

# **Guidebook & Indian Waters Council Supplement for Earning the**



## **Doctorate of Commissioner Science Degree**

**and**

## **Doctorate of Commissioner Science Knot Award**



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## **Project/Thesis Advisor**

Once you have decided to pursue the Doctorate of Commissioner Science degree, talk with the dean of your Council College of Commissioner Science. That person or their designee will appoint an advisor to guide you through your doctoral efforts.

Your advisor will be someone who has already achieved their doctorate and has been where you are now. If problems arise, your advisor will provide the necessary assistance or find the help you need. It is good practice to share your work often with your advisor so that you stay focused on your topic.

To obtain approval for beginning your doctoral thesis or project, submit a one-page document to the dean of the doctoral program or designee with the following information:

- Your name and current commissioner position
- The working title of your thesis or project
- A brief paragraph describing the purpose of your thesis or project and why you chose that topic
- A proposed outline that will be used to write the thesis or project report

**Download:** [Suggested Thesis/Project Proposal](#) Form

Please note that the thesis or project should be related to unit service. If you have questions, discuss them with the dean or your advisor early! Once you have submitted your document, it will be reviewed to determine if the topic is appropriate, sufficiently focused, and worthwhile. The intent of the thesis is to improve some aspects of unit service.

**Download:** [Identify a Need in Unit Service for Your Topic](#)

## **Degree Requirements for the College of Commissioner Science**

**Course Requirements:** Courses from the National College of Commissioner Science curriculum at all levels cover subject matter enhancing the knowledge and performance of commissioners. Course content is directed toward unit service rather than program areas and therefore courses offered in a local University of Scouting **do not** meet the requirements for any of the degrees in a College of Commissioner Science. Questions should be directed to your council commissioner, college dean, or doctorate advisor

### **Reciprocity**

Colleges of Commissioner Science will accept a commissioner's coursework from any Boy Scouts of America College of Commissioner Science provided an official transcript listing courses from the national curriculum is made available.

Commissioners who participated in local courses must have the approval of their college dean or council commissioner to use those courses to fulfill degree requirements.

Classes taken at a University of Scouting that are not listed in the BSA National Commissioner Development Curriculum (<https://www.scouting.org/commissioners/training/college-of-commissioner-science/>) **will not** be accepted for credit. College of Commissioner Science courses that have been retired and archived will continue to be accepted until they sunset at the close of 2023.

## Reciprocity Statement

As facilitators and trainers for this curriculum, we are charged with representing the BSA and delivering this national material. To stay consistent across the nation, the content of the training should be delivered as designed and written. Therefore, the materials on the BSA Commissioner Development CCS webpage are provided in a “Read-Only” downloadable format to support uniformity of content. This ensures the same message is delivered as we provide a unified approach to unit service. Consistent and Repeatable delivery assures fair reciprocity (the transfer of your class work between colleges of commissioner science in different councils/host groups) in the work toward a degree or award. This has become more important with the option of virtual colleges.

## Degree Recognition

Colleges of Commissioner Science will recognize degrees earned from other Boy Scouts of America Colleges of Commissioner Science provided that a degree certificate is available.

Download: [Doctorate of Commissioner Science Knot Personal Tracking Record](#)

## Bachelor’s Degree

### *Prerequisites:*

- Current registration as a commissioner
- Current BSA Youth Protection Training certificate
- Completion of a Commissioner Basic Training Course



### *Course Requirements:*

Completion of **seven (7)** courses of instruction, including at least **five (5)** from the National College of Commissioner Science curriculum at the Bachelor’s level. The remaining **two (2)** courses can be locally created and focus on unit service.

## Master’s Degree

### *Prerequisites:*

- Current registration as a commissioner
- Current BSA Youth Protection Training Certificate
- Completion of Bachelor of Commissioner Science degree
- Earn the Arrowhead Honor



### *Course Requirements:*

Completion of **seven (7)** additional courses of instruction (total of 14), including at least **five (5)** from the National College of Commissioner Science curriculum at the Master’s level. The remaining **two (2)** courses can be locally created and focus on unit service. CED courses can also qualify.

## Doctorate of Commissioner Science Degree



### **Prerequisites:**

Current registration as a commissioner  
Current BSA Youth Protection Training Certificate  
Completion of Master of Commissioner Science degree  
Earn the Commissioner Key

- **Course Requirements:**
- Completion of **ten (10)** additional courses of instruction (total of 24), including at least **five (5)** courses from the National College of Commissioner Science curriculum at the doctorate level. The remaining **five (5)** courses can be locally created and focus on unit service. CED courses can also qualify. Elective courses **may not** have been previously applied toward your bachelor's or master's degrees.
- **Thesis or Project:**  
The topic of a project or thesis needs to be related to unit service and the commissioner's primary registration – (district commissioner, assistant district commissioner, unit commissioner, roundtable commissioner, etc.). The topic must be pre-approved by the College of Commissioner Science Doctorate program dean or designee.  
The Council Commissioner or designee may authorize an alternate topic if it is deemed appropriate.  
The finished project or thesis must be approved by the doctoral dean or designee.
- **Commissioner Performance:**
- Serve on a college of commissioner science staff (instructor or support staff), or work with training support for commissioners for at least one year.

**The award of the Doctoral Degree must be approved by the council commissioner or designee.**

## Doctorate of Commissioner Science Knot Award

**NOTE:** The completion of the Doctorate of Commissioner Science degree does not automatically qualify a commissioner for this award. All requirements below must be met. There are two additional unique requirements to earn this award: tenure and recruiting.

### **Prerequisites:**

- Current registration as a commissioner
- Current BSA Youth Protection Training Certificate
- Completion of the Doctorate of Commissioner Science degree
- **Tenure:**  
Serve as a commissioner for a minimum of 5 years. (Years need not be consecutive).  
This service can be in one or more positions as a commissioner.
- **Recruiting:**  
Recruit or assist in recruiting at least three new commissioners during their tenure as a commissioner.



**The award of the Doctorate of Commissioner Science Knot must be approved by the council commissioner or designee.**

## **Selecting and Limiting the Scope of Your Doctoral Project or Thesis**

You need to decide whether to complete a project or write a thesis to fulfill your doctorate requirement.

**Project:** A project is often considered an event or activity relating to unit service. Your project is the implementation of your ideas and what you plan to accomplish along with a summation of how it was completed and the results that were achieved.

Projects require you to plan, implement, lead, facilitate, or DO some activity beyond gathering information. The project report should be detailed enough to enable others to duplicate the project and explain the project outcome along with the benefits provided.

**Thesis:** A thesis statement is a declarative sentence that asserts the position your paper will be taking. This statement should be specific. In a thesis, you form a premise, collect data, analyze results, form a conclusion, and implement your findings into real-life applications for the betterment of unit service.

It is recommended that the topic of a project or thesis be related to unit service and to the current commissioner position in which you are registered. There may be specific circumstances under which a topic related to another area of scouting would be appropriate. Local councils have the authority to approve topics related to another area of scouting when selecting one related to unit service isn't appropriate or practical. The council commissioner or designee may authorize an alternate topic.

### **Project/Thesis Advisor**

You may choose to work on your own, but it is highly recommended that you work with a trusted advisor to guide you throughout the thesis/project. Your advisor should be someone who has already achieved their doctorate as they have the basic tools and can assist you in preparing your paper. It is good practice to share your work early and often so your project/thesis advisor can guide you and provide feedback when needed. Remember, it is not the advisor's job to write the paper for you, only to help edit it.

### **Limiting the Scope**

What are some considerations that you should take into account when limiting the scope of your project or thesis?

- Is the issue you wish to improve or change within your scope of authority?
- Is there sufficient information to support the need for your project/thesis focus?
- Are there any financial implications for completing your project/thesis and are they within your ability to manage them?
- Does what you plan to do fall within the policies of the BSA and your council?

One way to narrow/limit your topic would be to discuss with your advisor the use of SMART goals and how to apply them to your topic.

- Is your topic **Specific**?
- Is your topic **Measurable**?
- Is your topic **Attainable**?
- Is your topic **Relevant** to Unit Service?
- Is your topic **Time-Based**?

Applying the principles of a S.M.A.R.T. analysis to your topic will help you efficiently use your time and resources.

### **Project Development**

Project planning defines the project scope, objectives, and steps needed to get the work done. The output of the project planning process is a project management plan.

Planning a project does not have to be difficult. These basic planning steps can help you write a plan that's both realistic and on target.

- **Research and Preplanning:** Understanding the ins and outs of the project will help you determine the best process and identify any snags that might get in the way of success. Conduct your own research to dig deeper into your goals and outcomes and any potential issues or risks.
- **Draft an outline:** Outline how the project should work. If you're at a loss for where to begin, start with the who, what, when, and how of the project.
- **Your plan should be able to answer** the following questions: What are you trying to deliver? How will you get there? Is there a deadline you have to meet?
- **Confirm your plan:** Now is the time to discuss your outline with your advisor to be sure that what you want to do will meet the requirements of the degree.
- **Execute your plan:** With your advisor's approval, carry out the project, making careful notes along the way as to what worked and what did not work. Did you have to make changes or alter your plan?

And finally, did you achieve what you set out to do? These notes will be helpful in your final project report to your advisor.

### **Writing an outline**

Identify your topic or thesis statement. Decide what points you would like to discuss during your paper. Put your points in logical, numerical order so that each point connects back to your main point. Write possible transitions between paragraphs.

Remember that your outline should serve as a rough idea of how your paper will develop; it does not have to be very formal or exact.

### **Sample Project Outline**

- Title Page Executive Summary or Abstract
- Table of Contents
- Dedication (if desired)
- Project Description and Evaluation
- Recommendations/Conclusions (Based on data presented)

- Appendixes (As required - Copy of all lists, illustrations, tables, and charts)
- Bibliography
- Glossary of terms (If necessary)
- Index (If necessary)

### **Sample Thesis Outline**

- Title Page
- Executive Summary or Abstract
- Table of Contents
- Lists of illustrations, Tables, and Charts
- Dedication (if desired)
- Text or Body of Report: Introductory chapter with background, purpose, problem, methods of study, and within the boundaries of your topic.
- Analysis and interpretation of findings
- Conclusions and recommendations based on data presented
- Appendixes (if necessary)
- Bibliography
- Glossary of Terms (if necessary)
- Index (if necessary)

You can use any form of this example to write your outline. Everyone organizes differently, so it is important to do what works best for you.

### **Thesis Development**

A good thesis has two parts. It should tell what your premise is, and how you plan to support it. A premise is an idea or recommendation and includes the reasons and evidence behind an assumption or conclusion. Your premise (idea) should be presented in a format that readers can understand and see the point you are trying to make.

To be effective, your thesis needs to have a definable premise/idea. An example of this might be that overall unit health and the support of unit-serving commissioners are closely related.

Your thesis needs to be as clear and specific as possible and you need to gather facts and information supporting what you are trying to show. Make an outline to help organize your thoughts. Revise it as many times as you need to.

### **Research Sources**

The development of specifics may involve library research, interviews, visits, or firsthand observations.

Other sources could include internet research, library research, surveys/questionnaires, interviews, and Scouting literature. When you are using the internet, be sure to use official BSA websites to ensure the accuracy and timeliness of your information.

## **Questionnaires and Interviews**

An important part of using questionnaires and interviews is to create questions that can measure the opinions and experiences of your target audience. Evaluate your survey questions to see if the language used predetermines the kinds of answers you receive. If you gather information based on questions that are ambiguous or biased, your data may not mean much.

Identify what topics will be covered in your questionnaire or interview and put them in a logical order. Once you have developed your questions, test them on a few people to gauge responses and make revisions to your questions as needed. Try to make your questions as open-ended as you can. Be sure to prepare clear and concise instructions for participants so that they can complete your questionnaire easily. If you use a rating scale, avoid a middle-of-the-road response. Don't let respondents choose a response that is neither positive nor negative. Make them decide. The responses you get will be more meaningful.

## **Organize your data**

Once you have conducted your questionnaires and/or interviews and completed your research, it's time to start analyzing and organizing the results and develop a preliminary outline of the project report/thesis. An outline as mentioned above can help you do this.

If you are using statistics, ensure you are using a valid sample. (The more respondents, the greater the validity of the sample)

Use the internet as a resource, recognizing its limitations. For instance, you could Google "How to design a survey" or similar questions to research how to do something you seldom do. If doing a project, then save all the materials you generate on the project to assist with writing your final report. Take notes to help you remember and to provide needed references.

Assemble your materials because now it's time to write your report. Organize notes according to the outline you prepared. If you include diagrams, organize them in a logical order so that they build on each other and depict the story you are trying to tell. When using factual material or the thoughts of others, be sure to give accurate and complete credit to the original author.

## **Appendices**

What to put in appendices – Tables of data you may have collected, lists of possible Scouting sponsors or supporters, information whose detail is not needed in the body, but may prove useful to other users, and so forth.

The format of your report is not that important – just **make sure that someone reading your work can find where you obtained your information.**

## **Write Your First Draft**

Reading your report aloud will make you experience the words more like others might and will give you a more objective view of your work. It adds a precheck layer to your proofreading and can make you think a bit more about whether the report makes sense. Saying it aloud makes it sound more real, which is your goal.



**Reread, Revise, Rewrite:**

In revising the first draft, ask yourself: Have I made my purpose clear? Are the major points of the thesis or project supported? Is my style too wordy? What expressions or words can be eliminated? What parts need to be rewritten for greater clarity?

Summarize or reemphasize the major point of your thesis or project and explain what conclusions you reached.

A handy tool to use as a guide in writing your final report is "The Language of Scouting ". It can be found here: <https://www.scouting.org/scoutsource/Media/LOS.aspx>.

**Download: Checklist for Editing Doctorate Project/Thesis Reports**

Ask someone to proofread your work and make suggestions for improvement. Revise as needed. Plan a meeting with your advisor to discuss your work and revise as necessary.

**Project/Thesis Submission Guidelines**

Once you have submitted your document, it will be reviewed by the council's doctoral review committee who will determine if the topic is appropriate, sufficiently focused, and worthwhile.

The thesis intends to improve some aspect of unit service. A project report may vary somewhat in form depending on its purpose; however, the following elements are appropriate 1

The project report/thesis should be submitted to the dean of the college of commissioner science or the doctoral review committee along with your Doctorate of Commissioner Science Knot Personal Progress Record.

**Download: Doctorate of Commissioner Science Personal Knot Tracking Record****Doctoral Review Committee**

The doctoral review committee shall be made up of the council commissioner (or designee), the college dean (or designee), and the dean of doctoral studies (or designee), and may include up to two (2) additional commissioners who have earned their doctorate for a maximum committee of five (5) individuals. The purpose of this committee is to use a group rather than one person to determine the legitimacy of the project or thesis. The candidate's advisor, however well-qualified, may not be part of this committee. The committee reviews all materials and informs the candidate whether a further revision is required.

If the project/thesis is accepted, the printed or electronic copy will become the property of the council's college of commissioner science and be placed in the college's document library and with proper recognition made available to all commissioners as a reference for future use. The Doctor of Commissioner Science certificate and Doctor of Commissioner Science knot are two separate recognitions, and will be conferred as the requirements for each recognition are met. Presentation of the recognitions will be at the discretion of the college dean and the learner.

**IMPORTANT NOTICE:** Some commissioners attend many different colleges of commissioner science to earn their degrees. The doctorate degree is specific to each council. To earn the Commissioner Knot Award, national requirements must be fulfilled. An out-of-council candidate must secure the approval of his/her council commissioner, complete the necessary requirements, and at the conclusion of the project, must have the council commissioner approve the project, sign the candidate's forms, and provide an appropriate venue to confer the Doctoral Degree and/or Knot Award.

## **Indian Waters Council Supplement to the Guidebook for Earning the Doctorate of Commissioner Science Degree**

This brief supplement was created to provide you, the person seeking to complete a Thesis or Project, with some help with the Guidebook. It also establishes what the Indian Waters Council approach is to completing this work, specifically as it applies to the final approval of the paper by the Doctoral Review Committee.

The Guidebook for Earning the Doctorate of Commissioner Science Degree and Doctorate of Commissioner Science Knot Award, or simply the Guidebook, is a very detailed guide to completing the Doctorate of Commissioner Science degree, and the Doctorate of Commissioner Science Knot Award. (They are *not* the same thing!) Following the Guidebook will make the process much more manageable and will help you through the roughest parts of the process.

The Guidebook takes a logical approach of stepping through earning the award. This Supplement will follow the Guidebook closely. If something is not addressed here, it's simply because it's so clearly called out in the Guidebook that there didn't seem to be a reason to go over it again.

### **Project/Thesis Advisor**

This section is clear, but this is just a reminder. Having an advisor from the beginning of the process will help you get through it in a much more straightforward way. Your advisor can help you through the process of defining your effort. Rely on them!

### **Degree Requirements for the College of Commissioner Science**

Just a reminder that courses you take outside of the Commissioner College program will likely not count toward a degree. This is explicitly called out by the Guidebook, in that classes taken at Scouting U (for example) will not be used for this program.

### **Doctorate of Commissioner Science Degree**

This is a copy from the Guidebook but is important enough to emphasize it. "The topic [of your project or thesis] must be pre-approved by the College of Commissioner Science Doctorate program dean or designee. The Council Commissioner or designee may authorize an alternate topic if it is deemed appropriate." When you are putting your ideas together for your paper, you'll want to have them approved by the dean. This will help ensure that you are on firm footing in terms of the topic.

### **Doctorate of Commissioner Science Knot Award**

While it is called out in the Guidebook, it bears repeating that earning the Doctorate of Commissioner degree does not earn the Knot Award. The requirements for the Knot Award are called out separately and are more challenging.

### **Selecting and Limiting the Scope of Your Doctoral Project or Thesis**

I really can't stress this too much. You don't want to try to boil the ocean! With your advisor, select a topic that will help unit service. You will want to identify a topic that is related to unit service, if possible. The Guidebook mentions the use of SMART goals in defining the topic of your paper. It's a good idea, and will you keep what you're doing focused.

## **Writing an outline**

I can't emphasize how much this will help you. Whether you've worked on lengthy papers in the past or not, starting with an outline will help you focus on what each section should be. There are sample outlines available in the Guidebook. Yes, you can deviate from those, but they are a great place to start! As a bonus, if you are using a word processing tool like Microsoft Word, creating your headings early will also auto-generate things like your table of contents. It's both a time saver and reduces the editing time by ensuring accuracy.

## **Research Sources**

You can use almost any credible resource for a source. As with any good academic effort, you'll want to give credit to the original authors from which you got the information. There are several different formats for how you will want to cite these references, but the important part is making sure that you give the original author the credit they deserve. If you're using somebody else's words, put them in quotes. It ensures that you won't be thought to have plagiarized the work.

## **Questionnaires and Interviews**

If you are planning to use questionnaires or interviews as part of your paper, it will always be in your best interest to have your questions reviewed by somebody who may not be familiar with your material. You may be so familiar with your material that you know what you're trying to ask—those questions may prove to be confusing for somebody else. This step will save you some pain when it comes to putting your materials together.

If you use the Internet as a resource, understand that it can have its limitations. The Internet is typically not reviewed by a third party, so the information you get may be highly skewed or totally inaccurate! Only use credible sites that provide accurate and complete information.

## **Group Projects**

While not specifically called out in the Guidebook, National has provided guidance concerning the requirement to work on a project by yourself. As with other single-person efforts, such as Eagle Projects and Wood Badge Tickets, this effort is only worked on by one person. An update to the Guidebook is forthcoming.

## **Doctoral Review Committee**

The Indian Waters Council (IWC) Doctoral Review Committee will be the body that considers your thesis or project. They will consider the content and the value of the paper. It's possible that the paper may be sent back for additional information or clarification. As this paper should be complete and accurate, this should just be considered part of the process and not a personal attack on your paper.

As a reminder, if a member of the Doctoral Review Committee is your Thesis or Project Advisor, they cannot be part of the review for your paper. Your paper will be submitted to the Dean, who will then distribute the paper for review by the Committee. Upon completion, the paper will become the property of the council's college of commissioner science and be placed in the college's document library and with proper recognition made available to all commissioners as a reference for future use.