

Advice for Units in recruiting Merit Badge Counselors

This memo was prepared to offer advice to units regarding the recruitment of new merit badge counselors (MBC's). The information below applies to STEMNova Counselors and STEMSuperNova Mentors as well.

In general, the approval of new MBC's involves many tasks including registration (even if the new MBC is already registered in a different scouter position), youth protection training certification, and qualifications specific to the requested badges. Also, it is important for MBC's to complete the “MBC Training module” located on scouting.org.

The following summarizes goals and objectives that are considered for a MBC's qualifications, and should be kept in mind by units:

1. MBC's must be men or women of good character, age 18 or older, and recognized as having the skills and education in the subjects they cover;
2. MBC's should have good rapport with Scout-age boys and unit leaders;
3. MBC's should have a “working knowledge” of the subject material so that they may teach from a standpoint of experience. BSA's intent is for Scouts to learn from those with an appropriate level of expertise;
4. The approval process cannot be rushed to the point where unqualified counselors are allowed to serve;
5. A well-qualified counselor can extend a young person's attention span. In this regard, more will be heard and understood, discussions will be more productive, and true interest developed. The conversations can lead to a relationship of mutual respect where the Scout is confident to offer his thoughts and opinions and value those of his merit badge counselor. Thus, the Scout's social skills and self-reliance grow, and examples are set and followed; and
6. There is no requirement to have a MBC for all Eagle-required MB's in each unit. In fact, BSA's goal is for scouts to reach out to MBC's that may not be familiar to him. Scouts will benefit from the perspectives of many “teachers” and will learn more as a result, and they should be encouraged to reach out to “unfamiliar” MBC's.

For further information, you are referred to the BSA Guide to Advancement (current edition), Chapter 7, including Article 7.0.1.0.

If you have any question, please contact either the Committee Staff Advisor at the Council offices, or me.

In Scouting,
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