

Use the latest version from the National BSA website – at this time, the 2014 printing is current.

Start gathering the information you need by asking your Unit Advancement Chair for a printout of both your unit's record about you, and of the BSA's record about you. Most units use a computer program such as Troopmaster (there are others). They use it for member tracking about attendance, advancement, merit badges, and special awards (like a Religious one, or 50 Miler). The BSA provides a program called Internet Advancement, which only tracks advancement and merit badges – but which is your official record. Get both, and make sure your BSA record is correct and complete.

If you have your rank cards and merit badge blue cards, compare those records with what your records say. If need be, have your unit and BSA records corrected and/or updated by your unit advancement chair.

Fill the ESRA form out online – it is a fillable pdf, and the type size will adjust automatically as needed.

Fill in your identifying information at the top left.

At the top right, fill in your earlier rank advancements using those (up to date) unit and BSA records.

Fill in Req. 1 information.

Req 2 asks for the names and contact information for Letters of Recommendation:

Your Scoutmaster will write to these people, requesting a confidential Letter of Recommendation.

Get all the data: the e-mail and phone number are useful for his follow-up, if they don't respond in time.

Your job is to think of who you want (to identify them), then ask them if they would be willing and able to provide your Scoutmaster with a Letter of Recommendation, in response to a request from him (not you).

(Able: sometimes people travel for several months, and simply may not be where they usually are.)

Scoutmasters often provide some criteria for the Recommender to consider – that's not your job. Letters will be returned to the Scoutmaster in sealed envelopes, and are only opened during your Board of Review.

Some special considerations:

Religious: This letter is supposed to be from a church official. A neighbor who attends the same church does not qualify. If you do not attend a church, then your parent(s) are supposed to write a separate letter speaking about your 'moral upbringing'. If the church official who you would say knows you best went to a new assignment at another church 'recently', and you can still contact him/her, then you can use that person.

Educator: This letter can be from a teacher or administrator or professional staffer; they can be a current teacher or one you had in (a) recent year or years. A teacher you had for a sequence for the past two years but no longer have as a teacher may be the educator who knows you best.

Employer: This letter is optional: if you had or have a paying job, if it was recent enough, if you can still make contact with them. You get to choose. Avoid using a summer camp staffer, unless you are still in contact with them and really are sure you know where they live. College students can be very hard to contact.

Others: These can be any adults you know. Scouting expects that you have a certain amount of involvement in your community. While you can pick a Troop leader or another educator or employer, you are encouraged to select someone from other areas of interest in your life.

Req 3, Merit Badges: Use the information from the BSA's record. Don't guess. Your ESRA will be compared to the BSA record. Use the merit badges that you used to earn earlier ranks – your unit record usually shows you that data. Cross out the merit badges that you did not use for advancement in the three places (slots 7, 8 and 10) where you have to show your choice. You can select (highlight) the ones to cross out, right click, and choose Strike Through from the pop-down list to do that crossing out.

Req 4, Leadership Position: The form is designed to make it easy for the clerical calculation of the six months needed to satisfy this requirement. If you are still doing the qualifying job, enter the date that you sign the ESRA, so the difference between two dates can be calculated. Note that Assistant Patrol Leader doesn't count.

Req 5, Service Project: You created a short title for your Project on your Workbook's front cover. You can use that title here, too. Use the total number of hours that are in your Project Report in your Project Workbook.

Req 6 & 7, Scoutmaster's Conference and Board of Review: Print ESRA out in color; sign it.

Note that you need to bring two other documents to your Board: a statement of Ambitions and Life Purpose, and a list of leadership positions as defined in Requirement 7 of the Eagle Scout Rank Application. These two documents are intended to tell the Eagle Board of Review about you. Scouting encourages you to think ahead about your life. Scouting wants you to be active in your school, church, and community.

The "Statement of Ambitions and Life Purpose" is probably easier to write if it is:

- a. Focused your goals for the next ten years, rather than the next sixty years.
- b. Contains your thoughts on future schooling, on what your job might be, on what you will do for fun, and how you will participate in your church and community.
- c. Pictured as only a good-sized paragraph (1/2 to 3/4 page) in length.

The "List of Positions of Leadership"

- a. Is intended to be a simple list, not an essay.
- b. Can be organized as you choose, either chronologically or by order of importance.
- c. Should list what you have done recently and in the past while a Boy Scout – things not on the Application.
Examples are Assistant Patrol leader and Patrol Leader jobs done early in your years in the Troop.
- d. Should list your role in the activities and groups in which you have been active, even if not the president, team captain, first violinist, or leading man in the play. In many cases, your participation is an act of leadership to your classmates in school, your church, the community, etc..
- e. Should list participation in the Order of the Arrow, if applicable.
- f. Should include academic success, like Honor Role or the National Honor Society.
- g. Should include honors and awards as requirement 6 says.

After your Scoutmaster's Conference, your Scoutmaster and Committee Chair will also sign it. Get a copy.

They are responsible for its subsequent processing, starting with copying the signed version for their use.