

Guidance on the Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Scouting Advancement

Chester County Council Advancement Committee, August 2026

AI Disclosure: The Chester County Council Advancement Committee used Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools to assist in the drafting, organization, editing, and refinement of this guidance document. Final review, evaluation, and approval of the content were completed by members of the Advancement Committee.

Scouts and Scouters,

Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools are becoming a common part of everyday life. Many Scouts and adults already use AI through search engines, writing tools, navigation applications, grammar checkers, educational software, code writing, and online research tools. Scouting America also recognizes the growing importance of AI through initiatives such as the Artificial Intelligence Merit Badge and Scouting America’s AI chatbot *Scoutly*.

As technology evolves, it is important that Scouts learn to use these tools responsibly, ethically, and in a manner consistent with the Scout Oath and Scout Law.

Section 5.0.8.0 of the *Guide to Advancement 2025, Using Technology-Based Tools in Advancement*, states:

“Generative artificial intelligence and other tools (spell checkers, grammar checkers, autofill, etc.) may be used by a Scout to assist with written requirements, but their use must be fully disclosed to the person reviewing the work, and the final output must be the Scout’s own original work.”

This guidance is intended to help Scouts, parents, merit badge counselors, unit leaders, and advancement volunteers understand the appropriate use of AI in Scouting advancement activities. From a definition perspective, please note that generative artificial intelligence includes such frequently used platforms as ChatGPT, Claude, Google Gemini, and Microsoft Copilot.

Guiding Principle

AI should be used as a tool to support learning, communication, organization, and research—not as a substitute for a Scout’s own work, leadership, thinking, or participation.

A Scout may use AI only if:

- The Scout understands and can explain the content.
- The work primarily reflects the Scout’s own ideas, effort, and learning.

- The Scout is honest and transparent about how AI was used.

Advancement in Scouting is intended to develop character, citizenship, leadership, critical thinking, and personal growth. AI tools should support these goals—not replace them.

Appropriate Uses of AI in Scouting Advancement

Examples of acceptable AI use may include:

- Brainstorming ideas for projects or activities
- Research assistance
- Grammar and spelling review
- Formatting suggestions
- Creating outlines or organizational structures
- Helping organize schedules, materials, or task lists
- Translation assistance
- Assisting with presentations or visual aids
- Generating practice questions for learning
- Exploring career fields or merit badge topics
- Supporting trip planning or navigation preparation
- Helping Scouts better understand concepts or terminology

AI tools may be used similarly to spell checkers, calculators, research aids, or educational support tools—as long as the Scout remains the primary learner, author, planner, and decision-maker.

Ask yourself this question: “Would I ask a parent or teacher to do for me what I am asking AI to do for me?” If the answer is no, this use of AI might not be appropriate.

Advancement Areas Where AI May Be Used Carefully

Merit Badges

AI may assist Scouts with:

- Researching merit badge topics
- Understanding concepts
- Organizing notes
- Reviewing written work
- Practicing interview or presentation skills

However, Scouts must still:

- Personally complete all requirements
- Demonstrate their own understanding
- Participate actively in discussions, activities, and hands-on learning

- Complete all observations, experiments, service, leadership, and field work themselves

Merit badge counselors should continue to evaluate the Scout's personal knowledge, effort, and participation.

Eagle Scout Service Projects

AI may assist with:

- Research
- Brainstorming
- Formatting
- Scheduling
- Organizational support
- Editing suggestions

However, the Proposal, Final Plan, and Project Report must reflect the Scout's own leadership, planning, communication, problem-solving, experience, lessons learned, and personal effort.

The Eagle Scout Service Project is intended to demonstrate leadership and initiative—not the ability to generate polished AI content.

Statements, Reflections, and Personal Essays

Personal statements and narratives—including the Statement of Ambitions and Life Purpose, reflections, or similar written requirements—should represent the Scout's authentic voice, experiences, goals, and values. *AI should not write personal statements and narratives on behalf of a Scout.*

Limited assistance such as grammar review or formatting suggestions may be appropriate.

Unacceptable Uses of AI

Examples of inappropriate AI use include, but are not limited to:

- Writing entire or portions of reports, essays, or advancement submissions
- Generating personal reflections or experiences
- Replacing the Scout's own analysis, planning, or leadership
- Completing requirements on behalf of the Scout
- Submitting AI-generated content as original work
- Misrepresenting the Scout's effort or understanding
- Using AI in a way that bypasses learning, participation, or skill development
- Using AI without required parent, guardian, or adult leader knowledge and approval

The purpose of advancement is growth through personal effort and experience.

Disclosure and Transparency

Scouts must disclose significant AI assistance to the appropriate adult leader, merit badge counselor, project coach, or board of review.

Examples of significant AI assistance may include, but are not limited to:

- Research support
- Outline generation
- Organizational assistance
- Editing recommendations
- Presentation development

Transparency demonstrates honesty, responsibility, and trustworthiness.

Guidance for Parents and Adult Leaders

Parents, guardians, unit leaders, merit badge counselors, and advancement volunteers should help Scouts learn responsible and ethical technology use while ensuring that advancement remains Scout-led.

Adults should encourage:

- Honest disclosure
- Critical thinking
- Verification of facts and safety information
- Responsible use of technology
- Understanding of AI limitations and inaccuracies
- Personal accountability and participation

AI should support learning and growth—not replace it.

If Concerns Arise About AI Use

If an adult leader, counselor, advancement volunteer, or board of review believes that AI may have replaced substantial portions of a Scout's original work, the recommended approach is to:

- Speak directly with the Scout
- Discuss how AI was used
- Confirm the Scout understands and can explain the content
- Reinforce expectations regarding integrity and personal effort
- Request revisions or additional demonstration of knowledge if necessary

This conversation should be handled as a teaching opportunity consistent with Scouting values.

Important Reminder About AI

AI tools are not always accurate. Scouts should critically evaluate all AI-generated information and verify facts, instructions, safety guidance, and recommendations using reliable sources and adult supervision when appropriate.

Scouts remain responsible for all work submitted as part of advancement requirements, regardless of whether AI tools were used.

FAQs

1. A Life Scout has submitted the most complete Eagle Project Proposal that I have ever read. When asked about some of the proposal details, the Scout did not seem to know the answers and then admitted that AI wrote nearly all of the Proposal. What do I, a proposal approver, do?

Answer: AI cannot write the entire proposal, generate core project content, nor replace a Scout's personal thinking and planning. The core work must be the Scout's and the Scout needs to understand and be able to explain every aspect of the Eagle Proposal. Further, a Scout must disclose where AI was used. You would explain this to the Scout and require the Scout to rewrite the entire proposal in their own words.

2. I received a Statement of Ambitions and Life Purpose from one of my Scouts and it sounds nothing like the Scout. When I asked the Scout about the statement, the Scout admitted that AI wrote it. What do I, the Scoutmaster, do?

Answer: Have a direct conversation with the Scout about the importance of personal integrity and that the Statement of Ambitions and Life Purpose should represent the Scout's authentic voice, experiences, goals, and values. Request the Scout to rewrite the statement in their own words expressing their own personal Ambitions and Life Purpose.

Final Thought

Artificial Intelligence can be a valuable tool for research, organization, communication, and learning. However, Scouting advancement is fundamentally about character, citizenship, leadership, service, personal growth, and integrity.

Every advancement requirement should ultimately reflect the Scout's own effort, understanding, leadership, and values.

Lastly, AI and its use are part of a rapidly changing landscape. Implementation of AI, and AI-governing policies such as this one, will evolve.