TEXAS AWARD FOR PERFORMANCE EXCELLENCE

TEAM LEADER PROCESS MANUAL

VERSION 3.0
NOVEMBER 2015

QUALITY TEXAS

Encouraging and recognizing excellence

Team Leader Core Processes

Page

Stage 0 – Preparation

Before the "real" work of being a Team Leader begins, some preliminary preparation is necessary. Examiners must complete the following four steps to qualify as a Quality Texas Foundation Team Leader for the Texas Award for Performance Excellence (TAPE).

Back-up Team Leaders have two primary roles. First, they must be prepared at any time to step up and fill the role of Team Leader. Family emergencies and unexpected business travel have forced this situation many times in the Foundation's history. Second, the Back-up Team Leader fills leadership roles on the team as specified and directed by the Team Leader. These roles will differ depending on the team, the Applicant, and the Team Leader's judgment.

Step 1: Complete Training

Depending on the experience of the individual, examiners must complete differing levels of training.

- New Examiners – Should attend the three-day Pre-Examiner Course
- Examiner Training -
  - New Examiners attend three days of training to learn the TAPE process and procedures.
  - Returning Examiners attend three days of Examiner training and serve as table anchors.
- Team Leader Training
- Site Visit Strategy Development and Team Preparation
  - All Team Leaders participate in this telephone call prior to the site visits.

Step 2: Qualify as a Team Leader

The Quality Texas Foundation chooses Team Leaders based on the responses of the application, successful completion of training, ability to work cooperatively with others, overall values, knowledge of the Criteria, and leadership potential. Course instructors and Quality Texas staff make these determinations, and appoint Team Leaders accordingly.

Step 3: Understand and Adhere to the Code of Ethics

Quality Texas asked each Team Leader to sign a statement indicating they fully understand, and will comply with, the Quality Texas Foundation (QTF) Code of Ethics. This is the most important part of the preparation Stage. The Team Leader must fully understand and internalize these values. The QTF Code of Ethics embodies the highest ethics and character, and demonstrating these values supports the integrity of the process. As a Team Leader, you will serve as an ambassador of the QTF and a role model for performance excellence leadership.

Verify Independence

The Team Leader will receive an email notification following assignment to an Applicant. The email will address how to access scorebook navigator and make sure there is not a conflict of interest with the Applicant. Follow these steps to make this determination carefully:

1. Look at the application on scorebook navigator and seek the name of the Applicant. To lead the team, there must be complete independence from the Applicant. For example, the Team Leader must not:
   a. Know any of the Applicant's Senior Leaders.
   b. Be a stakeholder of the organization, financially or otherwise.
   c. Be able to benefit in any way from contact with, or knowledge of, the operations of the Applicant.
   d. Be in an organization that is in the supply chain of the Applicant, or that uses a key supplier in the Applicant's supply chain.
   e. Be in an organization that is a customer of the Applicant.
   f. Be in an organization that supplies, or is supplied by, a competitor of the Applicant.
   g. Be employed by a competitor of the Applicant.

2. Read the Eligibility Certification Form at the front of the application The Eligibility Certification Form is located in the first few pages of the overall application.
3. Review all organization charts in the application and look for names of people you may know.
4. Read the Organizational Profile completely before determining if a conflict of interest exists.
5. If you think that you may have a conflict of interest with the Applicant, contact the Quality Texas Foundation, Dr. Mac at 512-656-8946 by voice or text immediately to report the potential conflict.
6. When you know there is no conflict notify the QTF Dr. Mac by voice or by text. You as the team leader will be responsible to check with all the other team members by email to make sure they do not have a conflict.
7. You are now ready to begin Stage 1 Independent Review, and your Team Leader experience will commence.

Texas Award for Performance Excellence (TAPE)
Award Level Application Review Process

The Texas Award for Performance Excellence (TAPE) Award Level Application Review Process is outlined in Figure 1 below. The Board of Examiners performs three critical Stages in this process, namely:

Stage 1 – Independent Review

Stage 2 – Consensus Review

Stage 3 – Site Visit

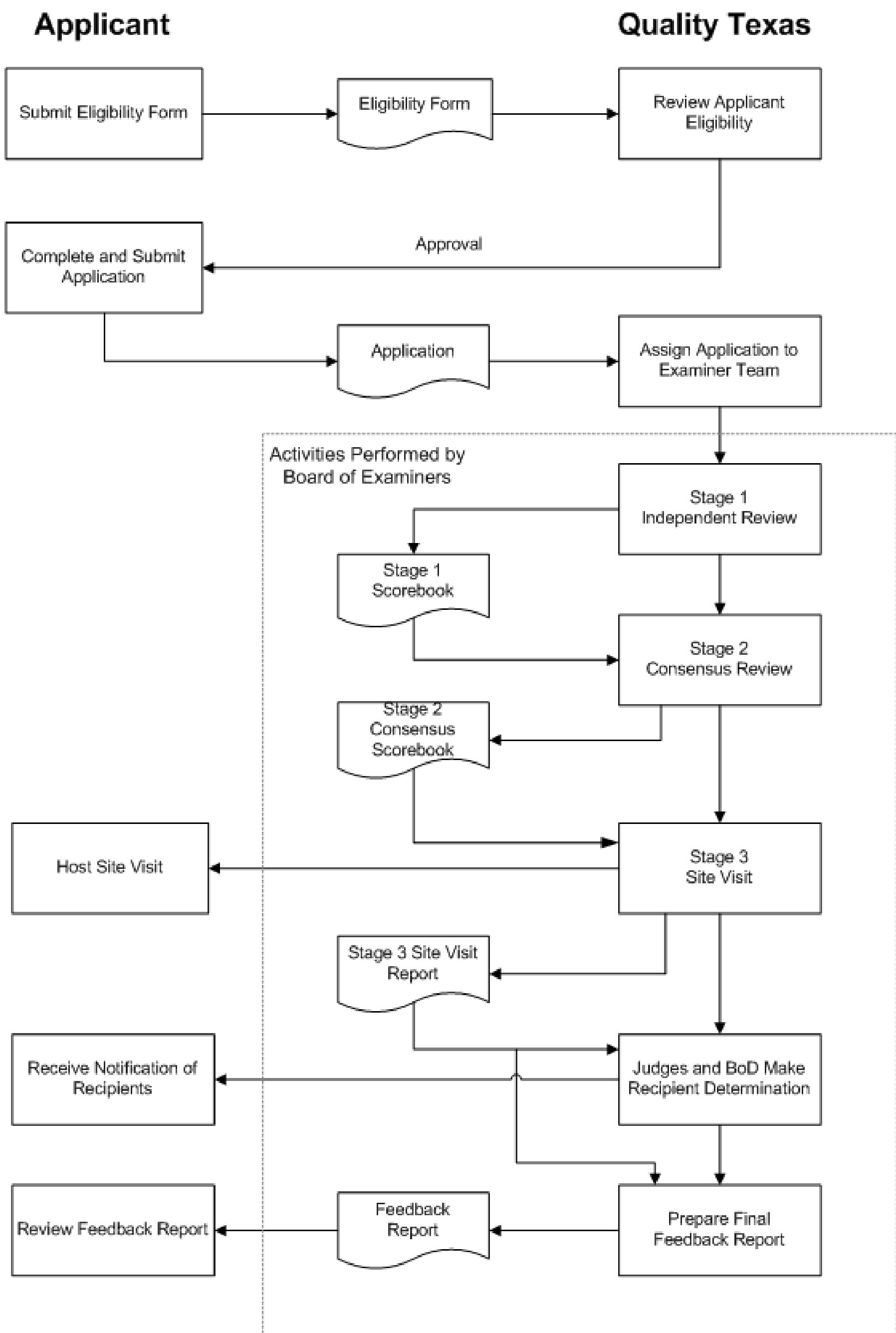

Figure 1. Award Level Application Review Process

Stage 1 – Independent Review

Introduction

Independent review is the first Stage of evaluation of Applicants for the Texas Award for Performance Excellence (TAPE). During Stage 1, a team of Examiners, each working independently, reviews an application. Each Examiner reads the application, writes observations about Strengths and Opportunities for Improvement (OFI's) in the Scorebook, and scores the Applicant's response to each Item against the Criteria.

Stage 1 begins when individual Examiners receive a copy of an application packet from Quality Texas. The primary purpose of this Stage is to ensure that Examiners, with diverse views and perspectives, independently review and score each TAPE application. Stage 1 ends when the completed Stage 1, Independent Review Scorebook, is marked done by the team leader on the scorebook navigator site. The Team Leader can expect to spend 40 to 60 hours on this Stage.

The Team Leader has several customers during Stage 1:

1. <u>Other team members</u>:

   At Stage 2, each of the other team members will be required to analyze each assigned Item. The Team Leader is also available to respond to other team members who have questions on the review process. Be careful not to reveal the identities of other team members during these consultations. The Team leader also compensates for any weaknesses on the team. If an Examiner does a poor job in Stage 1, the Team Leader spends additional time making it right for the others by coaching techniques.

2. <u>Feedback Writer</u>:

   The Feedback Writer does not spend time re-writing a well-conceived comment. However, they are required to re-write comments that are not on target.

3. <u>Panel of Judges</u>:

   The Judges eventually review the team's work in their responsibility for evaluating potential award recipients.

4. <u>Quality Texas Foundation</u>:

   The Foundation presents your work as its own.

5. <u>The Applicant</u>:

   The Applicant is the end-user of the product you are creating.

The Team Leader must complete 15 Process Steps during Stage 1. The Examiner Process Manual documents the same steps that all Examiners follow; however, each step below outlines additional Team Leader responsibilities. A timeline will be sent by email to the entire team but the Team Leader has the responsibility to follow it and guide the team.

Step 1: Study the Application

1. As Team Leader, you will need to become an expert on the application. You should know the application better than the rest of the team, as you will be helping the other Examiners through their assigned Items.
2. The notes or highlighted points you make in the application will be useful as you help fellow team members in the next two Stages.
3. One method is as follows but each Team Leader should determine what works best for them. Colored highlighters. This is for consideration if you do not have your own methodology. Your color-coded application may save a lot of time during Stage 2 as you help the team members through this Stage of the process. For example, some Team Leaders use:
   - Yellow for a potential Key Factor
   - Green for a potential Strength
   - Red for a potential OFI
   - Blue for a potential Key Theme
4. Pay special attention to potential Key Themes because you will be leading their identification in all Stages of the process. You must take the broadest view of the Applicant since the other team members will be focusing mainly on their assigned Items.
5. Answer the team's questions. You will receive contact information about the team early in Stage 1. Contact them by voice or email and let them know you can answer their questions about the process. Send weekly emails through Stage 1 to check on examiners' progress and to provide reminders of what they should be doing each week.

   It is good to request a copy of Category 1 at the time on the calendar that indicates it should be complete. That will allow you to check the progress and quality of each examiner's work. Setting due dates for posting sections of the scorebook to match the calendar is a good way of ensuring that individual examiners are on course and sets the expectation that the scorebook will be completed on time.

   The Process Coach, a former team leader, may also serve as a support for you and examiners during this stage.
6. Send an introductory e-mail to the Team. The e-mail will contain the following:
   - Your completed biography
   - A blank biography form
   - A block of dates viable for the pre-consensus phone call
   - A calendar-mechanism for the team members to mark their available and unavailable dates for the pre-consensus call

- A format for the team members to be able to mark their Item preferences as first, second, and third

Step 2: Identify Key Factors

The Team Leader needs to pay special attention to the Key Factors for two main reasons. First, the Team Leader must always keep these in mind to guide the other team members in making the right strength and OFI assessments. Second, the Team Leader will be assimilating everyone else's Key Factors and presenting a consensus list at the beginning of Stage 2. The Team Leader's consolidated Key Factors list will be the only list used for the remainder of the review of the application.

Step 3: Compare the Application to the Criteria

Continue making notes during this step to advance your leadership in mastery of the Applicant's position against the Criteria.

Step 4: Identify Potential Comments **for Process Items**

1. Marking (+), (-), (++), and (--) symbols in the application and the Criteria book will save you and the team members time in the next Stage. Remind the team about using NERD when writing comments.
2. You may identify 30 to 50 potential comments during this step. The more the better, as the pre-thinking may be helpful during points in Stage 2 when potential comments in an Item begin to fall away through the consensus process.
3. Pay special attention to *Learnin*g, and *Integration* in the ADLI cycle. Some of the less experienced Examiners will benefit from your insights in these areas, especially as they apply to more mature applicants.

Step 5: Determine Scoring Ranges for Process Items

Take care in developing the scoring ranges. The Judges look at the team's Stage 1 scores.

Step 6: Select Comments for Process Items

Attend carefully in selecting the 4-6 comments to write. The other Examiners often look at the Team Leader's scorebook first when developing a consensus proposal for an Item.

Step 7: Write Comments for Process Items

Remember that a new Examiner may have a tendency to use a Team Leader's comments as a basis for a consensus proposal comments. Thus, it is important that your Stage 1 assessments address the application well.

Step 8: Score Results Items

Take care in developing the score. The Judges study the Team's Stage 1 scores.

Step 9: Identify Potential comments for Results Items

1. Using the +/- method next to each graph for levels, trends, and comparisons will enable you to help the other team members in Stage 2. You may also want to use (C) or (S) for comparisons and segmentation.
2. Pay special attention to comparisons, linkages, gaps, and, segmentation, as inexperienced Examiners often miss some of these areas.

Step 10: Determine Scoring Ranges for Results Items

Take care in developing the scoring ranges. The Judges study the Team Leader's Stage 1 scores in detail.

Step 11: Select Comments for Results Items

Attend carefully in selecting the 4-6 comments to write. The other Examiners often look at the Team Leader's scorebook first when developing a consensus proposal for an Item.

Step 12: Write Comments for Results Items

Remember that a new Examiner may have a tendency to use a Team Leader's comments as a basis for a consensus proposal comments. Thus, it is important that your Stage 1 assessments be very good.

Step 13: Score Results Items

Take care in developing the score. The Judges study the Team's Stage 1 scores.

Step 14: Identify and Write Key Themes

Spend considerable time on this section. You will be responsible for Key Themes through all the Stages of the process and doing a good job here will save a lot of time in Stages 2 and 3.

Step 15: Compile Scores

Check and recheck your score. Again, the Judges look at the Team Leader score more closely than Stage 1 scores for the rest of the team.

Stage 2 – Consensus Review

Introduction

Consensus review is the second Stage of evaluation of Applicants for the Texas Award for Performance Excellence (TAPE). During Stage 2, a team of Examiners jointly reviews each application. Typically, the Consensus Team consists of individuals who participated in the Stage 1 Independent Review. During Consensus Review, the Team Leader assigns Examiners as Category-Item Leads and Back-up Category-Item Champions.

Each Examiner develops a Stage 1 scorebook on the Scorebook Navigator web-based system. At the beginning of Stage 2, the Team Leader will open a new team scorebook on the Scorebook Navigator using the Team Leader's scorebook. Category-Item Champions will merge (copy and paste) comments from all scorebooks into a new document for individual categories through use of the Scorebook Navigator.

Examiners then synthesize comments and prepare 4-6 well-written comments that represent the best collective thoughts of the team. The Category Champion places synthesized comments into the Stage 2 scorebook on the Scorebook Navigator for the consensus call.

Back-up Category-Item Champions review the proposed synthesized comments for their assigned Category-Item leads to ensure that the intent observations address all major points of the Criteria Item without going beyond the Criteria requirements. The full team then achieves consensus on the comment synthesis, revised score, and site visit issues to verify strengths and clarify OFI's. The customers for this process are the same as those for Stage 1. It is important that Examiners come to the consensus meeting VERY well prepared, or the other Examiners on the team will have a difficult—and time consuming—experience.

Some Team Leaders serve a role as a Category or Item Champion. When this is the case, they follow the procedures given in the Examiner Process manual. The procedures below are additional and relate to the Team Leader role only.

The Team Leader must complete 16 Process Steps during Stage 2.

Step 1: Ensure All Scorebooks Stage 1 Independent Review Are Posted on Scorebook Navigator

1. Each Examiner needs to complete their Stage 1 scorebook on the Scorebook Navigator by the due date established by the Quality Texas Foundation (QTF).
2. If any are delinquent, you must contact the Examiner and pursue the material. (Conduct follow-up after every due date throughout the process.)
3. You should let the QTF know this has occurred and seek their help, if necessary, to contact the Examiner.
4. If the late scorebook is not forthcoming, contact the QTF to discuss replacing/discharging the Examiner on/from the team.

Step 2: Send Introductory E-mail to the Team

1. You will prepare the first Stage 2 e-mail to the team after the posting of all the Stage 1 scorebooks.
2. The e-mail will contain the following:
   a. Welcome to the team
   b. The Team Leader must post all examiner bios, list of team members with emails and phone numbers (work, home, cell), list of Category Champions and Back-ups, and other items of information.
   c. A date for the pre-consensus phone call (1-2 hours)
   d. A date for the consensus call (4-8 hours) over three days
   e. A calendar of due dates for synthesized intent observations, review by back-up category leads, and posting on the Scorebook Navigator
   f. An invitation for any team member to provide a teleconference number for the Pre-Consensus call or receive call in numbers from QTF.
3. As Team Leader and the primary coach for the team, your availability will provide necessary guidance and support for the team, especially new Examiners. It is not advisable, for example, to be available for contact only through work email Monday through Friday. Team members may need to contact you at any time on any day as they work through the process.
4. There will be a Process Coach (PC) assigned to each team that will serve as assistance to the Team Leader. The PC is not the Team Leader and will not take over the team, they will only provide advice and make sure the Team Leader is following the QTF approved process.

Step 3: Schedule Pre-Consensus Call and Send Next E-mail to the Team

1. If a team member did not offer to host the call, contact QTF Dr. Mac (drmac@quality-texas.org) or Lin (linwrinkle@quality-texas.org) for a number to use.
2. This e-mail should contain:
   a. The date and time for the call
   b. The call-in number for everyone to use with a thank-you to the organization hosting the call
3. At any step in the process where a target date is involved, you may need to follow up with an Examiner. Always contact QTF if you cannot contact the person.
4. You will find it helpful to take notes on which Examiners are on time for each deliverable, and who is tardy. Some Team Leaders keep a running spreadsheet on

this. These data are handy for Stage 3. As a Team Leader, you should know which Examiners always meet timelines and which may need more guidance and support.

5. If a team member is chronically late through the process, contact the Foundation for a discussion on whether the Examiner should continue as part of the team.

Step 4: Select Item Assignments for the Team

1. In selecting the Items for team members, use the following Criteria:
    a. Consider what is best for the applicant.
    b. Consider what is best for QTF.
    c. Consider what is best for the team.
    d. Consider what is best for the team member.
2. Consider how many Examiners you have when making the selections. There are 17 Items to divide among the team. Try to divide the Items equally among the members. This may help you decide whether to assign any Items to yourself. If you are an experienced Team Leader, you may wish to take one or two Items. Team Leaders must be flexible and prepared since the need to pick up an Item at some point in the process can and does happen when extenuating circumstances arise.

    If you are a new Team Leader, you may wish to focus only on the Team Leader responsibilities.

    a. The advantage to taking an Item yourself is that it keeps you actively in the application and allows you to lead by example during the consensus review.
    b. The disadvantage to taking an Item is that it leaves less time for you to focus on the additional Team Leader responsibilities you have.
3. When Team Leaders decide to take Items, they often select 1.1 and 7.5, since these typically involve interaction with the Applicant's senior management.
4. Many Team Leaders make a matrix of the Items and the Examiners to aid in the selection process. Adjustments may need to be accomplished dependent upon the number of Examiners and the size and complexity of the applicant. Category Item breakdowns may work as suggested below.

Category	Primary	Back-Up
Examiner 1	1.0 and 7.4	2.0 and 7.5
Examiner 2	2.0 and 7.5	1.0 and 7.4
Examiner 3	3.0 and 7.2	5.0 and 7.3
Examiner 4	5.0 and 7.3	3.0 and 7.2
Examiner 5	4.0	6.0 and 7.1
Examiner 6	6.0 and 7.1	4.0
Examiner 7 BUTL	1.0, 2.0, 3.0, 7.2, 7.4, 7.5	4.0, 5.0, 6.0, 7.1, 7.3
Examiner 8 BUTL	4.0, 5.0, 6.0, 7.1, 7.3	1.0, 2.0, 3.0, 7.2, 7.4, 7.5
Examiner 9 TL	None specifically but reviews all	None specifically but reviews all

5. You should consider the following in your determinations:
    a. The education of the Examiner: One with a math degree may be a good for Category 6. One with a computer science degree may be good for Category 4.
    b. The experience of the Examiner: An HR Manager may be a good choice for Category 5. Someone that has been involved in strategy development may be good for Category 2.
    c. The preferences of the Examiner: When possible, allow the Examiner to try an area where they have the most interest.
6. It is okay to split Categories between Examiners. For example, with enough team members, some Team Leaders assign an Examiner to 3.1 and 7.1, and another Examiner may receive 3.2 and 7.2.

Step 5: Develop Agenda for Pre-Consensus Call

1. You have some flexibility in the agenda, but at a minimum, the agenda should cover:
    a. Confirming Item and back-up assignments
    b. Confirming the date for the consensus call

c. Agreeing on a date for trading intent observation synthesis with Back-ups, and a date for mini-consensus

   Allow about three days for back-up review and two to three days more for final mini-consensus. Begin with a suggested calendar.

d. Format for consensus intent observations

e. Roles for consensus, including timekeeper, scorekeeper, Criteria guardian, Key Factors monitor, and key themes monitor

f. Questions from the team

2. Some other agenda Items you may consider are:

   a. Ground rules for the consensus call

   b. Review of "next" events for the team

   c. A review of the intent observation synthesis process

      This approach will benefit a team consisting of several first year Examiners.

   d. A reminder that it may take up to 5-10 hours per Item to develop a consensus proposal

   e. A reminder of the dates for Stage 3 (site visit)

   f. Reminders on how to prepare for consensus

3. A challenging part of the process is to calendar the next events, as they need to occur. You need to have this fully thought-through before the pre-consensus call. You must look at the calendar, starting with the dates/timelines QTF requires for completion of the Stage 2 scorebook. Now take that date and work backwards, considering the following milestones:

   a. The date the Score Summary Worksheet must be complete and QTF notified of that completion to drmac@quality-texas.org. This deadline is set by QTF in the initial applicant cycle document.

   b. The date the final stage 2 scorebook is posted on Scorebook Navigator and notice sent to Foundation.

   c. The date the final consensus Items are posted for the Team Leader and the Feedback Writer to review on the Scorebook Navigator.

   d. The date Back-ups post the marked-up file for Item Champions on Scorebook Navigator.

   e. The date Item Champions must post the proposed file from consensus for their Back-up on the Scorebook Navigator.

   f. The date of the consensus meeting.

   g. The date the Feedback Writer posts the final proposed consensus file for the team on the Scorebook Navigator.

h. The date the Item Champions post their Item consensus proposal file for Team Leader and Feedback Writer.

i. The date Back-ups post their marked-up file to the Item Champions.

j. The date Item Champions post their consensus proposals for Back-ups.

Each of these milestones needs to have an assigned date that you have determined before selecting the consensus meeting date at the pre-consensus meeting. You will need to make sure the dates are achievable given the deadline at the end of the Stage. QTF will send you a calendar for all team members to follow and for the Team Leader to use as a guide.

It is recommended that the consensus call be split into two days unless it can be completed in a four-hour block. The team will decide this together. Remember to choose a back-up day in case a difficulty arises that forces the need for more time.

Step 6: Review Key Factors with Team if needed

1. Team Leader should review the consolidated list of Key Factors with the team.
2. Remind the team to disregard their Key Factor lists and use only the consolidated list from the Team Leader.

Step 7: Conduct Pre-Consensus Call

1. This is your first chance for the team to hear you lead, so it is important to make a good impression and set the stage for an organized and efficient collaborative process. Be well prepared for this meeting. Your confidence will grow, and the team will see this in you.
2. Be sure the team exits the call with all questions answered and with a clear path to the next steps.
3. Run the meeting per the agenda, but be flexible to cover any other topics that emerge.
4. Remind the team that everyone needs to be on a landline for the consensus call unless an applicant waiver is given.

Step 8: Lead Team through Comment Synthesis Process

1. Be available for the team through this complex process. Refer Examiners to the Examiner Process Manual for further explanation or walk the team or Examiner through an example.
2. Call or e-mail first year Examiners a few days into the process to ask how they are doing.

3. You may want to send an e-mail to the team every few days (at least weekly) to give encouragement and reminders. Keeping communication open and frequent gives Examiners an opportunity to seek assistance and prevents delays during the process.

Step 9: Lead Team through Rescoring Process

1. In your coaching on this topic, emphasize the importance of leaving the Stage 1 scores behind.
2. A second point of emphasis should be to double-check the score against the scoring guidelines. Focus on the Scorecard for analysis and decision making during this phase. Your attention to guiding Examiners through the appropriate analysis grounded in the Criteria and Scoring Guidelines will ensure greater accuracy and depth of feedback to the Applicant.
3. Be sure that you do not overly influence the consensus score or allow any team member to dominate the scoring. The Judges look closely at comparison of individual and consensus scores to determine if there appears to be undue influence by any one individual.

Step 10: Lead Team through Site Visit Issue (SVI) Writing Process

In your tutoring on this topic, emphasize the importance of minimizing the number of Site Visit Issues written per Category. Make sure that any requirement for copies of documents are fully justified. Let Examiners know that there will be time later in the process to refine/improve SVIs through analysis of the Key Themes and other Items.

Step 11: Lead Team through Comment Process

Teach the team that well prepared comments are the key to an efficient consensus call. Teams that have prepared by using this strategy can complete the consensus call in 4-5 hours.

Step 12: Lead Team through Back-up Consensus Process

Make sure you have the team copy you on all e-mails between Champions and Back-ups. Track them, and make sure each pair meets all established deadlines. If a deadline passes with no e-mail traffic or postings on Scorebook Navigator, contact the Champion and Back-up to understand why.

Step 13: Prepare for the Consensus Meeting

1. Remind the team to prepare a script for their Item presentations, and to practice it.

2. Make sure the team knows they need to come to the call with their endorsements and concerns already noted.

Step 14: Lead the Consensus Meeting

1. Your leadership in this meeting is pivotal to the success of the entire effort.
2. Remember to verify that everyone is on the phone.
3. Make certain all team members are present before beginning. You may not start otherwise nor will you be able to continue if someone drops off the call. Discussion must stop if anyone steps away from the phone, and resume only upon return of the individual.
4. Start by covering the meeting ground-rules.
5. Next, review the meeting agenda.
6. Review the process each Champion will use to reach consensus with the group. See the Examiner Process Manual for a detailed list of the events and their sequence for this meeting. Monitor that Examiners follow the sequence, making corrections as needed. You will need your skill as a facilitator since you will be simultaneously attending to "process" and "content."
7. If you have taken an Item, model the procedure for the team using your item. In some cases, the team leader and back up have modeled presentation of an item during the pre-consensus call to assist team members in preparing for consensus.
8. If you need to conserve time, do this on the Site Visit Issue part, there will be time to recover and improve these prior to and during Site Visit Training.
9. As each Examiner goes through his/her material, and the team reaches consensus, take notes on potential Key Themes. This will save an hour or more at the end of the meeting.
10. Keep a close watch on the time. Assign one member to be the timekeeper to help keep everyone on track. **Do not allow examiners to read each word as they need to summarize only**. Keep discussions focused and on task to ensure efficient use of time and to maintain productivity. If they begin to degrade into arguments, step in and bring the discussion back on track.
11. Use breaks judiciously, adjusting the timing as needed to complete the call with acceptable timing.
12. Use the scoring guidelines to consense on the score.
13. After completing the last Item, lead a check on the final total score and Scoring Band.
14. You may need to coach Examiners if the team encounters problems with an Item. Be prepared to interject with comment proposals for struggling Champions. You may call a break to work on a problem Item or discuss later one-on-one. If

necessary, call a five-minute break, and speak with the Process Coach on a private line to discuss this.

15. Ensure all Examiners participate and are involved. Facilitate their involvement by calling on them if necessary. Consider using the rule that no one speaks twice until each has spoken once.
16. Keep notes on the individual strengths of each Examiner. This will save time later when you complete the Examiner assessments. Knowing the strengths/weaknesses of all Examiners will increase team efficiency at the site visit as you develop an understanding of who can handle extra assignments and coach new or struggling Examiners. Knowledge of the individuals and the team dynamics will also help you identify areas in which you can provide guidance for each examiner.
17. You have flexibility in how to finalize Key Themes. Complete this task after reaching consensus on all the Items. Some Team Leaders use a round robin process to receive feedback. Others send their notes and allow a break for the team to absorb the proposals. Typically, the Team Leader is responsible for leading consensus on Key Themes.
18. At the end of consensus, be sure to thank the team, and be sure everyone understands the target dates for the post consensus work. Ask the back-ups to send their notes from the consensus discussions to their Item Champion. Remind the team to copy you on all correspondence within the duos.

Step 15: Lead Team through Revision of Item Intent Observations

1. Monitor the e-mail traffic, and Scorebook Navigator entries between Champions and Back-ups to ensure meeting target dates.
2. The completed files must include only changes agreed upon by the team in the consensus meeting.

Step 16: Finalize Consensus Scorebook with Feedback Writer

1. Assist the Feedback Writer in finalizing the consensus scorebook using revised Item comments posted by the Examiners.
2. Provide the finalized scorebook to the team for final review.
3. Assist the Feedback Writer with adjusting the Consensus Scorebook using the Team's feedback
4. Finalize the scorebook with the Feedback Writer.
5. Post the final consensus scorebook on Scorebook Navigator and send an email to the QTF CEO for notification of the posting.
6. Remind the team to maintain all materials until instructed further. Do not destroy of shred any material until told to do so by QTF.

Stage 3 – Site Visit Review

Introduction

The third Stage of evaluation of applicants for the Texas Award for Performance Excellence consists of an on-site visit. During Stage 3, the Examiner Team and Process Coach visit an applicant's site or sites to verify and clarify feedback and scoring. Examiners participating in Stages 1 and 2 are expected to continue supporting the team through Stage 3. Except in extreme situations/emergencies, Team Members do not change between Stages 1 and 3.

Preparation for the site visit begins during the Examiner Site Visit Strategy Development and Team Preparation workday. The Team Leader will lead the team in preparation for the site visit, and the team will meet one another for the first time.

The team will also meet the day before the site review begins. The purpose of this team meeting is to get everyone "on the same page" and go over final preparations for the site visit.

The Stage 3, Site Visit Review process is intense. The process includes planning, the on-site visit, and post-site visit consensus activities. Once onsite, Examiners are required to stay until the Site Visit Scorebook is complete and all Examiners have signed the Scorebook Signature Page and the Role Model Status Recommendation Form. Leaving prior to completion of the Site Visit Scorebook, except in the case of extreme emergency, is unacceptable.

Typically, the Item assignments remain as they were in Stage 2; and after verifying strengths and clarifying OFI's on site, repeat the Back-up and consensus processes. Finalize the scorebook by revising the Key Themes based on the new agreed upon comments.

Understanding and regarding the Ethical Standards Policy is extremely important in this Stage because you will conduct your activities in front of the Applicant. Ensure the integrity of this award program maintaining confidentiality of the Applicant's data. Keep Applicant and Examiner materials secure at all times.

The Team Leader must complete 28 Process Steps during Stage 3. The Team Leader may delegate some of the tasks to the Back-up Team Leader, the Feedback Writer, and Senior Examiners as appropriate. Delegation may extend to promising, but less experienced, Examiners at the Team Leader's discretion.

Step 1: Develop Agenda for Onsite Strategy Development and Team Preparation Work Days

1. This meeting is a working session to help the team prepare for the site visit.
2. Agendas may differ due to where the team is on Site Visit Issues (SVI's) and because of the complexity of the Applicant's system. Many agendas include the following:

a. Facilitate the process of introducing the team members and letting them get comfortable working together.

b. Review and finalize the list of documents requested for delivery to the hotel. This list must be minimized to reduce the difficulties on the applicant to make additional copies. Examiners need to review documents on site to the maximum extent possible.

c. Finalize all SVI's, ensuring they cover all intent observations.

d. You will need to write SVI worksheets. Write one together as an example for first year Examiners on the team.

e. Develop walk-around questions. These questions can be drawn from the Organizational Profile and tables and charts throughout the application.

f. Develop interview strategy and lists of interviewees.

g. Develop the schedule for the site visit, including interview pairings.

h. Prepare for the initial meeting with the highest-ranking official.

i. Go over the opening meeting agenda.

j. Review the system for tracking materials provided by the Applicant. Make sure that you do not lose documents. Again, minimize the number of documents requested. There must be a document log to make sure what you have and what needs to be returned. Assign an Examiner to monitor this for you or one of the backups.

k. Review interviewing techniques and ethics.

l. Review the code of conduct.

m. Leave with a clear site visit plan and all questions answered.

Step 2: Contact the Applicant

1. Prior to the site visit, the Team Leader will make contact with the Applicant. Several calls to the Applicant's Point of Contact to clarify logistics and the site visit process will prepare and reassure the Applicant that that the necessary site visit plans are progressing. Topics for discussions include the following:

    a. Request Category 7 updates via email or to be delivered to the hotel on Sunday afternoon. The applicant will submit updates to Category 7 prior to the site visit or at the beginning of the site visit.

    b. Request the list of documents the team would like to see at the hotel and on-site. Remember to minimize the list so as not to place a burden on the applicant.

    c. Develop the snacks list.

    d. Determine dinner options for the team.

e. Define equipment needs as well as other items on the Supplies and Equipment Checklist.

f. Ask about any safety or security issues at the site.

g. Clarify the dress code, including any special regulations regarding footwear.

h. Review the number of Examiners.

i. Coordinate Site Visit Logistics with Applicant (ex – transport, lodging, etc.).

j. Answer any process questions.

k. Address any concerns.

2. As you acquire information, communicate the plan to the team. For example, make sure all team members know logistics, dress code, and have completed travel arrangements. Travel reimbursements can be made only if receipts are given to the team leader.

Step 3: Conduct the Pre-Site Visit Meeting at the Hotel

1. Hold the pre-site visit meeting at the hotel beginning Sunday at 1 p.m. before the site visit begins. This first meeting can last between four and five hours, depending on the preparation level of the team entering the meeting. It is best to plan to meet by 1:00 pm so that you are not rushed for time and are able to complete preparations early to allow for a good night's rest. Keeping the team from fatigue will maintain morale and the quality of the team's work. At no time should the team be in the work room at the hotel after 10 PM or before 6AM unless some am travel is involved. Proper rest and sleep will allow the Examiners to do their best work and provide the best feedback to the applicant.

2. The agenda for the meeting can cover some of the same topics as the team preparation workday, depending on how much the team completed on the workday. You may choose from the list below for potential agenda Items:

   a. Finalize all SVI's, ensuring they cover all intent observations.

   b. Finalize walk-around questions.

   c. Develop interview strategy and lists of interviewees.

   d. Develop the schedule for the site visit, including interview pairings

   e. Prepare for the initial meeting with the highest-ranking officials. The time needed for this will vary with the complexity of the Applicant. Most meetings go for only two hours. Set this expectation with the organization point of contact.

   f. Go over the opening meeting agenda (provided by QTF).

   g. Review the system for tracking materials provided by Applicant.

h. Review interviewing techniques, ethics, and general site visit behavior.
i. Review the code of conduct.
j. Examine the updated Category 7 results the Applicant will have delivered to the hotel or emailed previously.
k. Review ground rules for the site visit.
l. Assist Item Champions in understanding the Site Visit Issue strategy.
m. Remind Examiners that the site visit serves to clarify and verify information.
n. Finalize agendas for site visit meetings and schedules. Complex applicants may require sites to be visited. Work with the team to decide how to sample multiple sites.
o. Provide information to the team on all topics regarding the visit.
p. Remind the team not to reveal to the Applicant any personal information or any information regarding TAPE experience.
q. Remind the team that the schedule will likely change after each day and to remain flexible.
r. Validate any decisions regarding focus groups as a strategy.
s. Let the team know that more time on site leaves less time for the consensus process.
t. Decide on a system to account for documents reviewed. Your system should include some type of library-style sign-out process.

Step 4: Conduct the Introductory On-site Meeting

1. This meeting is attended by the full Examiner Team and an audience determined by the Applicant. Typically, all Senior Leaders, Category Champions, and other key leaders will attend.
2. The Applicant may choose to make a presentation. The presentation may be as simple as an introduction, or can be as complex as a multimedia presentation. Some applicants have presented skits. Alert the organizational point of contact that this even will not exceed one hour.
3. You will make a presentation using slides provided by QTF.
4. Maintain a neutral and professional demeanor throughout the on-site days. The Applicant will be reading your body language and voice tones. Be careful not to reveal your thoughts about the Applicant, their presentation, or their chances to receive the award.

   Some applicants assign people to shadow the team and report the activities. Some scour the site room at departure and seek clues as to their status. Most applicants debrief at the end of each day and interview people that interacted with the team.

Some applicants will have their personal consultants on sight to review questions asked during the day. Be sure the team knows that the Applicant only receives feedback through the feedback report. Address any breach of acceptable behavior immediately.

Step 5: Conduct the Executive Meeting

1. This meeting includes the full team and the top managers from the Applicant organization.
2. Use this meeting to get answers to many of your questions from the Site Visit Issues (SVI's). Some Items lend themselves easily to this process. For example, Items 1.1 and 1.2 are naturals, since the leaders are present. Many of the people in the room may have participated in strategy planning, so SVI's from 2.1 and 2.2 may also see progress. For a complex organization with dozens of sites, you may want to run a longer meeting. This would enable a check on "approaches" across many Items, while checking deployment at the sites to be visited.
3. Prepare the team to have a few questions to ask in areas that would help them with their SVI's. Let them ask follow-up questions as needed. Some questions will focus on the expert knowledge of a specific person, and others can be general. The most appropriate Applicant manager may respond to many of the more specific questions. Let the team know it is better to have too many questions prepared rather than too few. Having more questions than may be needed will avoid an awkwardly short meeting due to lack of preparation.
4. Remind the team to take comprehensive notes. In three days, the team will all be in a room trying to recall each meeting and conversation, and by then, so much will have happened that it will be difficult to remember day one.
5. As team leader, you should take notes on EVERYTHING – even on Items that do not belong to you as a Champion. Later in the week, you will be helping everybody develop comments.

Step 6: Start the Assessment Process with the Two-Person Sub-teams

1. Remember that no one may interface with an Applicant without another team member present. This also applies to the Team Leader. The Process Coach may form a pair with another Examiner. The Process Coach will want to spend significant time with you in order to provide support and make an assessment about your role as a Quality Texas Foundation leader and representative.
2. Remind the Back-ups to take comprehensive notes for the Champions. The Champions may be too busy developing an understanding of the Applicant's position to be able to do so.
3. Have the team keep a log of all persons interviewed, and their positions in the organization. This will be important data for a report on the estimated percentage

of the organization "touched" by the assessment team. An effective practice is to have members of a focus group sign in but at a minimum, record the positions, departments, etc. represented and the number attending the group meeting.

4. If possible, convene the full team for lunch in the "caucus" room provided by the Applicant. Use this time to debrief on team member findings.
5. Meet with the Applicant contact at the end of each day to review the schedule and plan for any changes that needed. If possible, the Team Leader and process Coach should meet with the highest-ranking officer each day or the organization's designated point of contact.

Step 7: Conduct the Evening Caucus

1. Give the team 1-1.5 hours of personal time when you reach the hotel each evening.
2. The team will meet for dinner each evening. With the possible exception of one evening, you will have a working dinner. If time allows, take the team for a nice dinner one evening (Thursday normally). After the close out onsite is typically the best day for a nice break. Be careful not to mention the Applicant during the dinner, as people at nearby tables may be listening.
3. You may wish to start with a round robin debrief so everyone can hear key points learned by each team member during the day. This should take you through dinner. The rest of the evenings will be filled, first with re-writing intent observations, and later, with comment writing and consensus.
4. Each evening, visit with team members to see how they are doing and to offer your help with intent observation and comment writing.
5. Before adjourning, review any schedule changes that may be needed for the next day.
6. If possible, send the team members to their rooms between 9:00 and 10:00 pm. You may wish to keep the Back-up Team Leader and Feedback Writer to finalize schedule adjustments. Fatigue will diminish the effectiveness of the team and negatively influence morale.
7. Remind the team that after the closing meeting, there can be NO MORE contact with the Applicant and no more access to documents except those provided by the Applicant that do not have to be returned. Tell them to be sure they have collected all the information they need to proceed with the consensus process before the team leaves the site on the final day.

Step 8: Learn From Site Visit Issues (SVI's)

1. Work with the team to share learning from SVI's in the evenings.
2. Some Team Leaders post the SVI worksheets on the walls as completed so each person can see the results. You will want to review each SVI to assess the information.

Step 9: Ensure Document Return

1. After the site visit, you should not allow the team to take Applicant documents off site unless they are copies that do not have to be returned.
2. Return all documents reviewed on site, and have the Applicant sign off on the Document Log before the closing meeting on the last day on site.

Step 10: Conduct the On-site Closing Meeting

1. You will conduct a closing meeting with the Applicant's management, often the same group that participated in the opening meeting.
2. The Closing Meeting can last from 15 to 20 minutes. You will conduct this meeting using brief slides provided by QTF. Once again, pay attention to your body language and voice inflections. The Applicant will be reading you and the team to try to receive an indication of how you feel they did.
3. You may supplement the QTF materials to answer questions about process, but do not discuss anything else. Do not say anything to indicate you had a great visit – only thank them for their cooperation, hospitality, and providing material requested, making people available for interviews, etc.

Step 11: Identify Potential Intent Observations

1. After learning from the Site Visit Issue (SVI) worksheets, the process used in Stages 1 and 2 again takes place.
2. Each Champion will determine potential comments using the learning from the site visit, and you will help them as needed.

Step 12: Determine the Scoring Range

Just as in Stages 1 and 2, the Examiners will now select the right scoring range based on their new understanding of the Applicant's achievement. The team does not refer back to Stage 1 or Stage 2 scores.

Step 13: Select Intent Observations to Revise or Write

1. Just as before, the Examiners will select the intent observations to write.
2. Again, travel the room to help Examiners select the 4-6 most important things to tell the Applicant for each Item.
3. Remind the team that steps 12 and 13 are an iterative process, and to get it right, they may need to revise their initial thinking. Focus on actionable feedback keeping in mind how the Applicant can use the information to further their maturity relative to the Criteria.

Step 14: Revise or Write Comments

1. **The Examiners will write comments as before.**
2. **Comments will be written at this time.**

Step 15: Rescore Items

As you coach team members in rescoring, have them check the scoring guidelines again.

Step 16: Perform Consensus on Intent Observations and Scoring

1. **Consensus is performed as usual.**
2. **The Examiners are released to write the comments at the end of consensus.**

Step 17: Write Comments From Consensus Comments

1. Remember NERD – NUGGETT, EVIDENCE/EXAMPLE, RELEVANCE, DONE. The NUGGET you are trying to tell the organization. The EVIDENCE or EXAMPLE. The RELEVANCE of the comment and then you are DONE.
2. You will now help the team, as needed, in writing the comments.
3. You can save time by reminding the first year Examiners to eliminate statements such as “it is not clear,” and “it is not apparent.”
4. Check each OFI comment for the required “RELEVANCE or why this is important.” This is an area often overlooked by Examiners.
5. Also check comments for embedded strengths in OFI’s to be sure the scoring will not be underestimated.
6. If there is time, ask the Examiners to post completed proposed comments on the wall so everyone can read them during breaks from their own work.

7. Check with team members frequently to be sure everyone is progressing. Help those who are lagging.
8. While the team is working on the comments, you and perhaps a backup team leader should be working on the Key Themes, using the developing comments.

Step 18: Final Team Consensus on Comments and Scoring

1. Begin the team consensus on the completed comments and double check the scoring through a discussion of the scoring guidelines.
2. Before you begin, remind everyone to work as a Team with active listening and consensus. Remind all that ELMO (Enough Let's Move On) lives here.

Step 19: Finalize Key Themes

1. After all Items have been agreed-upon, refocus the team on the Key Themes.
2. You will need to lead the team through this step. Walking the wall observing all comments is a great way to spot Key Themes. Remember these are cross-cutting with multiple category/items.
3. During the consensus process, you should be taking notes for adjustments to the proposed Key Themes.
4. You may want to call a break for an hour or so, and let the team absorb the Key Theme proposals in the wake of the finalized comments and scores.

Step 20: Finalize the Scorebook

1. Based on any final discussion of the Site Visit Scorebook, the Feedback Writer will make the remaining corrections on the spot, and everyone signs the scorebook. CELEBRATE, CELEBRATE, YOU DID A GREAT JOB!
2. Examiners stay until all Team Members sign the completed Scorebook and the Role Model Status Recommendation Form. Examiners sign the Scorebook Site Visit Signature Page signifying individual support of the completed Site Visit Scorebook.
3. Encourage the team members to sign up for next year.
4. Remember to complete the "Summary of Sites Visited" to demonstrate to the Judges the thoroughness of the team's visit. This will consist of information such as the number of people with whom you met and include the level of employee and the number for group meetings and walkabouts. You do not need the names.
5. Remember to complete the scoring summary.
6. Before departing, remind the team about the confidentiality of what took place throughout the entire process. There can be no disclosure to **anyone at any time** as

to the Applicant, any information about the site visit or the team, or the location of the Applicant you visited.

Step 21: Prepare Departure of the Team

1. Ensure that you, one Back-up Team Leader, the Feedback Writer, and the Process Coach have a copy of the final Site Visit Report/stage 3 scorebook. The four of you are the only ones that will leave with any documents and you (Team Leader) will keep the application, the SVI worksheets, the Stage 1, 2 and 3 scorebooks, and any pertinent notes. You will destroy all of these items after completion of the final Feedback Report after the Judges meeting. (Please note that the feedback report will be finalized in Scorebook Navigator.)
2. AFTER you (team leader), backup team leaders, and the feedback writer have all the information saved for your team, then the other Examiner can delete their files. Before leaving the hotel, ensure the team members delete all computer records, destroy all documents, applications, and printed material when appropriate.
3. Dismiss the team, with your thanks, and with encouragement to sign up for the next year. Complete a survey on survey monkey about the work of the team.

Step 22: Close the Site Visit Work at the Hotel

1. Remember to thank the Process Coach and keep them in the loop to help you.
2. Clean up the conference room, ensuring all data used in preparing the report are shredded, including any charts, etc.
3. Deliver the final report to the QTF (drmac@quality-texas.org). This includes the Stage 3 Scorebook, Sites Visited, Signature page for the Scorebook, and Score Summary Worksheet.

Step 23: Meet with the Panel of Judges

When you arrive home, start studying. Soon, you will speak with the Judges about the scorebook you developed with your team and what you saw on the site visit. You will explain the team's decisions, and answer their various questions.

Step 24: Complete Post Judges Call Revisions

You may need to adjust some of the scorebook comments after the call with the Judges. Work with the Feedback Writer if this is the case.

Step 25: Review Editor Recommendations

An Editor, who is an expert on writing and grammar, will make improvements to the Stage 3 scorebook. If there are questions regarding content of comments, the editor will contact you directly to address concerns or questions.

Step 26: Finalize Report after Editor Changes

1. You will need to review the Editor changes and make final determination about whether to accept them.
2. The Editor is not to make changes that affect content, but rather should make changes that improve form. While you should accept all the changes to form that improve the report, you should challenge any content changes. As Team Leader, you own the decision regarding content.
3. Work with the Feedback Writer on changes. Post the final document on the Scorebook Navigator and send a copy to drmac@quality-texas.org.

Step 27: Shred Documents

1. When you receive notification from the QTF that everything has been finalized, notify the team to shred all their work.
2. Again, thank them for their contributions, remind them about the special awards banquet, and encourage them to return for next year's cycle.

Step 28: Complete Surveys and Attend Awards Banquet

1. The Quality Texas Foundation (QTF) will send requests for completion of online surveys for each stage of the process. Complete yours and encourage the team to do so as well.
2. Make plans to attend the awards banquet, respectfully avoiding contact with the Applicant. Be sure you have explained to the Applicant while on site that there can never be any public recognition of the team as examiners are required to maintain confidentiality regarding their service on any application.
3. Send feedback to the QTF on Examiners that demonstrate the leadership skills to serve as Team Leaders or Feedback Writers in the future. Make your own plans to return as Team Leader for the next cycle!