



Virtual Merit Badge University Expectations

The goal of the VMBU is for Scouts to complete badges through this program however, Covid-19 limitations as they are today may prevent participants from completing some badges. Examples: nights out for Camping; visit a facility; face to face volunteering, etc. Please follow these guidelines to ensure you can complete as much, if not all requirements for the badges you select.

We ask that Scouts limit their selections to 3 badges so that we may serve as many Scouts, BSA members as possible. Be sure to re-review the schedule prior to registering as we will continue to make updates until registration is launched on **February 1**.

Purchase and read the Merit Badge Pamphlets prior to the start of the first class.

You can purchase the Merit Badge Pamphlets prior to the 1st class through the Scout Shop

<https://www.scoutshop.org/literature/program-literature/merit-badge-pamphlets.html>

Or through Amazon as paperbacks, or as Kindle books. Note: be sure if purchasing paperbacks from Amazon that you are buying the correct version. A list of current revision dates can be found

here. <http://www.usscouts.org/mb/mbbooks.asp>

You can also visit a New England Scout Shop, which is offering in-store, curb side pickup, and delivery.

<https://www.facebook.com/newenglandscoutshop>

Take the Cyber Chip Course

All Scouts participating must complete the Cyber Chip Training for their current grade.

<https://www.scouting.org/training/youth-protection/cyber-chip/>

Do the homework.

There will be homework between sessions, be sure to complete and submit through the Google Classroom link provided. Some instructors will use workbooks, others will not. Your counselor will advise how they want to see your work presented.

Video Conference Etiquette

Use the video option when possible.

It lets people see you and confirm that you are engaged.

Dress for the occasion, or; Don't wear your pajamas.

Scouts are expected to wear their uniform, your uniform shirt is required.

Stage your video area.

Keep in mind that people are not just seeing you, they are also seeing whatever the camera is pointed at behind you. Maybe arrange it so that your camera is not facing towards a pile of unfolded laundry or your unmade bed. Refrain from using distracting backgrounds that you can add electronically.

Create an appropriate area to participate.

Be seated at a table or desk with your electronic device stationary. Don't hand hold your phone, don't go on a walking tour of your home, don't be propped up on your bed with pillows, or sitting on the floor – you get the picture. This is a classroom, not a video chat with your friends. Your electronic device should be within reach to easily unmute.



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA® MAYFLOWER COUNCIL

More light is better.

Video quality is dramatically improved with more lighting. An extra nearby lamp is usually helpful. Just make sure the light is in front of you, not behind you - being backlit makes you harder to see. No flashing holiday lights or mood coloring lights.

Try to look into the camera.

If you are presenting or speaking to a group, looking into the camera will give the appearance of eye contact with whoever you are talking to. It is also definitely better than being forced to stare at your own face and realizing how badly you need a haircut.

Be sure that your camera is positioned so we are not looking just at the top of your head or the ceiling.

Do your own tech support before you start.

Make sure you do a test run at some point, and that you are aware of your audio and video settings before you start. Most video conference services allow you to see a test of what your camera is recording before you start broadcasting it to everyone else, so have it arranged the way you want it. You can also usually decide if you come in with audio hot or muted before you accidentally broadcast whatever is on the TV in the next room. And speaking of sound ...

Stay on mute if you are not talking.

Background noise can be really distracting. If you are not sharing anything at the moment, go ahead and hit mute until you do. That way, no one has to listen to the car alarm that goes off in your neighborhood or your neighbor's perpetually barking dog.

Sign on using your full name.

To help the counselor with attendance, sign in using the name you are registered by. No nicknames, no aliases, not your parent's name. Be sure to create the personal profile with your name.

Don't eat during the meeting.

It can be a little gross to watch other people eat sometimes. Or listen to them chewing, for that matter. If your class is at lunch 12:00-2:00PM, eat before, same goes for dinner or snacks.

Don't do other private things while on a meeting.

Speaking of gross: have you heard any horror stories about people being caught picking their nose, combing their hair, or using the bathroom while on a video conference, thinking they were muted or had their video off? Don't become a statistic. It can be easy to forget that people can hear or see you if you are in a group of up to 20 Scouts, so don't risk it, you are not invisible!

Stay focused.

To stay on task, keep unnecessary conversations to a minimum. It can get extremely hard to be productive when several people are all talking at once, and even more so when overlapping audio and shuffling video screens are involved. Close the door and put up a do not disturb sign for your family.

LET'S HAVE SOME FUN!