



# MAYFLOWER DISTRICT - TRANSATLANTIC COUNCIL

## MERIT BADGE UNIVERSITY

**24 January 2026 @ RAF LAKENHEATH**



Registration Packet for Units & Counselors

**Please read this packet carefully**

Counselors must register by 11 January 2026

MB Schedule and Prep Work will be available on the  
master Google Doc

Units must register by 18 January 2026

# Schedule of Events



## Saturday, 24 January 2026

08h45 – 09h45	Troop and Counselor check-in @ High School Cafeteria
09h45	Opening Ceremony @ High School Cafeteria
10h00 – 12h00	Merit Badge Session 1 See Merit Badge Class schedule for locations
12h00 – 13h15	Lunch A
12h15 – 13h15	Merit Badge Session 2 See Merit Badge Class schedule for locations
13h15 – 14h30	Lunch B
13h30 – 14h30	Merit Badge Session 3 See Merit Badge Class schedule for locations
14h45 – 15h45	Merit Badge Session 4 See Merit Badge Class schedule for locations
16h00 – 18h00	Merit Badge Session 5 See Merit Badge Class schedule for locations
18h00 – 18h30	Check out of Troops @ High School Cafeteria

## 1. Overview

The Merit Badge University is a one-day event where we hope as many troops as possible can attend the event, bringing as many merit badge counselors with them as possible, and everyone then shares the merit badge counselors. The hope is that by pooling counselors from across our district we can provide merit badges counselors which are experts in a wide variety of areas which are not always available to each unit.

### 1.1 Where and When

Merit Badge University check-in starts at 09h00 on 24 January 2026 at High School Cafeteria on RAF Lakenheath. Counselors should check in for their teaching location assignments and unit leaders can pick up schedules for their troops.

The address for RAF Lakenheath main gate is **RAF Lakenheath, Brandon Road, Brandon, Suffolk, IP27 9PN.**

Once you reach RAF Lakenheath main gate, if are a DOD Cardholder or have been added on to the Unescorted Base Access list then you should be able to get straight through gate.

From here to get to High School Cafeteria go straight over first roundabout then again straight over following one (where to the right you will see Commissary) Continue on straight past Burger King which will be on your right until get to roundabout that need to go left. From here you should see Tire Center on your right. You will need to take a right just after this. From there continue on and take the next left which will take you to Housing Complex area with car parking. Hopefully there will be space here available to park. Then go up steps at end of parking where will find the Cafeteria.

### 1.2 Counselor Registration & Fees

In order to produce a timetable for Scouts, we are asking that Counselors sign up individually as soon as possible, and before 11 January 2026.

Counselors should sign up by registering on the google doc –

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1hgyzeal5GJBsuY9MuKq8Xd1p49hgtSy5dSRKjMRJoHE/edit?usp=sharing>

- Their Unit number
- Their full name
- 1 to 3 merit badges they would like to counsel from which we will select one for them, depending on other volunteers
- Any particular skills we should consider when allocating the counselor to a merit badge
- The number of hours they want for each merit badge they are offering to counsel (so we can produce a timetable)
- Any prep work scouts should do before the day
- Any equipment or supplies the counselor may require

The master schedule will be updated as counselors and scouts sign up. Please reference that for the latest and greatest information.

[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1HhemBso\\_i73Mfc-hXFacIB4JRKi9ACrub2JhcTNdVMY/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1HhemBso_i73Mfc-hXFacIB4JRKi9ACrub2JhcTNdVMY/edit?usp=sharing)

To show our appreciation for those that volunteer to be Merit Badge Counselors there will be no cost for this form of registration. The costs for Counselor lunch, event patch and other supplies will be offset from the fees of the youth participants that they will be teaching.

Though there is not fee for Counselors we will require all those registering to complete the registration on Black Pug event page when this has gone live. This does not need to be completed until all Unit registration completed prior to 18 January 2026, with other Unit fees. See section 1.4 for how to pay fees.

Data protection: By volunteering to be a counselor, you are consenting to have your last name, first initial and unit number published on a read-only access Google doc or Black Pug spreadsheet which will be generally available to the public.

### 1.3 Unit Registration & Fees

Registrations should be submitted as soon as possible and as scouts sign up. No need to wait for the entire unit. Registrations are due **NO LATER THAN** 18 January 2026.

Registration is completed on Black Pug, where can find event on Transatlantic Council Calendar via following link: <https://scoutingevent.com/802> There will be a link to the Master Schedule which will be available on the individual unit sheets when sent out or can be found here –

[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1HhemBso\\_j73Mfc-hXFacIB4JRKi9ACrub2JhcTNdVMY/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1HhemBso_j73Mfc-hXFacIB4JRKi9ACrub2JhcTNdVMY/edit?usp=sharing)

You can complete this registration by emailing the following information to Frank Sottrines:

- State clearly the Unit
- Each Participant's Full Name
- Whether a Scout or Adult
- Each Participant's Passport Number & Nationality or that they are a DOD Cardholder

Or we suggest Unit Leaders compile this information on Unit Roster to assist with updating of the Master Schedule.

For each Adult:

- how they will help (see sections 4 & 5)
- any special dietary needs

For each Scout:

- merit badge choices (see section 3)
- any special dietary needs

The Merit Badge University is held on an active US military base. We are grateful to the US military for allowing us to use their facilities. The flip side of this is must follow their rules. There is NO flexibility for bringing excess people. **Everyone not in possession of a DoD ID card must be registered before the deadline. No exceptions can made.**

The fee for youth participants will be US\$ 15.00 We encourage all adults attending to register as a Merit Badge Counselor or helper.

All accompanying adults should be listed on the sign up sheet so that we have a headcount for planning.

Please see section 1.4 on how to pay your fees.

If you have questions regarding registration, please email either Casey Wilson or Frank Sottrines.

### 1.4 Paying Fees

We expect that payments should be made at the UNIT level and not on the individual level, via the Black Pug registration link.

Refunds or changes will only be given at the discretion of the University Dean.

## 1.5 Core Management

The Core Management team for the Merit Badge University is listed below. You can usually reach them during evening hours. Just a gentle reminder that everyone on this list is a volunteer.

University Dean – Casey Wilson
<a href="tel:+447840839431">+44 7840 839431</a> <a href="mailto:caseywilson@gmail.com">caseywilson@gmail.com</a>
Dean of Administration – Frank Sotrines
<a href="tel:+447540984358">+44 7540 984358</a> <a href="mailto:franksotrines.scouting@gmail.com">franksotrines.scouting@gmail.com</a>

There will also be RAF Lakenheath base personnel around. If you have a question or problem, please see a member of the University Staff. If appropriate, we will then liaise with the base to rectify any problems that may arise.

## 2. General Information

### 2.1 Changes & Cancellations

The University Dean is the only individual authorized to change or cancel a scheduled activity. Any necessary changes will be made at the earliest possible time and posted in writing at the Staff HQ. If you have a question on the program, please feel free to come to the Staff HQ at any time or ask a staff member.

### 2.2 Parking

All vehicles must be parked in one of the designated parking areas near the entrance or main car park. Troops are encouraged to car pool and arrange to have as few cars as possible as the parking area will be limited.

Please observe the posted speed limits; watch out for speed bumps and children.

## 2.3 Food Service

There will be an organised lunch for all participants. There will also be Coffee / Tea available for adults. Please make your own arrangements for any other meals your unit needs.

Please indicate during registration any special dietary requirements, so that they may be catered for in advance. We will try our best to offer suitable alternatives, but we may ask that some individuals bring their own lunches.

In accordance with Scouting America's environmental principles, we ask that ALL PARTICIPANTS BRING THEIR OWN REUSABLE CUPS AND/OR WATER BOTTLES.

### 2.4 Emergency Contact

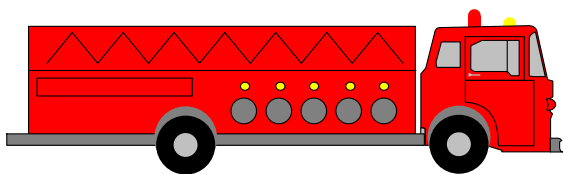
It is recommended that, if possible, Units should have access to a cellular phone that can be used as a primary contact for members of that Unit in an emergency. Please ensure everyone in your unit has this contact number.

The emergency number for the Merit Badge University is +44 7840 839431. Please ensure callers know the Unit Number and, if possible, the Unit Leader's name.

### 2.5 Medical Forms

In case of serious injury or illness requiring emergency medical services or hospital treatment, a health history record and permission of a parent or guardian are required. This form, known as the Medical Form, must be accessible to the Unit Leader at all times.

Parts A and B are required for all participants (youth and adult) for the Merit Badge University. Unit Leaders should keep their medical forms in a safe place.



[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1HhemBso\\_j73Mfc-hXFacIB4JRKi9ACrub2JhcTNdVMY/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1HhemBso_j73Mfc-hXFacIB4JRKi9ACrub2JhcTNdVMY/edit?usp=sharing)

For all merit badges, Scouts should go to [www.meritbadge.com](http://www.meritbadge.com) and review the current requirements.

## 2.6 Fire & Ambulance Service

In the unlikely event that fire or ambulance services are needed, send a runner to the Staff HQ immediately so that an emergency call can be placed and the University Dean notified immediately.

In the event of a fire alarm being sounded, please exit the building in an orderly manner and assemble on the playing fields next to the main parking lot.

## 3. Merit Badge Program

Merit badge sessions will be in four blocks of one or two hours each. We hope this gives counselors enough time to either complete the merit badge or to make worthwhile progress.

### 3.1 Before the Merit Badge University

We will ask Counselors to tell us what preparatory work each scout will need to do for their sessions. The sooner we receive the information from counselors, the sooner we will be able to tell the scouts. Please pass on this information to your scouts when available.

We will host the information on a Google doc for easy access which will be kept updated as classes are filled/opened. A link for this spreadsheet will hopefully be available on the Mayflower page of [www.tac-bsa.org](http://www.tac-bsa.org)

We will NOT be providing merit badge workbooks from [www.meritbadge.com](http://www.meritbadge.com) for each scout and so scouts should print their own copy of the merit badge workbook from the site before coming.

### 3.2 Activities at the Event

There will be 2 sessions of 2 hours each and 3 sessions of 1 hour each. Scouts should sign up for a class in each session. Sessions 2 & 3 will be divided for lunch in order to eat in “shifts”. Please leave one of these sessions open. We hope to offer all the merit badges in Appendix A, however, the actual merit badges offered will depend on the counselors who sign up to teach.

We ask that scouts register their choice of merit badges BEFORE the weekend so counselors can prepare accordingly.

If a scout decides to change a merit badge class after that, they can go to the merit badge class they wish to take and ask the permission of the counselor to join the class. The counselor can allow a scout to participate (and will add the scout to the class roster) or refuse at their discretion. The most common reason will be that a class is already full or that the scout has not undertaken the prep work for the class.

### 3.3 After the Event

We do not provide “blue cards” and neither will Merit Badge Counselors. Instead, counselors will be given a class roster on which they will indicate the requirements completed. After the Merit Badge University, the completed class rosters will be updated to the master google doc

[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1HhemBso\\_j73Mfc-hXFacIB4JRKi9ACrub2JhcTNdVMY/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1HhemBso_j73Mfc-hXFacIB4JRKi9ACrub2JhcTNdVMY/edit?usp=sharing)

Unit Leaders should transfer the requirements completed to Scoutbook for their scouts.

Some Scouts may leave with partials. Where it is not possible to complete the merit badge within the troop, Scouts are welcome to connect to the Merit Badge Counselor in Scoutbook.

## 4. Merit Badge Counselors

The counselor's job is to act as a coach and an examiner. As a coach, the counselor helps the Scout over the hurdles of the requirement developing his or her self-confidence as s/he proceeds. Through the counselor's expertise and experience, the Scout is made aware of the broader and deeper aspects of the subject, developing an interest which may lead to further explorations on his own. As an examiner, the counselor satisfies himself/herself that each Scout who comes to them meets all the requirements for the merit badge and that all Scouts are treated equally.

Some useful guidance on being a merit badge counselor is in Appendix B.

### 4.1 Scouting America Registration & Youth Protection

In accordance with Scouting America National policy, all adults volunteering as counselors must be registered Merit Badge Counselors or registered adults, with current Youth Protection Training. Adults who are already registered with a Troop (Scoutmaster, Assistant Scoutmaster, Committee member, Merit Badge Counselor, etc), Pack, Crew or the District should already be covered.

If you are not already registered as an adult leader with Scouting America, please follow these simple steps to register as a merit badge counselor (there is a fee of \$25 to register as a counselor with Transatlantic Council.

1. Complete an Adult Application (position code 42): ADULT APPLICATION <<<NEW: US Citizens with SSNs can now apply on line here>>>>  
<https://my.scouting.org/online-registration/2faf122e-791a-4b5b-8db7-d4a7f30a7854/applicant-type>
2. Take the Youth Protection Training if not done within past 2 years:  
<https://www.scouting.org/training/youth-protection/>
3. Complete the Merit Badge Information Form  
<https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/34405.pdf>
4. Send the Adult Application, YPT Certificate and MERIT BADGE Info form to:  
[trevor.nitz@scouting.org](mailto:trevor.nitz@scouting.org)
5. Complete the Merit Badge Counsellor Training Available in my.scouting.org - Scouts BSA - Merit Badge Counselor Position Specific Training

If your Unit decides to recruit volunteers from outside your Unit, please remember that they must be registered counselors (as above) and the Merit Badge University organizers will hold your Unit responsible for the registration fees of those counselors.

#### 4.2 Counselor Signups

Please sign up early to be a counselor. The earlier you sign up, the more notice we can give scouts on the prep work to be done and the merit badges available.

Counselors should volunteer to counsel merit badges as per section 1.2 above. By giving us a choice of merit badges, we can slot counselors into merit badges which need counselors without too much to-ing and fro-ing.

The list of merit badges we would like to offer is at Appendix A. These are merit badges which have previously been well suited to the Merit Badge University. If you wish to counsel a merit badge which is not on the list, that may also be possible. There are many reasons merit badges are left off. For example, we may not know if anyone has the very specific skills necessary to counsel the merit badge. We have made a conscious decision NOT to offer any merit badges which are traditionally offered at TAC Summer Camps.

As part of the signup process, we are asking that counselors tell us how many hours (1, 2, 3 or 4) they would like to have available to teach their merit badge. We will then be able to timetable classes to meet counselor's needs and therefore manage the scout's expectations.

We are also asking for any prep work counselors wish for scouts to undertake. Experience has

shown that scouts will only do prep work if they have plenty of notice. Our aim is to finalize the timetable and prep work before the Christmas break so that scouts can use that time to work on their merit badges.

All Scouts are asked (see section 3.1) to review the requirements on [www.meritbadge.com](http://www.meritbadge.com) of their chosen merit badges. They are also asked to bring a printed workbook for their merit badges. We will provide some (limited) spares for scouts which may forget.

#### 4.3 Administrative Matters

Counselors should check-in on arrival at the Staff HQ in the High School Cafeteria. We will give you a counselor packet.

In the packet will be your class rosters and instructions for filling them out. The roster records what requirements have been completed by the scouts. Please return your completed rosters to the Staff HQ before leaving the Merit Badge University.

There is no formal process for a scout to change merit badge classes. If a scout shows up that is not on your roster, and you are comfortable with allowing them to join, please just write their name in one of the empty rows on your attendance roster. If your class is already full, please kindly inform the scout that there is no space for them in your class and they should try a different merit badge. The decision to allow a scout that is not on the class roster to participate in a merit badge class is left to the discretion of the counselor.

#### 4.4 After Class Finishes

We would be grateful if counselors would, with the assistance of their final class of scouts, clean their teaching areas by:

- Putting tables and chairs back where they started;
- Ensuring all litter is thrown away;
- Making a note of any damage caused (and reporting any damage to the Staff HQ);
- Ensuring all lights are switched off.

Life to Eagle  
Life to Eagle Training is a course for Scoutmasters, Committee members and Eagle Coaches which explains the various paperwork and procedural steps involved in climbing Scouting's highest peak. The training also gives ideas on how to choose and conduct Eagle Scout Service Projects.

## 5. Other Adult Opportunities

The Merit Badge University is about the Scouts so for the rest of us, we are working to make this the best event possible.

All adults accompanying the Scouts to Merit Badge University should be signed up on the roster so that we have a good headcount for planning.

We encourage all adults to either register as a Merit Badge Counselor or Helper.

### 5.1 Ways to help

The main areas where we will need help are:

- Helping to check units in
- Organising lunch
- Serving lunch
- Manning the main desk
- 

If you would like to help with these roles, please indicate when registering.

### 5.2 Adult Leader Training

There may also be an adult leader training course on offer at the Merit Badge University, subject to interest.

Adults should register for this as per section 1.3.

## 6. General Information

### 6.1 On Arrival

Once you reach RAF Lakenheath main gate, if are a DOD Cardholder or have been added on to the Unescorted Base Access list then you should be able to get straight through gate. If not then we will need to arrange someone to meet you at the Visitor Center to arrange a day pass and escort you onto the base.

From there you will need to make way to High School Cafeteria (instructions previously in section 1.1), where you will be able to Check In.

### 6.2 Check In

Once the Unit Leader has arrived, he or she should come to the Staff HQ to check-in. Unit Leaders will be given the schedules for their scouts which include the locations for each class.

Counselors should also come to check-in. They will be given the pre-printed class list and some other materials. They will then be directed or shown to their merit badge teaching location.

### 6.3 Check Out

On check out, please assist the Staff by ensuring:

- All Merit Badge class rosters are completed and turned in;
- Your Counselor Evaluation Forms are completed and turned in; and,
- Any materials borrowed for teaching merit badges are returned.

All units should plan to leave by 18:30.

### 6.4 Counselor & Unit Evaluations

Counselor evaluations will be handed out to Merit Badge Counselors. The Merit Badge Counselor evaluation shall be specific to the merit badge and how we can improve for next year.

Unit Leaders will be emailed an evaluation form for their unit. The unit evaluation should be completed in conjunction with the PLC of that troop. It helps the event if the form represents the views of the whole unit.

## 7. University Rules

### 7.1 Law of the University

As in all Scouting activities, the Scout Oath and Law will be the Law of the University. Any individual who does not act as s/he should may be putting his/her unit's future privileges in jeopardy and putting the privilege of the Mayflower District to hold the Merit Badge University at risk. Units that do not comply with these rules may be asked to leave.

### 7.2 Smoking & Fires

Smoking and vaping is not permitted inside any building at RAF Lakenheath. If an adult needs to smoke during the Merit Badge University, they

must do so outside, should be out of the line of sight of Scouts and in a designated smoking area.

### 7.3 Proper Uniform

Scouts should wear their field uniform (scout shirt, pants, belt, and socks) with a Scout T-shirt underneath for the day's activities. We ask that Adults wear either their field uniform or a Scouting T-shirt as well. These measures are necessary to identify participants.

In accordance with Scouting America National policies, NO military garb or fatigues, including camouflage, should be worn. Rain gear which is camouflaged is allowed, although it is not recommended.

### 7.4 Discipline

Leaders will be responsible for the behavior of their scouts at all times.

### 7.5 Electronics & Cell Phones

Adults may wish to bring their own laptops/tablets and/or data projectors as teaching aids.

Scouts may also wish to bring tablet PCs, iPads, or laptops to classes. These should only be used for merit badge work and in accordance with the Scout Oath and Law. Any Scout who abuses this privilege may have the device confiscated by the Merit Badge University staff to be handed over to their unit leader.

**Any electronic device brought to the Merit Badge University is done so at the risk of the person bringing the device. Transatlantic Council, Scouting America and the Mayflower District's volunteers are not liable for any loss or damage to any such devices whosoever caused.**

## 7.6 Knives

No knives will be needed, nor should they be brought for the day.

## 7.7 Alcoholic Beverages

No alcoholic beverages of any kind are allowed at the Merit Badge University.

## 7.8 Firearms

For safety reasons, firearms, pellet guns, BB guns, bow and arrows or slingshots of any kind are not allowed at the Merit Badge University.

## 7.9 Fireworks

Absolutely no fireworks are permitted.

## 7.10 Dogs

No dogs are permitted except those used as guide dogs for the blind or other aid for disabled participants.

## 7.11 Health and Safety

The rules in the preceding paragraphs are for your health and safety. Please follow them and be careful. The University Staff will be alert to safety hazards during the weekend. Please assist in the elimination of hazards or reckless acts as they are observed or brought to your attention.

## 7.12 Consideration of the Public

During the Merit Badge University, our scouts will be on display to members of the public. We ask that Unit Leaders remind their scouts to act in a scout-like manner at all times. The impressions left by any one scout, whether positive or negative, will be the impression given of us all.

## Appendix A – Proposed Merit Badge Classes

The following is a list of merit badges which we consider are well suited to the Merit Badge University format. Many are also generally popular with scouts. When choosing a merit badge to counsel, these merit badges are our top suggestions for counselors to choose from.

We have included an indication as to the progress which is typically made by scouts during the Merit Badge University. This is to assist Merit Badge Coordinators with advising scouts as to their choice of merit badges to take. The actual progress made can change drastically, including due to:

- Whether or not prep work is completed,
- Any changes to requirements;
- Counselor's teaching style
- Individual scout's aptitude for the merit badge.

Typical Progress for merit badges is determined on a scale of likelihood to complete which goes:

1. Likely to complete on the day
2. Likely to complete with some prep work
3. Possible to complete with some prep work
4. Unlikely to complete even with prep work
5. Highly unlikely to complete even with prep work

However, it is important to realize that even if a merit badge is not completed, the counselor's objective should be to make substantial progress and enable the scout to complete the rest of the merit badge with limited further counseling.

Merit Badge or Class	Typical Progress
Den Chief Training	Course complete
American Business	Highly unlikely to complete even with prep work
American Heritage	Likely to complete with some prep work
Animal Science	Possible to complete with some prep work
Architecture	Possible to complete with some prep work
Art	Likely to complete on the day
Athletics	
Auto. Maintenance	Likely to complete with some prep work
Aviation	Likely to complete with some prep work
Chemistry	Likely to complete with some prep work
Chess	Unlikely to complete even with prep work

Cit in the Community	Highly unlikely to complete even with prep work
Cit in the Nation	Highly unlikely to complete even with prep work
Cit in the World	Highly unlikely to complete even with prep work

Coin Collecting	Possible to complete with some prep work
Collections	Likely to complete with some prep work
Communications	Possible to complete with some prep work
Composite Materials	Highly unlikely to complete even with prep work
Cooking	Highly unlikely to complete even with prep work
Crime Prevention	Unlikely to complete even with prep work
Dentistry	Likely to complete with some prep work
Digital Technology	Highly unlikely to complete even with prep work
Drafting	Likely to complete with some prep work
Electricity	Likely to complete with some prep work
Electronics	Possible to complete with some prep work
Emergency Preparedness	
Engineering	Likely to complete with some prep work
Entrepreneurship	Highly unlikely to complete even with prep work
Exploration	
Family Life	Highly unlikely to complete even with prep work
Fingerprinting	Likely to complete on the day
Fire Safety	
Game Design	Highly unlikely to complete even with prep work
Genealogy	Possible to complete even with prep work
Geology	
Golf	Unlikely to complete even with prep work
Health Care Professions	Possible to complete with some prep work
Journalism	Highly unlikely to complete even with prep work
Law	Likely to complete with some prep work
Mining in Society	Likely to complete with some prep work
Model Design & Building	Likely to complete on the day
Music	Likely to complete with some prep work
Nuclear Science	Likely to complete with some prep work
Personal Fitness	Highly unlikely to complete even with prep work
Personal Management	Highly unlikely to complete even with prep work
Photography	Unlikely to complete even with prep work
Programming	Highly unlikely to complete even with prep work

Public Health	Highly unlikely to complete even with prep work
Public Speaking	Likely to complete with some prep work
Pulp and Paper	Possible to complete with some prep work
Radio	
Railroading	Likely to complete with some prep work
Reading	Unlikely to complete even with prep work
Robotics	Highly unlikely to complete even with prep work
Safety	Unlikely to complete even with prep work
Salesmanship	
Scholarship	Possible to complete even with prep work
Scouting Heritage	Highly unlikely to complete even with prep work
Search and Rescue	Highly unlikely to complete even with prep work
Stamp Collecting	Unlikely to complete even with prep work
Sustainability	Highly unlikely to complete even with prep work
Textiles	Possible to complete with some prep work
Theatre	Unlikely to complete even with prep work
Traffic Safety	Likely to complete with some prep work
Truck Transportation	Possible to complete with some prep work
Weather	Likely to complete with some prep work

In addition, please bear in mind that the philosophy of the Merit Badge University in selecting merit badges to offer is:

- 1) Merit badges which are traditionally offered at Transatlantic Council Summer Camps are typically not offered, with some exceptions.
- 2) It is better to have a variety of merit badges than multiple sessions of a few merit badges as this maximizes the Scout's ability to try something new and which might not be available within the unit.
- 3) Scouts should NOT concentrate on required merit badges; instead, they should focus on merit badges which interest them as they will then get the most out of the event (and out of Scouting).

## Appendix B – Helpful tips and Information for Counselors

The following is some useful guidance on how to maximize your effectiveness as a merit badge counselor. We hope that you find it helpful in preparing for your classes. Please also review in full section 4 above as it details the operations of the Merit Badge University for Counselors.

### 1. Duties as a Counselor

Interview the Scouts to determine their preparedness, the amount of knowledge they already have in the subject, and their interest in the subject.

Short-term and long-term goals are set by the Scout with encouragement from the counselor.

The counselor follows up with the Scout on his goals: projects, collections, written work.

The counselor helps the Scout evaluate his progress.

The counselor encourages the Scout to ask for any help he needs to gain more knowledge or skill in the subject.

### 2. Duties as a Coach

The counselor teaches the Scouts the skills required and gives the Scouts an opportunity to practice the skills under his or her guidance. He

or she takes a genuine interest in the projects and encourages completion.

Always remember that enthusiasm and interest not only make the merit badge experience more rewarding for the Scout but may induce him to pursue the topic on his own in the future.

### 3. Duties as an Examiner

Make sure you have the most current requirements for the merit badge and that you follow these requirements in a FAIR and UNIFORM manner.

The list of available Merit Badges and the current requirements can be found here - <https://www.scouting.org/skills/merit-badges/>. About 15-20 merit badges are updated each year, so be sure you are using the most recent version.

#### 4. Counseling Techniques

- For the Scout to get the most benefit from the counseling session, s/he must feel welcome and relaxed. One way for the counselor to put him/her at ease is to ask a simple question. For example, "How long have you been in Scouting?" or "What got you interested in the Astronomy merit badge?"
- Another way to put a Scout at ease is to show him/her something related to the merit badge subject. For example, a Coin Collecting merit badge counselor might show the Scout his/her coin collection. However, don't overwhelm the Scout. Remember, s/he is probably a beginner.
- A third way to put a Scout at ease is to ask him/her to do a simple skill. For example, a Woodwork merit badge counselor might say, "Would you sand this piece of wood while I get some tools ready?"
- At the beginning, the merit badge counselor should carefully review each requirement to be sure the Scout understands what s/he must do.
- Before the merit badge counselor ticks as complete a requirement, s/he must insist that the Scout do exactly what the requirements call for. If it says, "show or demonstrate," that is what s/he must do. Just telling isn't enough. The same things hold true for words such as "make," "list," "in the field," and "collect, identify, and label."
- On the other hand, you cannot require more of a Scout than stated. You must not, for example, say, "I want to be sure you really know your stuff, so instead of the 20 items you need for your collection, you must have 30 to get my signature."
- It is, of course, acceptable for a Scout on his/her own initiative to do more than the requirement calls for.
- When reviewing the requirements with a Scout or testing him/her, the merit badge counselor may find that the Scout needs help in learning a particular skill. One of the jobs of a merit badge counselor is to teach the Scout the skills required.
- The most effective way to teach a skill is to get the Scout to practice while learning.
- KISMIF!

## 5. Tips for Counselors

### Agenda

Have an agenda with times. Be ruthless with keeping the program on track. Might as well plan for a 5-minute downtime at the beginning while Scouts show up and settle down.

### Use of the Internet

There will be Wi-Fi available for counselors and instructions will be issued on check-in. PowerPoint presentations and videos may be shared with the Scouts using the Counselor's laptop.

However, the Wi-Fi is not always 100% reliable and counselors would be well advised to make back-up plans. Print off color pictures of things to talk about - have a contest and you can hand out the pictures as prizes. If you are techy, you might be able to cache some pages of a Web site which you later 'tour' to meet some of the requirements.

### Attendee Numbers

Be flexible, you may have one Scout at a particular session and eight at another! You will get advance warning on your attendee numbers about a week out, but please plan on being flexible.

### Attention Span of Scouts

Assume it is very short! Lectures can be deadly. Contests, interaction, flash cards, prizes, competitions, game shows, props, acting out, pictures, and activities all help kill boredom. Be creative. Think out of the box. This is fun.

### Supplies

Please bring what you will need to teach the merit badge.

### Be Self Sufficient

Bring pencils/pens and cords to charge any devices you're using.