

Doctorate of Commissioner Science Advisor's Guidebook



This Guidebook is to be used in conjunction with the “Guidebook & Indian Waters Council Supplement for Earning the Doctorate of Commissioner Science Degree and Doctorate of Commissioner Science Knot Award.”



Guidebook revision date: June 2026

Table of Contents

1. Why This Guidebook?	1
2. Appointment of an Advisor.....	1
3. Initial Advisor/Candidate Discussion	2
4. Where to Begin	2
5. Approval of the Proposed Project	2
6. Suggested Approach for the Candidate to Develop their Paper.....	3
7. Review and Editing of the Candidate's Product	3
8. Using the Personal Progress Record	3
9. Submission of the Paper for Final Review by the Project Review Committee	4
10. Paper Approval.....	4
11. Submission of the Approval of Entry in the Candidate's Training Record.....	4
12. Award of the Doctorate of Commissioner Science Knot Award.....	5
13. Conclusion	5
Appendix A, Current Advisors and Contact Information.....	A-1
Appendix B, Checklist for Editing Doctorate Project Reports	B-1

1. Why This Guidebook?

This short guidebook is intended to provide direction for the Scouter who holds a Doctorate of Commissioner Science and is serving as an “Advisor” for another Scouter who is a “Candidate” for the Doctorate of Commissioner Science. This guide should be used in conjunction with the “Doctorate and Knot Award Guidebook & IWC Supplement,” which is on the Indian Waters Council Commissioner Corner (<https://indianwaters.org/doctorate-of-commissioner-science-knot-award-2/>).

This guidebook is not intended to be an absolute set of directions concerning your role. Rather, it is intended to be a guide toward what you should be doing for the new doctoral candidate. The Guidebook will address a number of issues that will support the Doctorate candidate throughout his or her journey. For example:

- Discussion with the candidate while they are deciding what they want to do for a project
- How that effort should get initial approval of the proposed Project by the Project Review Committee
- Your role in editing and reviewing the Candidate’s paper
- Use of the DCS Knot Personal Tracking Record
- Your role in the submission of the paper to the Committee for final review.
- Finally, this guide will address the submission of the paperwork for the award of the Doctorate and will discuss how that award might be presented.

This effort takes time! It’s not unusual for the Advisor to work with a Candidate for a year—or longer—on this effort. Part of your role as the Advisor is, along with keeping your candidate focused, to act as a cheerleader. This is a lengthy effort, and as such, it may have to be temporarily set aside for other things. Keeping your candidate focused on the effort can be a challenge.

Not all holders of a Doctorate of Commissioner Science (DCS) will want to act as an Advisor. That’s completely understandable. It can be time-consuming! This Guide also includes holders of the degree at Appendix A, so pointing a candidate toward one of those degree holders in lieu of advising is just as valuable.

Before beginning this effort, both the Advisor and Candidate must understand that the Doctorate of Commissioner Science and the Doctorate of Commissioner Science Knot Award are *not* the same thing. The Doctorate of Commissioner Science is a required component of the Knot Award. While this project will complete the DCS, it will not complete the Knot Award.

2. Appointment of an Advisor

As an advisor, you may have been asked to take on this responsibility by the Dean of the Doctoral Program. Conversely, you may have been selected by the Candidate because of a personal relationship. Both are completely acceptable. The Advisor should be aware of what this

effort will entail. The Advisor must also recognize that they are in this role to help the Candidate through either the research and documentation of a project, coupled with the preparation of a write-up on the project. Both will take time and require ongoing coordination.

3. Initial Advisor/Candidate Discussion

The first meeting with the Candidate is about kicking off the project. It establishes roles and boundaries for what the Candidate and the Advisor will do over the course of the effort, and the goals for the effort. The Advisor is there to do just that: advise. They are not to write the final paper or develop the project, but to help the Candidate consider different options, understand what is required for the effort, and critically and honestly review the materials as they are developed. Ensuring that both parties understand what is expected will help establish the ground rules that both will work from.

During this meeting, the Candidate may have a solid idea about what he or she would like to accomplish. The discussion would then focus on how to solidify this idea in writing on the proposal form. On the other hand, the Candidate may have only the vaguest idea of what they want to do and may not have decided on a project. In that scenario, the Advisor can help the Candidate consider some different ideas and help the Candidate identify what they may be passionate about.

4. Where to Begin

Once the Candidate has crystallized what they want to do, then their next task is to complete the Project Proposal and Review Form. This fillable pdf form may be downloaded from the IWC Commissioner Corner at <https://indianwaters.org/doctorate-of-commissioner-science-knot-award-2/>. The goal of the form is two parts. First, it is to ensure that the Candidate has decided on a goal for the effort and can articulate what that effort will be. The second part is to give the Review Committee a solid understanding of the planned effort, which can help decide whether it is sufficiently service-oriented to meet the requirements laid out in the Doctorate and Knot Award Guidebook.

5. Approval of the Proposed Project

While the Guide for earning the Doctorate of Commissioner Science degree notes that the proposal for a project is to be approved by the Dean of the Doctoral program, Indian Waters Council has elected to have the Project Review Committee review the proposal. Following that review, the Advisor to the Council Commissioner, a professional, must also approve the proposal.

This ensures that there is a broader range of eyes on the proposal. This is especially valuable as the Review Committee has a wide range of Scouting experience, and nobody knows everything. Having the committee consider the proposal helps ensure that the proposal is both critically and fairly reviewed. This is in the best interest of the Candidate and removes any potential for personal bias that the Dean might hold, either for or against what the Candidate proposes.

6. Suggested Approach for the Candidate to Develop their Paper

As with any written effort, how a paper might be developed is very much personal taste on the part of the writer. Some authors just want to throw as much down as they can, and sort it out as they go. Other authors prefer to work more methodically, with a path laid out for the effort. Neither is wrong. However, if the Candidate has not written anything in some time, having a more defined path may help bring the project and/or paper together with less editing.

Another issue is the level of effort that will go into either the project. The project should be of a manageable size. It should not be so complex or time-consuming that it cannot be completed.

Again, there is no right or wrong way to write. There are some basic writing rules (most of which were learned in grade school). These include proper punctuation and grammar. It also includes readability. There are, however, some approaches to writing that will help keep the paper much tighter.

7. Review and Editing of the Candidate's Product

The project is to be developed and completed, but a paper describing the project must also be presented. In the case of the project, it will depend completely on what the Candidate is developing. If the Project is the development of written materials, then the Advisor will review them, and the final paper that is submitted for review. Relevance and good writing are required.

The Advisor should be critical of the deliverables. If the writing is sloppy, if the grammar and spelling are poor, or if the effort seems to meander, then the Advisor must be honest with the Candidate, and work with them to create a better product. (See Appendix B for guidelines concerning the editing of a paper.) As a reminder, the project paper becomes the property of the Council when completed and will be published in the Commissioner Corner with other papers.

The Advisor should also pay close attention to the checklist for editing in Appendix B. The Advisor must be aware of even accidental plagiarism, as that would seriously undermine the Candidate's work. Appropriate credit must be given for others' work. Regarding the structure of the document, current word processors will resolve issues identified in the "Editing" section of Appendix B. Word processors will manage issues such as page numbers aligning with section headings. This is much easier than trying to manually resolve this after the document is written, and will certainly make any post-writing edits more accurate. The style for the text should generally adhere to the section under Document Style of Appendix B.

8. Using the Personal Progress Record

The Progress Record for Doctorate of Commissioner Science Knot Award, which can be downloaded from the Commissioner Corner, is a fillable pdf that should be used to track the journey for this effort. It can be downloaded here, with other documents about the Doctorate of Commissioner Science Knot Award (<https://indianwaters.org/doctorate-of-commissioner-science-knot-award/>). It's a useful tool for tracking which courses have been taken, dates of certain required actions, such as the earning of the Arrowhead Honor Award (a prerequisite). The record will be attached to the application for the Knot Award, making it part of the record. If the

Candidate does not have an accurate record of courses taken, then the certificate or diploma for the Bachelor's and/or Masters of Commissioner Science can be used to document the number of courses taken.

9. Submission of the Paper for Final Review by the Project Review Committee

The paper should be submitted in pdf format, which allows all members of the Review Committee to view it, regardless of the reviewers' computer platform. The paper should be submitted by the Advisor to the Dean of the Doctoral program (see Appendix A for the Dean's contact information), ensuring that the paper is prepared with a review sheet and submitted to the Review Committee. The paper is reviewed by the members of the Committee, making any recommendations for update, or simply approving the paper.

Should the Advisor also be a member of the Review Committee, the Advisor will not vote on approval of the paper, nor will the Advisor make any "off the record" recommendations on the paper. The submitted paper stands on its own, and approval or lack of approval will be based on the opinions of the Committee, all of whom must hold a Doctorate of Commissioner Science.

10. Paper Approval

Indian Waters Council has a standing committee for the review of Doctorate submissions. The Project Review Committee has the sole responsibility to review and accept or decline submissions for the requirements for a Doctorate of Commissioner Science. All members of the Committee must already hold the Doctorate of Commissioner Science.

Once the submission has been forwarded to the Review Committee by the Dean, the Project Report paper, will be reviewed in a round-robin format by all members of the Committee. Should the paper require additional work, the member(s) making the recommendation(s) will advise the Dean, who will coordinate with the Advisor. If the members of the Committee approve the paper, then the Dean will process as spelled out in Section 11, below.

Should the paper need additional work, the Advisor will work to overcome any identified deficiencies with the Candidate. Once completed, the paper will again be submitted, and the process will be repeated.

11. Submission of the Approval of Entry in the Candidate's Training Record

Following final approval of the project paper by the Committee, and confirmation that all prerequisites have been completed, the Dean will advise the Council Commissioner (the President of the Commissioner College) that the requirements for the degree have been completed. (Should the Candidate be from another council, the Dean will provide the documentation to the Council Commissioner of the Candidate's home council. Upon approval of the Council Commissioner and the Advisor to the Council Commissioner, a professional Scouter, the Dean will then let the Advisor know that the paper has been accepted, and the Doctoral

degree may be awarded. The Advisor will let the Candidate know that he or she has been awarded the Doctorate of Commissioner Science, and that a suitable presentation event will be arranged.

The Dean will also submit the completed form to the Indian Waters Council Training Committee Chair for entry into the Candidates' training records. (If the Dean can update training records, this step may be skipped.)

12. Award of the Doctorate of Commissioner Science Knot Award

Finally, the big day has arrived! The Candidate has completed the required number of courses, has completed the prerequisites, and has had their project approved. Now it is time to actually award the Doctorate.

There is no set requirement concerning how it can be awarded, but this should be recognized as a major milestone in a commissioner's education. It should be acknowledged. As with any academic effort, the ideal situation is to award the Doctorate at the Commissioner College. This accomplishes two things. First, it recognizes the Commissioner in front of his or her peers. Given the level of effort involved, this is completely appropriate. Second, it gives commissioners who are still working on their Doctorate a sense that there is light at the end of the tunnel. (It would be completely appropriate to present the knot to the Candidate immediately upon completion of all requirements and approval of the Doctorate, even if the formal presentation is to be made at the Commissioner College. It has been earned, and the immediate recognition is very worthwhile.)

But as much as this might be the "best" approach in many circumstances, it is not the only one. The commissioner may have relocated, in which case, coordination with the gaining council may be the best approach. Or, the Candidate may be based out of a council that does not have a Doctoral program, in which case the home council will likely make the presentation after it has been completed at Indian Waters Council. The commissioner may really be very uncomfortable with a public presentation, as the attention could be undesirable. In that case, a much smaller presentation may be made, perhaps with only the Council Commissioner. The commissioner may want the presentation to include family, in which case the Commissioner College may not be ideal. This is not a one-size-fits-all decision, and the commissioner's preference should be considered.

For considerations concerning the presentation of awards, the Advisor should consider reviewing the Indian Waters "Guidebook for Approving, Presenting, and Documenting Adult Awards" (<https://indianwaters.org/awards/>). This Guide is useful in terms of ideas concerning how awards should be made and documented.

13. Conclusion

As noted at the beginning of this guidebook, other than the requirements for the processing of a Project, this document is not a set of absolute requirements. It is a *guide*. If you are undertaking the role of an Advisor, hopefully, it has shed some light on your role as an advisor. If you have any questions, you should reach out to the Dean of the Doctoral program for clarification.

Appendix A, Current Advisors and Contact Information

Current holders of the Doctor of Commissioner Science Knot Award who can act as an advisor. This list is subject to change with the availability of the Advisors.

- Diane Bauer, Council Commissioner
- Lee Doty, Assistant Council Commissioner
- Curt Nellis, Roundtable Commissioner
- Ed Reynolds, Assistant Council Commissioner

The current Dean of the Doctoral program is Lee Doty, Assistant Council Commissioner. He can be reached by email at leedoty@commissionerbsa.com or by phone at 703-395-5861. The current President of the College of Commissioner Science is Diane Bauer, Council Commissioner. She can be reached at dianebauersc@gmail.com or by phone at 843-251-6492.

Appendix B, Checklist for Editing Doctorate Project Reports

Note that a major portion of this checklist was copied from the Scouting.org website, and can be found at <https://www.scouting.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/4-Checklist-for-Editing-Doctorate-Project-Thesis-Reports.pdf>

General Purpose Editing

- Is the purpose clear?
- Is the paragraphing correct?
- Is each paragraph unified and coherent?
- Are the paragraphs clearly related to one another?
- Are the sentences varied in structure?
- Can a sentence be better written? Avoid passive language.
- Is the style too wordy? Avoid long and run-on sentences.
- Can expressions or words be eliminated?
- Is punctuation needed to make the meaning clearer?
- Does any part need to be rewritten for greater clarity?
- Does it read well? Does the paper appear to follow a logical order?
- Does the Candidate give proper credit for others' words, i.e., no plagiarism?
- If references were used—and they should be—were they accurately cited?

Document Style

- For consistency, the following style standard should be applied to all submissions:
 - All submissions should be in 12-point Times New Roman. Headings may be in a larger font, typically 14-point. Cover pages may have different styles and graphics.
 - Line spacing should be double-spaced within paragraphs, with double spacing between paragraphs.
 - Margins should consistently be 1 inch on all sides. Text blocks would be indented.
 - “Widows and Orphans” control should be applied to paragraphs. This is a standard setting.
 - All attachments and tables should have an appropriate caption.
 - References should be appropriately cited.

Editing in Preparation for Publication (Written or Electronic)

- Compare the Table of Contents with headers.

- Ensure proper header formatting throughout.
- Ensure correct margins throughout the paper.
- Use of color should be conservative and appropriate.
- Is there subject/verb agreement throughout the document?
- Tables and columns can be difficult to interpret if not properly formatted.
- Are all words spelled correctly? Ensure your spell check is on. Search for common misspellings or improperly formatted words. Use the Language of Scouting as a reference.
- Ensure footers and page numbering are consistent.
- Some topics require chronological order. (Not in order: He became President – He died – He was born)
- The original document submitted to the Review Committee will be submitted in a pdf format.