally, 2 pages double spaced grammar and spell checked is the minimum desired to fully express one's direction in life. The scout should consider where he wants to go in life, what things influenced his decision, what he must do to reach those goals and how he plans to give back to his community when he is at a point in life where he can share what he has learned from his scouting experience. Scouts should also create a list of Honors and Awards received outside of Scouting and add this attachment to the application as well.
4. Take the completed application to the scout office for BSA local verification. Once the signature of the Council Eagle Coordinator is obtained, the scout is eligible for a Board of Review. (Note: A board of review **cannot** be conducted without verification and the presence of the completed application.)
5. A Unit representative must call the District Advancement Chairman to schedule a Board of review. It is required that a registered district advancement representative (DR) attend all Eagle Boards. At least 2 weeks notice is generally needed to schedule a DR. The Advancement Committee will make every attempt to accommodate the needs of the scout and the unit; however, there is no guarantee of availability for requests of extremely short notice.
6. On the night of the board, the unit should provide at least 2 members for the board, one of whom will serve as board chairman. Current Scoutmasters and Assistant Scoutmasters shall not serve on Eagle Boards. It is expected that all board members will have reviewed the procedure of conducting an Eagle Board contained in this and other relevant documents.
7. The Board chairman is responsible for ensuring that all necessary documents are present. These documents include 1. The completed Eagle Scout Rank Application, signed by the council; 2. The completed Eagle Project Workbook, with eight signatures; 3. The Sealed letters of recommendation; 4. The Ambitions and Life Purpose essay; and 5. The unit advancement form. A Council envelope will be provided to collect documents at the completion of the board.

8. The board and the Eagle candidate should meet and introduce all present. The chairman will then request the candidate to leave the room so that the board may review the accuracy and completion of all the documents to ascertain that the board can be conducted.
9. The District representative will ask about any special or unusual circumstances that he should be aware of before the board begins the interview.
10. The Candidate is brought into the room and the interview begins.
11. The review is not intended to be a test of scout knowledge or past requirements for advancement. It is a medium to get to know the candidate, understand his character and determine his moral fitness to have the privilege and assume the responsibilities of being an Eagle Scout. It is more important for the candidate to *understand* the meaning of the scout oath and law than it is to repeat it perfectly on the first attempt. Questions should be constructed to gage this requirement of understanding. Understanding the concepts of **honor, doing one's best, and duty to God and Country** are **essential** for a successful Eagle Board.
12. The standard for Eagle is the same for a 13-year-old as it is for an 18-year-old candidate. It should be understood that an older scout will generally be able to express himself in a more mature fashion, and thus should be treated in a fashion commensurate with his level of maturity. The Eagle Board should be an event that a boy remembers his entire life. It is not desirable to place stress on the candidate; however, it is desirable to challenge the candidate to give and express his best. Pay close attention to the demeanor of the scout. If he begins to show nervousness and stress, attempt to change the tenor of the board to create a friendlier environment. On the other hand, if it seems too easy or if the boy lacks seriousness, carefully elevate the intensity of the questions to give the boy a challenge and to bring out his best for this important milestone in his life.
13. At least 25 percent of the time during the board should be devoted to questions and review of the boy's Eagle project. It is important for the candidate to explain what he learned from the project and understand that he will probably do many similar projects as he continues through life.
14. His statement of Ambitions and Life Purpose should be carefully discussed. The boy should explain what he plans to do to give back to his community for what he has been given by the scouting experience.
15. After the board is satisfied that the boy has done his best to answer all questions, the chairman will ask him to leave the room for a few minutes while the board confers on his fitness to advance to Eagle. The decision to advance must be unanimous. After discussion if the boy is found to be worthy and to have completed all requirements, he should be brought back into the room. If there is an Eagle on the board, it is a nice touch for him to be the first to welcome him to the "Brotherhood of Eagle Scouts". If there is reason to defer his advancement, the board can be recessed and the boy will be told of the reason. It must be explained that it is the Scouts choice to accept the terms of the board and be able to continue the Board of Review at a later date or the Scout can choose to appeal the Boards decision.
16. The district representative and the board chairman will sign the Eagle Scout Rank Application for a successful candidate and it becomes the responsibility of the chairman to return the application, the letters of recommendation, and the Unit Advancement Form to the

scout office for recording. The Unit Advancement Form and the Council Envelope will be signed by all board members.

The Eagle Scout Application Form

It is the responsibility of the Eagle candidate to correctly complete and submit the Eagle Scout Application to the council before a Board is scheduled. It is responsibility of the unit representative present at the Board to return to the Council the required documents after the Eagle Board of Review. The reason for this is to protect the scout from negative consequences that could arise from mishandling or incorrect documentation. The Great Southwest Council personnel responsible for forwarding an application to National take great pride in ensuring that an application is correct. It is ultimately the unit representative's responsibility to ensure that all information is complete and correct before submission. Omissions and errors will only delay the processing of the application.

BSA National has published a list of the top ten reasons that an application is rejected at the National level:

10. No Council Number on Application. This requires the application to be removed from the daily work stack and placed in a special file until time is allotted to perform council lookups

9. Signatures missing. This requires the rejected application to be mailed back to the council. This oversight will cause a delay of at least four weeks because the postal service will be used.

8. No Boy Scout joining date or wrong date. Failure to indicate the Boy Scout joining date requires us to reject the application to request the proper date. This is because all requirements must be met after a boy joins scouting.

7. No Board of Review Date. We must have a Board of Review date to ensure all requirements were completed prior to the Board of Review. This date is also necessary since it is printed on the Eagle Scout credentials.

6. Duplicate Merit Badges on application. A total of 21 separate merit badges must be earned. Any application that requires a correction to merit badges that are listed twice on the application will be rejected.

5. Explanation for delay in Board of Review not furnished. We will ask for a letter when this time frame as described on the application is not met.

4. Proper badges not indicated in merit badge numbers 6 and 9.

3. If six months leadership between Life Scout and the Eagle Board of Review does not indicate sufficient time, we must return for correction.

2. Valid leadership position between Life Scout and Eagle Board of Review. The only valid leadership positions are those listed on the current printing of the Eagle Scout Rank Application, if it is not listed on the current printing, it is not a valid leadership position, (NOTE: WE (NATIONAL) RECEIVE MANY APPLICATIONS REQUESTING CREDIT FOR ASSISTANT PATROL LEADERS. THIS IS NOT ACCEPTABLE).

1. New Eagle Scout Rank Requirements have not been met. Scouts having completed any Eagle Scout rank requirements must earn the Personal Fitness Merit Badge and Cycling or Hiking or Swimming merit badges. We (National) must reject the application if it does not meet this new requirement.

The Eagle Board of Review

Purpose of a Board of Review:

The members of a Board of Review should have the following objectives in mind:

To make sure the Scout has completed the requirements for the rank.

To see how good an experience the Scout is having in the unit.

To encourage the Scout to progress further.

To Verify that the candidate has completed an acceptable Eagle Scout Service Project.

Additionally, the Board of Review provides "quality control" on advancement within the unit, provides an opportunity for the Scout to develop and practice those skills needed in a interview situation and is an opportunity for the Scout to review his accomplishments.

The Board of Review is NOT a retest; the Scout has already been tested on the skills and activities required for the rank. However, the chairman of the Board of Review should ensure that all the requirements have been "signed off" in the Scouts handbook. Additionally, the chairman should ensure that leadership and merit badge records are consistent with the requirements for the rank.

The Board of Review is an opportunity to review of the Scouts attitudes, accomplishments and his acceptance of Scouting's ideals.

Composition of a Board of Review:

The Eagle, the Board of Review consists of three to six members drawn from Scouting and the community. The members of the Board of Review are selected by the Unit Advancement Committee; at least one member of the District Advancement Committee (DR) must be a member of the Board of Review for Eagle and may serve as chairperson of the Board of Review if requested by the scout's unit. Unit leaders (Scoutmasters, Assistant Scoutmasters etc.) from the Scouts unit, relatives, or guardians may not serve as members of a Scout's Board of Review for Eagle. A Board of Review for Eagle may contain members of the community who are not registered Scouters; however, they should be knowledgeable of the principles of Scouting. For example: a representative from a chartering organization, an adult Eagle Scout (even if not currently registered), a religious leader or a professional in the area of expertise that the scout has an interest in. The Scout may request an individual to be a member of his Board of Review.

Mechanics of a Board of Review:

The Scout is introduced to the board by the Chairperson to the board.

The Scout should be in full uniform with badge sash and all merit badges affixed. Local or unit custom may have differences regarding the uniform.

The board members are invited to ask questions of the Scout. The questions should be open-ended, offering an opportunity for the Scout to speak about his opinions, experiences, activities, and accomplishments. Avoid questions that only require a simple one or two-word answer. If an answer is too brief, follow up with "Why?" or "How can that be done?" to expand the answer.

The questions need not be restricted to Scouting topics. Questions regarding home, church, school, work, athletics, etc. are appropriate. The Chairperson should be made aware of any "out-of-bounds" areas; these should be communicated to the board before the Board of Review begins (e.g., if a Scout is experiencing family difficulties due to a divorce, it would be prudent to avoid family issues.)

The time for an Eagle Board of Review should be from 30 to 50 minutes. When all members have had an opportunity to ask their questions, the Scout is excused from the room. The board members then consider whether the Scout is ready the Rank of Eagle. The board's decision must be unanimous. Once the decision is made, the Scout is invited back into the room, and the Chairperson informs the Scout of the board's decision. If the Scout is approved, there are general congratulations and handshakes all around, and the Scout is encouraged to continue work toward Eagle Palms. If there are issues which prevent the Scout from advancing, the board must detail the precise nature of the deficiencies: The Scout must be told specifically what must be done in order to successfully complete the Board of Review at a later date. Typically, an agreement is reached as to when the Scout may return for the continuation of the Board of Review. The Chairperson must send a written follow up, to both the Scout and the Scoutmaster, regarding the deficiencies and the course of action needed to correct them. It is the Scouts choice to accept the terms or to advance into the appeals process. This is explained fully in the Guide To Advancement, 2017, Section 8.0.1.5. and 8.0.4.0-2

Mechanics of a Board of Review for Eagle Rank

The mechanics of a Board of Review for Eagle are similar to all other Boards of Review, except that it is more in depth. Additionally, the Eagle Scout Rank Application, letters of Recommendation (minimum of 3) and the Eagle Project Notebook must be present and reviewed by the board.

Questions about these documents are appropriate, but the letters of recommendation are for the board's use only; any comments or questions about them should not reveal who wrote the letters. The letters are placed in the Council Envelope and are never given to the Scout. After the application has been approved by National Eagle Board of Review and returned to the local council the letters of recommendation are destroyed by the Council personnel after National Credentials have been received.

The Nature of the Questions:

The Board of Review for the Eagle Rank is different from the other Boards of Review in which the Scout has participated. The members of the Board of Review are not all from his Troop Committee. Introductions are essential, and a few "break in" questions may be appropriate.

At this point, the goal is to understand the Scout's full Scouting experience, and how others can have similar meaningful Scouting experiences. Scouting principles and goals should be central to the Scout's life; look for evidence of this.

Although this is the final rank, this is not the end of the Scouting trail; "Once an Eagle. always an Eagle. Explore how this Eagle Scout will continue with Scouting activities, and continued service to his home, church, and community.

Sample Questions:

1. What would you suggest adding to the Scout Law (a thirteenth point)? Why?
2. Why is it important to learn how to tie knots, and lash together poles and logs?
3. What is the difference between a "Hollywood hero and a real hero?"
4. Can you give me an example of someone who is a hero to you? (A real person, not a character in a book or movie.)
5. Why do you think that the Family Life merit badge was added to the list of required merit badges?
6. What camping experience have you had that you wish every Scout could have?
7. Have you been to Philmont or a National (International) Jamboree? What was your most memorable experience there?
8. What is the role of the Senior Patrol Leader at a troop meeting (campout, summer camp)?
9. If you could change one thing to improve Scouting what would you change?
10. What do you believe our society expects from an Eagle Scout?
11. The charge to the Eagle requires that you give back to Scouting more than Scouting has given to you. How do you propose to do that?
12. As an Eagle Scout, what can you personally do to improve your unit?
13. What will you be doing in your unit after receiving your Eagle Rank?
14. Tell us how you selected your Eagle Service Project.
15. From your Eagle Service Project, what did you learn about managing assets and the process and leading people? What are the qualities of a good leader?
16. What part of your Eagle Service Project was the most challenging? Why?
17. If you were to manage another project similar to your Eagle Service Project, what would you do differently to make the project better or easier?
18. What are your future plans (high school, college, trade school, military, career, etc.)?
19. Tell us about your family (parents, siblings, etc.). How do you help out at home?
20. What do you think is the single biggest issue facing Scouting in the future?
21. How do your friends outside of Scouting react when they learn that you are a Boy Scout? How do you think they will react when they learn that you have become an Eagle Scout?
22. Why do you think that belief in God or a higher power is part of the Scouting requirements?
23. How do you know when a Scout is "active" in his unit?
24. You have been in Scouting for many years. Sum up all of those experiences in one word. Why?
25. What one thing have you gained from your Scoutmaster's conferences over the years?
26. How does an Eagle Scout continue to show Scout Spirit?
27. Who brought Scouting from England to the United States? [Answer: William D. Boyce]
28. [Traditional last questions] Why should this Board of Review approve your request for the Eagle Rank? Or why should you be an Eagle Scout?

The Eagle Project

For a service project to qualify as an Eagle Scout service project, the Scout, while a Life Scout, must plan, develop, and give leadership to others in a service project benefiting any religious institution, school, or community. These projects, of course, must conform to the wishes and regulations of those for whom the project is undertaken.

The Eagle Scout service project provides the opportunity for the Eagle Scout candidate to demonstrate the leadership skills he has learned in Scouting. He does the project outside the sphere of Scouting.

As a demonstration of leadership, the Scout must plan the work, organize the personnel needed, and direct the project to its completion.

Eagle Scout projects should be about service to others. Guidelines to follow include:

- An Eagle Scout project involving council property or other BSA activities is not acceptable.
- An Eagle Scout project may not be performed for a business.
- An Eagle Scout project may not be of a commercial nature.
- An Eagle Scout project may not be a fund-raiser.
- Fund-raising is permitted only for securing materials needed to carry out the project.
- Donors to Eagle Scout projects must be made aware of what entity is benefiting from the project, and that it clearly is not the Boy Scouts of America.
- Any funds raised for an Eagle Scout project that are not used for the purchase of project materials must be given to the beneficiary.

Routine labor, a job or service normally rendered, should not be considered. There is no minimum number of hours that must be spent on carrying out the project, however 100-man hours is generally considered a guideline for a good project. The amount of time spent must be sufficient for the Scout to clearly demonstrate leadership skills.

The most current Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook must be used to meet this requirement.

The Scout must secure the prior approval of his unit leader, his unit committee, and the beneficiary of the project. The project must also be reviewed and approved by the district or council advancement committee or their designee to make sure that it meets the stated standards for Eagle Scout service projects before the project is started. This preapproval of the project does not mean that the board of review will approve the way the project was carried out.

Upon completion of the project, the *Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook*, properly filled out, is submitted with the Scout's Eagle application to include the following information:

- What was the project?
- How did it benefit others?
- Who from the group benefiting from the project gave guidance?
- Who helped carry out the project?
- What materials were used and how were they acquired?

Although the project *idea* must be approved before work is begun, the board of review must determine the manner in which the project was carried out. Questions that must be addressed include:

- Did the candidate demonstrate leadership of others?

- Did he indeed direct the project rather than do all of the work himself?
- Was the project of real value to the religious institution, school, or community group?
- Who from the group benefiting from the project may be contacted to verify the value of the project?
- Did the project follow the approved plan or were modifications needed to bring it to its completion?

All the work on the project must be done while the candidate is a Life Scout and before the candidate's 18th birthday, unless a time extension has been allowed by the council in writing.

The Eagle Scout service project is an *individual* matter; therefore, two Eagle Scout candidates may not receive credit for working on the same project.

The variety of service projects performed throughout the nation by Scouts earning their Eagle Award is staggering. For ideas and opportunities regarding service projects, the Scout can consult people such as school administrators, religious leaders, local government department directors, or a United Way agency's personnel.

The district or council advancement committee also can be helpful by identifying possible projects.

Time Extensions

If a Scout or a Venture Scout foresees that he will be unable to complete the requirements for the Eagle rank prior to his 18th birthday, he may file a petition in writing with the National Boy Scout Committee **through the local council** for special permission to continue to work toward the award after reaching age 18. The petition may also be filed by the unit leader or unit committee. The petition must show good and sufficient evidence and detail the extenuating circumstances that prevented the Scout from completing the requirements prior to his 18th birthday. **Extenuating circumstances are defined as conditions or situations that are totally beyond the control of the Scout or Venture Scout.**

If circumstances should also prevent a Scout or a Venture Scout from requesting the extension before he is 18, it is still permissible to ask for the extension, detailing the extenuating circumstances that prevented him from completing the requirements and from requesting the extension before age 18.

Appealing a Decision

There are two sets of circumstances in which a Scout or his parent(s) or guardian(s), acting on his behalf, may appeal a decision.

The first situation occurs when a unit leader or unit committee does not recommend a Scout for a board of review or refuses to sign the Eagle Scout application or advancement form. In such cases, the Scout or his parent(s) or guardian(s) may appeal the decision to the committee responsible for advancement at the next level, as described below.

The second situation occurs when a board of review does not recommend a candidate for rank advancement. In such a situation, the Scout or his parent(s) or guardian(s) may appeal the decision.

All appeals, under any circumstances, shall initially be directed to the next highest level. If the decision leading to the appeal occurred at the unit level, the appeal shall be directed to the district committee responsible for advancement. If the decision leading to the appeal occurred at the district level (i.e. an Eagle Scout board of review convened by the district), the appeal shall be directed to the council committee responsible for advancement. A decision at either level finding in favor of the Scout shall be final. Units have no right of appeal of a decision.

If the initial committee hearing the appeal does not find in favor of the Scout, he or his parent(s) or guardian(s) may appeal that decision to the next highest level. If the initial appeal was made at the district level, the next highest level is the council advancement committee. If the initial decision was made at the council level, or if the council advancement committee upheld the unfavorable finding of the district advancement committee, the Scout or his parent(s) or guardian(s) may appeal to the national Boy Scout Committee. All requests for appeal shall be made in writing, signed by the Scout and/or his parent(s) or guardian(s), and shall set forth in detail the reasons for requesting an appeal.

Upon initial receipt of an appeal, the district and the council advancement committee charged with hearing the initial appeal shall provide for a prompt review to determine the facts. All parties must be interviewed or written statements obtained. Confrontations between opposing parties must be avoided. The appeal review is not a second board of review and thus a unanimous decision is not required. A decision may be reached by majority vote. A written report setting out all details of the appeal and the reasons for the committee's decision shall be prepared and forwarded to the council Scout executive. A copy shall be furnished to the Scout bringing the appeal.

Appeals to the national Boy Scout Committee shall be processed through the local council, and the local council shall furnish copies of all pertinent documentation to the national committee, including a statement of the council's position on the matter. If the appealed issue concerns an Eagle Scout candidate, a copy of the Scout's Eagle Scout Rank Application shall be included. If the Scout's Eagle Scout leadership service project is at issue, a copy of his Eagle Scout leadership service project workbook shall be included. All decisions of the national Boy Scout Committee in reference to appeals shall be final.

References

Boy Scouts of America. 2008. *Guide to Advancement*. Irving, Texas. ISBN: 978-0-8395-3088-6

Ray Klaus. *Guide to Conducting Boards of Review*

Michael L. Cox. 2009. Amended 2014, 2018. *The Unit Committee's Guide to the Eagle Board of Review, Great Southwest Council*. Albuquerque, New Mexico