

# Special Interest Badges

Special Interest badges are one part of the Youth programme. They are used in conjunction with the Adventure Skills and Personal Challenges. In the Special Interest Badge the Youth member takes into account their personal hobbies and interests. They can use them to acquire a new interest/ hobby/ skill or develop an interest / hobby / skill they already have. They should then be able to share their interest / skill with others and help them acquire / develop it.

Special Interest Badges span five areas

1. Personal Skill
2. Physical / Recreation
3. Community Involvement
4. Environment
5. Adventure Journey / Expedition

**Personal Skill** – this can be to acquire a new skill or develop an existing one – e.g. drama, cooking, painting.

**Physical / Recreation** – any physical pursuit or activity – eg athletics, caving, archery.

**Community Involvement** – a service project – e.g. current affairs, guide, tidy towns.

**Environment** – anything which improves / protects the environment – e.g. animal welfare, nature reserve.

**Adventure** – journey to a new location / country – sailing, bivvy adventure, overseas development.

There is no required standard with Special Interest Badges. The Youth member decides which Special Interest Badge they want to do. They go to their Scouter and decide in consultation with the Scouter what their challenge will be. They pick the project, decide what they will achieve and how. Personal Challenges will help them

In consultation with their Scouter, a mentor will help and guide them while undertaking the badge. The mentor may be a Scouter in the Section or in another Section, a Youth member from another Section, or a parent with a particular skill. The mentor will help the Youth member with their challenges and encourage them to strive to do better or raise their standard. Youth members from the same Section could be doing the same badge but totally different projects and achieving different outcomes.

All Special Interest Badges will follow the Programme Cycle: Plan – Do – Review. A template is provided ([www.scouts.ie](http://www.scouts.ie)) to help them set their plan, aim and which Personal Challenges can help them. They can choose another method to record their Special Interest badge eg. a diary or poster.

The most important thing is to encourage them to cover all aspects described on the template.

A Youth member may do up to three badges in the same Special Interest area. They should be encouraged to complete the five areas before moving on to start again. There will be one badge design for each area and will identify if it is the first, second or third badge in that area. The areas will not follow a set pattern in the overall badge but will show which area each Youth member did, enforcing "My Journey".



Adventure



Community



Environment



Physical



Skills

Sample projects and a list of ideas in the areas are given to help Youth members and Scouters to get ideas. Youth members should be encouraged to devise their own projects and to come up with new ideas. It will help youth members if at first they pick Special Interest Badges from areas they are best in or already show an interest in.

Special Interest Badges will help Youth members achieve their Chief Scout's Award if they wish to complete it. In the Scout, Venture and Rover Sections Special Interest Badges will help Youth members achieve their Gaisce Award or Duke of Edinburgh Award.