2023–2024

Education

Engagement Level Criteria
for Performance Excellence

Effective June 2023

Note from the CEO:

Thank you for taking the time to consider applying for the Quality Texas Foundation Regional Program (QTFRP) Pioneer Level of Recognition (five-page Organizational Profile). This is the starting point for your organization or a section/group within an organization. Your next step is our Engagement Level of Recognition (five-page Organizational Profile + 10-page application). Since this is probably your first entry with QTFRP, welcome aboard.

It is our sincere hope that the questions embedded in the five-page organizational profile will cause your organization to evaluate exactly where you are, where you should be, and how you can significantly improve by prioritization of your improvement steps. The Baldrige Framework is used the world over (70 countries) to make systematic improvements to organizations. Proposed steps are shown below.

1) Assign a minimum of two personnel, preferably five to seven in your office to become Organizational Leadership/Examiners trained by the QTFRP. This training is where QTFRP teaches your personnel how to become valued Internal Coaches by informing the participants how to respond/write the responses to the questions and the reasons behind the questions. You can just begin writing if you like, but past information received from applicants indicate the Organizational Leadership/Examiner training was a major milestone in writing at any level. Our satisfaction rate over the past eight years has been 98%.

2) Write your responses to the questions and allow other people in your office to edit your work. Don't fall in love with your first draft. This application to be really effective will undergo several iterations with substantial improvements along the way. The application process will allow the organization to ask very difficult questions and address organizational priorities.

3) Revise multiple times and submit to QTFRP (www.quality-texas.org).

4) QTF is here to help! If you need assistance, QTFRP can provide you with coaching and with a customized writing seminar just for your organization to save you time and effort.

If QTFRP can be of assistance to you, please allow us that opportunity. QTFRP wants to be your go to source for Baldrige-based training. QTFRP also has leadership development, organizational strategic planning, workforce engagement training, and several others. Remember always that the Baldrige Journey is never finished! Happy travels!

Dr. Mac McGuire
CEO
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How do I get started?

However, you plan to use the Baldrige framework, the Baldrige community is there to help your organization learn, grow, and improve. See the following pages and visit https://www.quality-texas.org **to see the possibilities.**

The [Baldrige] Criteria help you link your strategy, your human capital process, your leadership development process, and all of your core operations together and help them focus on what your customers actually want.
—Scott McIntyre, President and CEO, Managing Partner, Guidehouse (formerly Baldrige Award recipient PricewaterhouseCoopers Public Sector Practice)

How to Use the Baldrige Excellence Framework

Whether your organization is large or small, you can use the Baldrige Excellence Framework for improvement. Your experience with Baldrige will help you decide where to begin.

The Quality Texas Foundation can help you assess your level of expertise and where your journey should begin. Please contact Lin Wrinkle-McGuire, COO, at linwrinkle@quality-texas.org Dwight Bailey, at dwightbailey@quality-texas.org or Dr. Mac McGuire, CEO at drmac@quality-texas.org for more information.

There are three different applications. Business/NFP is the most often used. Healthcare has a healthcare version if the primary customers are patients and families. Education has an education version if the primary customers are students and families.

Criteria for Performance Excellence
Begin with the Organizational Profile

The Organizational Profile is the most appropriate starting point for self-assessment and for writing an application. It is critically important for the following reasons:

- You can use it as an initial self-assessment. If you identify topics for which conflicting, little, or no information is available, use these topics for action planning.
- It sets the context for understanding your organization and how it operates and allows you to address unique aspects of your organization in your responses to the Baldrige Criteria questions in categories 1–7. Your responses to all other questions in the Criteria should relate to the organizational context you describe in this profile.
- It helps you identify gaps in key information about your organization and focus on key performance requirements and results.

Organizational Profile

The **Organizational Profile** is a snapshot of your organization and its strategic environment.

P.1 Organizational Description: What are your KEY organizational characteristics?

a. Organizational Environment

(1) EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM and SERVICE Offerings What are your main EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AND SERVICE offerings? What is the relative importance (including percentage of revenue/budget) of each to your success? What modalities do you use to deliver your EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AND SERVICES?

(2) Mission, Vision, Values, and Culture What are your MISSION, VISION, and VALUES? Other than values, what are the characteristics of your organizational culture? What are your organization's CORE COMPETENCIES, and what is their relationship to your MISSION?

(3) WORKFORCE Profile What is your WORKFORCE profile? What are your workforce or faculty and staff groups and segments and the KEY ENGAGEMENT drivers for each? What key changes are you experiencing in your workforce capability, capacity, and composition?

(4) Assets What are your major facilities, equipment, technologies, and intellectual property?

(5) Regulatory Environment What are your key applicable standards and regulations, and accreditation, certification, or registration requirements?

b. Organizational Relationships

(1) Organizational Structure What are your organizational leadership structure and GOVERNANCE structure? What are the key components of your organization's leadership system? What are the reporting relationships among your governance system, senior leaders, and parent organization, as appropriate?

(2) Students, Other CUSTOMERS and STAKEHOLDERS What are your KEY market SEGMENTS, student and other CUSTOMER groups, and STAKEHOLDER groups, as appropriate? What are their KEY requirements and expectations for your EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AND SERVICES, student and other CUSTOMER support services, and operations, including any differences among the groups?

(3) Suppliers, Partners, and Collaborators What are your KEY types of suppliers, PARTNERS, and COLLABORATORS? What role do they play in producing and delivering your KEY EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM and SERVICES and student and other CUSTOMER support services? What role do they play in contributing and implementing INNOVATIONS in your organization? What are your KEY supply-network requirements?

Notes

P.1a(1). Modalities for delivering programs and services to your students might be direct or might be indirect, through partners and collaborators.

P.1a(2). Your values are part of your organization's culture. Other characteristics of your organizational culture might include shared beliefs and norms that contribute to the uniqueness of the environment within your organization.

P.1a(2). If your organization has a stated purpose as well as a mission, you should include it in your response here and as appropriate in the process categories. Some organizations define a mission and a purpose, and some use the terms interchangeably. Purpose refers to the fundamental reason that the organization exists.

P.1a(3). As applicable, your workforce profile should include the location of your workforce, your organized bargaining units (i.e., union representation), and the special health and safety requirements of the workforce. Your workforce profile should specify any workforce groups the organization has identified for segmenting data. Organizations that also rely on volunteers and/or temporary staff members to accomplish core work (producing output that is necessary and/or student-facing) should include these groups as part of their workforce. Workforce or faculty/staff groups and segments might be based on type of employment or contract-reporting relationship, location (including remote work), work shift, work environment, use of flexible work policies, teaching vs. nonteaching role, student worker, or other factors. Current and anticipated changes impacting your workforce members might relate to scheduling, location, and their requirements and expectations.

P.1a(5). Regulations and requirements include any applicable occupational health and safety regulations; education standards; and environmental, financial, and product regulations. Education standards might include local, state, federal, or international statutory requirements, regulations, and/or sector-wide codes of conduct and policy guidance, including compliance with research ethics. Depending on the regions in which you operate, environmental regulations might cover greenhouse gas emissions, carbon regulations and trading, and energy efficiency.

P.1b(1). The Organizational Profile asks for the "what" of your leadership system. Questions in categories 1 and 5 ask "how" the system is used.

P.1b(2). Student and other customer groups might be based on common expectations, behaviors, preferences, or profiles. Within a group, there may be segments based on differences, commonalities, or both. You might subdivide your market segments or customer groups based on educational programs, services, or features; delivery modalities; geography; or other defining factors.

P.1b(2). Student, other customer, stakeholder, and operational requirements and expectations will drive your organization's sensitivity to the risk of program, service, support, and supply-network interruptions, including those due to natural disasters and other emergencies.

P.1b(3). Suppliers and partners may include, as appropriate, key feeder schools, organizations that supply curriculum or technology, transfer partner institutions that prepare students for your organization, and/or other businesses/industries that might be working with you to develop an education program specifically for their employees.

P.1b(3). Your supply network consists of the external entities involved in producing and delivering your programs and services to your students and offering follow-up, as appropriate. For some organizations, these entities form a chain, in which one entity directly supplies another. Increasingly, however, these entities are interlinked and exist in interdependent rather than linear relationships. The Education Criteria use the term supply network to emphasize the interdependencies among organizations and their suppliers. The term supply network represents an evolution and maturity in supply-chain management.

For additional guidance on this item, see the Education Criteria Commentary Baldrige Criteria Commentary (Education) | NIST

P.2 Organizational Situation: What is your organization's strategic situation?

    a. Competitive Environment

        (1) Competitive Position What are your size, share, and growth in your education sector or the markets you serve? How many and what types of competitors do you have? What differentiates you from them?

        (2) Competitiveness Changes What KEY changes, if any, are affecting your competitive situation, including changes that create opportunities for INNOVATION and collaboration, as appropriate?

        (3) Comparative Data What KEY sources of comparative and competitive data are available from within the education sector? What KEY sources of comparative data are available from outside the education sector? What limitations, if any, affect your ability to obtain or use these data?

    b. Strategic Context   What are your key strategic challenges, threats, advantages, and opportunities?

    c. Performance Improvement System   What is your overall system for performance improvement? What key tools and methods are used as part of this system?

Notes

P.2a. Education organizations are frequently in highly competitive environments. Aside from direct competition for students, they must often compete to secure financial, volunteer, and human resources (e.g., education organizations may compete with noneducation organizations where pay might be higher to recruit and retain faculty and staff). This competition may involve other education organizations, such as for appropriations, grant funding or suppliers, or the opportunity to provide supplemental services. For public education organizations, competition may involve other public agencies or departments, as in the competition for scarce budget resources.

P.2b. Strategic challenges, threats, advantages, and opportunities might be in the areas of educational programs and services, operations, societal contributions, and workforce. They might relate to finances, including funding

mechanisms; organizational structure and culture; political influences; emerging technology; digital integration; security and cybersecurity; emerging competitors; organizational resilience and risk management; changing stakeholder requirements and expectations; faculty and staff capability or capacity; brand recognition and reputation; diversity, equity, and inclusion; and the upgrade and maintenance of facilities.

P.2c. Excellence is not possible without robust evaluation and improvement of key processes, systems, and organizational results. The Baldrige Scoring System (pages 30–36) uses performance improvement through learning and integration as a factor in assessing the maturity of organizational approaches and their deployment. This question is intended to set an overall context for your approach to performance improvement. The system you use should be related to your

organization's needs and compatible with your organization's capabilities, capacity, and culture. Specific tools and methods that might be utilized as part of the system include, for example, PDCA or PDSA methodology; completion of accreditation and certification requirements; nationally validated systems to improve teaching performance; and independent institutional, departmental, or program assessments.

For additional guidance on this item, see the Education Criteria Commentary [Baldrige Criteria Commentary (Education) | NIST](#)

1 Leadership

The Leadership category asks how senior leaders' personal actions guide and sustain your organization. It also asks about your organization's governance system; how your organization fulfills its legal and ethical responsibilities; and how it makes societal contributions.

Vision and Values, Communication and Organizational Performance, Organizational Governance, Legal and Ethical Behavior, and Societal Responsibilities   **Process**

(1) How do senior leaders establish your organizational's mission, vision, and values?
(2) How do senior leaders' actions create an environment for success now and in the future?
(3) How do senior leaders communicate with and engage the entire workforce, key partners, students, and other key customers?
(4) How do senior leaders create a focus on action that will achieve the organization's success now and in the future?
(5) How do you evaluate the performance of your senior leaders, including the chief executive, and your governance board?

2 Strategy

The Strategy category asks how your organization develops strategic objectives and action plans, implements them, changes them if circumstances require, and measures progress.

Strategy Development Process, Strategic Objectives, Action Plan Development and Deployment, and Action Plan Modification

Process

(1) How do you conduct your strategic planning?

(2) How does your strategy development process stimulate and incorporate innovation?

(3) How do you collect and analyze relevant data and develop information for your strategy planning process?

(4) What are your organization's key strategic objectives and timetable for achieving them?

(5) How do your strategic objectives achieve appropriate balance among varying and potentially completing organizational needs?

3 Customers

The Customers category asks how your organization engages its students and other customers for ongoing success, including how your organization listens to them, determines programs and services to meet their needs, builds long-term relationships with them, and enhances the customer experience.

Customers' Expectations, Listening, Determination of Customer Satisfaction and Engagement, Product Offerings and Customer Support, and Customer Relationships   **Process**

(1) How do you listen to, interact with, and observe students and other customers to obtain actionable information?
(2) How do you listen to potential students and other customers to obtain actionable information?
(3) How do you determine your student and other customer satisfaction, dissatisfaction, and engagement?
(4) How do you build and manage student and other customer relationships?
(5) How do you determine educational program and service offerings?

4 Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management

The Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management category asks how your organization measures, analyzes, reviews, and improves organizational performance and how you manage your information and organizational knowledge assets.

Measurement, Analysis, Information and Knowledge Management	Process

(1) How do you use data and information to track daily operations and overall organizational performance?

(2) How do you select and effectively use comparative data and information to support fact-based decision-making?

(3) How do you review your organization's performance and capabilities?

(4) How do you build and manage organizational knowledge?

(5) How do you use your knowledge and resources to embed learning in the way your organization operates?

5 Workforce

The Workforce category asks how your organization addresses workforce capability and capacity and provides a workplace climate to support high performance. The category also asks how your organization engages, manages, and develops your workforce to utilize its full potential in alignment with your organization's overall needs.

Workforce Capability and Capacity, Workforce Climate, Workforce Engagement and Performance, and Workforce and Leader Development   **Process**

(1) How do you assess your workforce capability and capacity needs?
(2) How do you recruit, hire, place, and onboard new workforce members?
(3) How do you organize and manage your workforce?
(4) How do you determine the key drivers of workforce engagement?
(5) How does your learning and development system support the personal development of workforce members and your organization's needs?

6 Operations

The Operations category asks how your organization designs, manages, and improves its educational programs and services and work processes and ensures operational effectiveness to deliver value to students and other customers, and achieve ongoing organizational success.

Work Processes and Operational Effectiveness   **Process**

(1) How do you determine key educational program and service requirements?
(2) How do you design your key work process and support processes meet requirements?
(3) How does your day-to-day operation of key work processes ensure that they meet key process requirements?
(4) How do you determine your key support processes?
(5) How do you pursue your opportunities for innovation?

7 Results

The Results category asks about your organization's performance and improvement in all key areas—student learning and process results; customer results; workforce results; leadership and governance results; and financial, budgetary, marketplace, and strategy results.

Tracking and Using Key Results for More Improvement and Analysis

Display in graphical form where possible (chart/graph/table) where possible. There should be a minimum of one chart/graph/table for each question below. **Results**

(1) What are your results for student learning and for your student learning processes?
(2) What are your safety and emergency preparedness results?
(3) What are your student and other customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction results?
(4) What are your student and other customer engagement results?
(5) What are your workforce capability and capacity results?
(6) What are your workforce and leader development results?
(7) What are your results for senior leaders' communication and engagement with the workforce, partners, and customers?
(8) What are your financial performance results?

Glossary of Key Terms

The terms below are those in small caps in the Baldrige Education Criteria for Performance Excellence and scoring guidelines. Each term is followed by a definition in boldface. The rest of the first paragraph elaborates on this definition. The paragraphs that follow provide examples, descriptive information, or key linkages to other information in the Baldrige framework.

ACTION PLANS. Specific actions that your organization takes to reach its short- and longer-term strategic objectives. These plans specify the resources committed to and the time horizons for accomplishing the plans. Action plan development is the critical stage in planning when you make strategic objectives and goals specific so that you can effectively deploy them throughout the organization in an understandable way. In the ED Criteria, deploying action plans includes creating aligned measures for all affected departments and work units. Deployment might also require specialized training for some workforce members or recruitment of personnel. Deployment often relies on engagement and integration of the leadership system at the organizational and/or subunit levels.

For example, a strategic objective for an education organization in a highly competitive market might be to achieve student performance in the top quartile of the state's schools on an annually administered normalized test. Action plans could entail determining in which subjects students have scored the lowest, understanding skill deficiencies in those subjects, and developing curricula that enable students to master those skills. To deploy the action plans, the organization might need to train faculty in instructional and assessment methods. Organizational level analysis and review would likely emphasize student learning, budgetary performance, and student and other customer satisfaction.

See also STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES.

AGILITY. A capacity for rapid change and flexibility in operations. Agility may be needed to respond to emergencies or address changes in your operating environment, to take advantage of an immediate opportunity, and/or to address a strategic challenge.

ALIGNMENT. A state of consistency among plans, processes, information, resource decisions, workforce capability and capacity, actions, results, and analyses that support key organization-wide goals. Effective alignment requires a common understanding of purposes and goals. It also requires the use of complementary measures and information for planning, tracking, analysis, and improvement at three levels: the organizational level, the key process level, and the program, school, or class level.

See also INTEGRATION.

ANALYSIS. The examination of facts and data to provide a basis for effective decisions. Analysis often involves determining cause-effect relationships. Overall organizational analysis guides you in managing work systems and work processes toward achieving key organizational results and attaining strategic objectives.

Although individual facts and data are important, they do not usually provide an effective basis for acting or setting priorities. Effective actions depend on an understanding or relationships, which is derived from the analysis of facts and data and information.

ANECDOTAL. In a response to an Education Criteria item, information that lacks specific methods; measures; deployment mechanisms; and evaluation, improvement, and learning factors. Anecdotal information frequently consists of examples and describes individual activities rather than systematic processes. For example, in an anecdotal response to how senior leaders deploy performance expectations, you might describe a specific occasion when a senior leader visited all of your organization's facilities. On the other hand, in describing a systematic process, you might include the methods all senior leaders use to communicate performance expectations regularly to all locations and workforce members, the measures leaders use to assess the effectiveness of the methods, and the tools and techniques you use to evaluate and improve the methods.

See also SYSTEMATIC.

APPROACH. The methods your organization uses to carry out its processes. Besides the methods themselves, approach refers to the appropriateness of the methods to the item requirements and your organization's operating environment, as well as how effectively your organization uses those methods.

Approach is one of the factors considered in evaluating process items.

BASIC QUESTION. The most central concept of a Criteria item, as presented in the item title question.

BENCHMARKS. Processes and results that represent the best practices and best performance for similar activities, inside or outside your organization's industry. Organizations engage in benchmarking to understand the current dimensions of world-class performance and to achieve discontinuous (nonincremental) or "breakthrough" improvement.

Benchmarks are one form of comparative data. Other forms include education-sector data collected by a third party, data on competitors' performance, comparisons with similar organizations that are in the same geographic areas or that provide similar programs and services in other geographic areas, and information from the open literature (e.g., outcomes of research studies and practice guidelines).

CAPABILITY, WORKFORCE. See WORKFORCE CAPABILITY.

CAPACITY, WORKFORCE. See WORKFORCE CAPACITY.

COLLABORATORS. Organizations or individuals who cooperate with your organization to support a particular activity or event or who cooperate intermittently when their short-term goals are aligned with or are the same as yours. Typically, collaborations do not involve formal agreements or arrangements.

See also PARTNERS.

CORE COMPETENCIES. Your organization's areas of greatest expertise; those strategically important, possibly specialized capabilities that are central to fulfilling your mission or that provide an advantage in your marketplace or service environment. Core competencies are frequently challenging for competitors or suppliers and partners to imitate, and they may provide an ongoing competitive advantage or create opportunities in your business ecosystems. . The absence of a needed core competency may result in a significant strategic challenge or disadvantage for your organization in the marketplace.

Core competencies may involve technological expertise, unique program and service offerings that respond to the needs of your students, other customers, and market.

CULTURE. The shared beliefs, norms, and values that characterize your workforce and are demonstrated within your organization. In high-performing organizations, senior leaders create and reinforce an organization's culture based on the organization's mission, vision, and values.

See also ETHICAL BEHAVIOR and VALUES.

CUSTOMER. An actual or potential user of your organization's education programs and services. Customers include the direct users of your programs and services (students and possibly parents), as well as others who pay for your programs and services. The Baldrige framework addresses customers broadly, referencing your current and future students and other customers, as well as your competitors' students and other customers.

Student-focused excellence is a Baldrige core value embedded in the beliefs and behaviors of high-performing organizations. Student focus impacts and should be a factor in integrating your organization's strategic directions, work systems and work processes, and organizational performance results.

See also STAKEHOLDERS for the relationship between customers and others who might be affected by your programs and services.

CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT. Your students' and other customers' investment in or commitment to your organization and your educational program and service offerings. . It is based on your ongoing ability to serve their needs and build relationships so that they will continue using your programs and services. Characteristics of engaged students and other customers include retention, brand loyalty, willingness to make an effort to use and support—and to continue to use and support—your programs and services, and willingness to actively advocate for and recommend your brand and offerings.

DEPLOYMENT. The extent to which your organization applies an approach in addressing the requirements of an ED Criteria item. Evaluation of deployment considers how broadly and deeply the approach is applied in relevant work units throughout your organization.

Deployment is one of the factors considered in evaluating process items.

DIVERSITY. Personal differences among workforce members that enrich the work environment and are representative of your hiring and student communities. These differences address many variables, such as race, religion, color, gender, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, age and generation, education, geographic origin, and skill characteristics, as well as ideas, thinking, academic disciplines, and perspectives.

The Education Criteria refer to valuing and benefiting from the diversity of your workforce hiring and student communities. Capitalizing on both in building your workforce increases your opportunities for high performance; student and other customer, workforce, and community satisfaction; and student, and customer and workforce engagement. When embraced, diversity can drive cultural, economic, and social vitality and innovation.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES. Educational programs are activities that engage student in learning or contribute to scientific or scholarly investigation, including credit and noncredit courses, degree programs, research, outreach, community service, cooperative projects, programs leading to licensure, and overseas studies. Educational program design requires the identification of critical points (the earliest points possible) in the teaching and learning process for measurement, observation, or intervention. These might relate to curricula, course catalogs, programs of study, intervention, or extension programs.

Educational services are the services considered most important to student matriculation and success. These might relate to student counseling, advising, and tutoring; libraries and information technology; and student recruitment, enrollment, registration, placement, financial aid, and housing. They might also include food services, security, health services, transportation, and bookstores.

EFFECTIVE. How well a process or a measure addresses its intended purpose. Determining effectiveness requires (1) evaluating how well the process is aligned with the organization's needs and how well it is deployed, (2) evaluating the outcome of the measure as an indicator of process, program, or service performance, or (3) evaluating how well student and other customer requirements have been met or exceeded.

EMPOWERMENT. Giving people the authority and responsibility to make decisions and take actions. When people are empowered, decisions are made closest to the students and other customers (the front line), where work-related knowledge and understanding reside.

The purpose of empowering people is to enable them to satisfy students' needs, satisfy students and other customers on first contact, improve processes and increase productivity, and improve student learning and your organization's performance results, as well as to encourage collaboration. An empowered workforce requires information to make appropriate decisions; thus, your organization must provide that information in a timely and useful way.

ENGAGEMENT, CUSTOMER. See CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT.

ENGAGEMENT, WORKFORCE. See WORKFORCE ENGAGEMENT.

ETHICAL BEHAVIOR. The actions your organization takes to ensure that all its decisions, actions, and stakeholder interactions conform to its moral and professional principles of conduct. These principles should support all applicable laws and regulations and are the foundation for your organization's culture and values. They distinguish right from wrong.

Senior leaders should be role models for these principles of behavior. The principles apply to all people involved in your organization, from temporary workforce members to members of the board of directors. These principles benefit from regular communication and reinforcement. Senior leaders have the responsibility for the alignment of your organization's mission and vision with its ethical principles. Ethical behavior encompasses interactions with all stakeholders, including your workforce, students, parents, other customers, partners, suppliers, and local community members.

Well-designed and clearly articulated ethical principles empower people to make effective decisions with great confidence. In some organizations, ethical principles also serve as boundary conditions restricting behavior that otherwise could have adverse impacts on your organization and/or society.

See also the related core value, Ethics and Transparency.

EXCELLENCE. See PERFORMANCE EXCELLENCE.

GOALS. Future conditions or performance levels that your organization intends or desires to attain. Goals can be both short- and longer-term. They are ends that guide actions. Quantitative goals, frequently referred to as targets, include a numerical point or range. Targets might be desired performance based on comparative or competitive data. Stretch goals are goals for desired major, discontinuous (nonincremental) or "breakthrough"

improvements, usually in areas most critical to your organization's future success.

Goals can serve many purposes, including:

- clarifying strategic objectives and action plans to indicate how you will measure success,
- fostering teamwork by focusing on a common end,
- encouraging out-of-the-box thinking (innovation) to achieve a stretch goal, and,
- providing a basis for measuring and accelerating progress.

See also PERFORMANCE PROJECTIONS.

GOVERNANCE. The system of management and controls exercised in the stewardship of your organization. Governance includes the responsibilities of your organization's governing body (e.g., board of education, board of trustees, or overseers) and senior leaders; in some private education institutions, it may include owners/shareholders.

A combination of federal, state, and municipal regulations, bylaws, and policies document the rights and responsibilities of each of the parties and describe how they will direct and control your organization to ensure (1) accountability to stakeholders, (2) transparency of operations, and (3) fair treatment of all stakeholders. Governance processes may include the approval of strategic direction, policy creation and enforcement, the monitoring and evaluation of senior leaders' performance, the establishment of senior leaders' compensation and benefits, succession planning, financial auditing, and risk management. Ensuring effective governance is important to stakeholders' and the larger society's trust and to organizational effectiveness.

HIGH PERFORMANCE. Higher levels of overall organizational and individual performance, including quality, productivity, innovation rate, and cycle time. High performance results in improved service and value for students, other customers and other stakeholders.

Approaches to high performance vary in their form, their function, and the incentive systems used. High performance stems from and enhances workforce engagement. It involves cooperation among senior leaders, administrators, faculty, and staff, which may involve workforce bargaining units; cooperation among work units, often involving teams; empowerment of your people, including personal accountability; and workforce input into planning. It may involve learning and building individual and organizational skills; learning from other organizations; creating flexible job design and work assignments; maintaining a flattened organizational structure, where decision making is decentralized and decisions are made closest to students and other customers (the front line); and effectively using performance measures, including comparisons. Many organizations encourage high performance with monetary and nonmonetary incentives based on factors such as organizational performance, team and individual contributions, and skill building. Also, approaches to high performance usually seek to align your organization's structure, core competencies, work, jobs, workforce development, and incentives.

HOW. The systems and processes that your organization uses to achieve its mission requirements. In responding to "how" questions in Criteria categories 1–6, you should include information on approach (methods and measures), deployment, learning, and integration.

INDICATORS. See MEASURES AND INDICATORS.

INNOVATION(S). Making meaningful change to improve programs, services, processes, the organization, or societal well-being and create new value for stakeholders. (The Criteria use the term innovation as a process/activity and the term innovations to refer to the outcomes.) Innovation involves adopting an idea, process, technology, program, service, or business model that is either new or new to its proposed application. Innovations are discontinuous or "breakthrough" improvements in results, programs, services, processes, or societal well-being. Innovation benefits from a supportive environment, a process for identifying strategic opportunities, and a willingness to pursue intelligent risks.

Successful organizational innovation also entails knowledge sharing, a decision to implement, implementation, evaluation, and learning. Although innovation is often associated with technological innovation, it is applicable to all key organizational processes that can benefit from change through innovation, whether breakthrough improvement or a change in approach or outputs. Innovation may be present in organizations of all sizes, sectors, and maturity levels; in some cases, an organization's genesis is an innovative idea, process, technology, product, or change in organizational structure or business model.

See also BENCHMARKING, INTELLIGENT RISKS, and STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITIES.

INTEGRATION. The harmonization of plans, processes, information, resource decisions, workforce capability and capacity, actions, results, and analyses to support key organization-wide goals. Effective integration goes beyond alignment and is achieved when the individual components of an organizational performance management system operate as a fully interconnected unit.

Integration is one of the factors considered in evaluating both process and results items.

See also ALIGNMENT.

INTELLIGENT RISKS. Opportunities for which the potential short- or long-term gain or benefit outweighs the potential harm or loss to your organization if you do not explore them (sometimes referred to as a calculated risk). Taking intelligent risks requires a tolerance for failure and an expectation that innovation is not achieved by initiating only successful endeavors. At the outset, educational organizations must invest in potential successes while realizing that some will lead to failure.

The degree of risk that is intelligent to take will vary by the pace and level of threat and opportunity in the industry. In a rapidly changing environment with constant introductions of new programs, services, processes, or business models, there is an obvious need to invest more resources in intelligent risks than in a stable industry. In the latter, organizations must monitor and explore growth potential and change but, most likely, with a less significant commitment of resources.

See also STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITIES.

KEY. Major or most important; critical to achieving your intended outcome. The Education Criteria, for example, refer to key challenges, plans, work processes, and measures—those that are most important to your organization's success. They are the essential elements for pursuing or monitoring a desired outcome. Key is generally defined as around the most significant five (e.g., around five key challenges).

KNOWLEDGE ASSETS. Your organization's accumulated intellectual resources; the knowledge possessed by your organization and its workforce in the form of information, ideas, learning, understanding, memory, insights, cognitive and technical skills, and capabilities. These knowledge assets reside in your workforce, curricula, software, databases, documents, guides, policies and procedures. Knowledge assets also reside within students, other customers, suppliers, and partners.

Knowledge assets are the know-how that your organization has available to use, invest, and grow. Building and managing knowledge assets are key components of creating value for your stakeholders and sustaining a competitive advantage.

LEADERSHIP SYSTEM. The way leadership is exercised, formally and informally, throughout your organization; the basis for key decisions and the way they are made, communicated, and carried out. A leadership system includes structures and mechanisms for making decisions; ensuring two-way communication; selecting and developing leaders, administrators, department heads, and faculty leader; and reinforcing values, ethical behavior, directions, and performance expectations.

An effective leadership system respects workforce members' and other stakeholders' capabilities and requirements, and it sets high expectations for performance and performance Improvement. It builds loyalties and teamwork based on your organization's vision and values and the pursuit of shared goals. It encourages and supports initiative, innovation, and appropriate risk taking; subordinates organizational structure to purpose and function; and avoids chains of command that require long decision paths. An effective leadership system includes mechanisms for leaders to conduct self-examination, receive feedback, and improve.

LEARNING. New knowledge or skills acquired through evaluation, study, experience, and innovation. In addition to its focus on student learning, the Baldrige framework refers to two distinct kinds of learning: organizational learning and learning by the people in your workforce. Organizational learning is achieved through research and development, evaluation and improvement cycles, ideas and input from the workforce and stakeholders, the sharing of best practices, and benchmarking. Workforce learning is achieved through education, training, and developmental opportunities that further individual growth.

To be effective, learning should be embedded in the way your organization operates. Learning contributes to a competitive advantage and ongoing success for your organization and workforce.

Learning is one of the factors considered in evaluating process items.

LEVELS. Numerical information that places or positions your organization's results and performance on a meaningful measurement scale. Performance levels permit evaluation relative to past performance, projections, goals, and appropriate comparisons.

MEASURES AND INDICATORS. Numerical information that quantifies the input, output, and performance dimensions of processes, programs, projects, services, and the overall organization (outcomes). Measures and indicators might be simple (derived from one measurement) or composite.

The Education Criteria do not distinguish between measures and indicators. However, some users of these terms prefer "indicator" (1) when the measurement relates to performance but does not measure it directly (e.g., the number of complaints is an indicator but not a direct measure of dissatisfaction) and (2) when the measurement is a predictor ("leading

indicator") of some more significant performance (e.g., a gain in student performance or satisfaction might be a leading indicator of student persistence).

MISSION. Your organization's overall function. The mission answers the question, "What is your organization attempting to accomplish?" The mission might define students, other customers or markets served; distinctive or core competencies, or technologies used.

MULTIPLE QUESTIONS. The details of an Education Criteria item, as expressed in the individual questions under each lettered area to address. Multiple questions are those listed under the boldface questions.

Even high-performing, high-scoring users of the Baldrige framework are not likely to be able to address all the multiple requirements with equal capability or success.

OVERALL REQUIREMENTS. The most important features of an Education Criteria item, as elaborated in the first question (the leading question in boldface) in each paragraph under each lettered area to address.

PARTNERS. Key organizations or individuals who are working in concert with your organization to achieve a common goal or improve performance. Typically, partnerships are formal arrangements for a specific aim or purpose, such as to achieve a strategic objective or deliver a specific program or service.

Formal partnerships usually last for an extended period and involve a clear understanding of the partners' individual and mutual roles and benefits.

See also COLLABORATORS.

PERFORMANCE. Outputs and their outcomes obtained from student learning, processes, programs, students, and other customers that permit you to evaluate and compare your organization's results to performance projections, standards, past results, goals, and other organizations' results.

The Education Criteria address four types of performance: (1) program and service, (2) student- and other customer focused, (3) operational, and (4) budgetary, financial and marketplace.

Program and service performance is performance relative to measures and indicators of product and service characteristics that are important to students and other customers. Examples include the effectiveness of curriculum and instruction, assessment of student learning, participation in professional development opportunities, and student placement following program completion.

Student- and other customer-focused performance is performance relative to measures and indicators of students' and other customers' perceptions, reactions, and behaviors. Examples include admissions, retention, student and other customer complaints, and student and other customer survey results.

Operational performance is workforce, leadership, and organizational performance (including ethical and legal compliance) relative to measures and indicators of effectiveness, efficiency, and accountability. Examples include cycle time, productivity, productivity, accreditation, waste reduction, workforce turnover, workforce cross-training rates, regulatory compliance, fiscal accountability, strategy accomplishment, and community involvement. Operational performance might be measured at the program, school, class, or individual level; key work process level; and organizational level.

Budgetary, financial and marketplace performance is performance relative to measures of cost containment, revenue, and market position, including budget utilization, asset growth, and market share. Examples include instructional and general administration expenditures per student as a percentage of budget, program expenditures as a percentage of budget; performance to budget, annual budget increases or decreases; income, expenses, reserves, endowments, and annual grants/awards; resources redirected to education from other area; scholarship growth; the percentage of budget for research; the budget for public service; and market gains.

PERFORMANCE EXCELLENCE. An integrated approach to organizational performance management that results in (1) delivery of ever-improving value to student, other customers and stakeholders, contributing to improved education quality and student learning, as well as ongoing organizational success; (2) improvement of your organization's overall effectiveness and capabilities; and (3) learning for the organization and for people in the workforce. The Baldrige Organizational Profile, Education Criteria, core values and concepts, and scoring guidelines provide a framework and assessment tool for understanding your organization's strengths and opportunities for improvement and, thus, for guiding your planning toward achieving higher performance and striving for excellence.

PERFORMANCE PROJECTIONS. Estimates of your organization's future performance. Projections should be based on an understanding of past performance, rates of improvement, and assumptions about future internal changes and innovations, as well as assumptions about changes in the external environment that result in internal changes. Thus, performance projections can serve as a key tool in managing your operations and in developing and implementing your strategy.

Performance projections state your *expected* future performance. Goals state your *desired* future performance. Performance projections for your competitors or similar organizations may indicate challenges facing your organization and areas where breakthrough performance or innovation is needed. In areas where your organization intends to achieve breakthrough performance or innovation, your performance projections and your goals may overlap.

See also GOALS.

PROCESS. Linked activities with the purpose of producing a program or service for a customer (user) within or outside your organization. Generally, processes involve combinations of people, machines, tools, techniques, materials, and improvements in a defined series of steps or actions. Processes rarely operate in isolation and must be considered in relation to other processes that impact them. In some situations, processes might require adherence to a specific sequence of steps, with documentation (sometimes formal) of procedures and requirements, including well-defined measurement and control steps.

In the delivery of services, particularly those that directly involve student and other customers, such as educational programs and services, process is used more generally to spell out what delivering that service entails, possibly including a preferred or expected sequence. If a sequence is critical, the process needs to include information that helps customers understand and follow the sequence. Such service processes also require guidance for service providers on handling contingencies related to customers' possible actions or behaviors.

In knowledge work, such as strategic planning, research, development, and analysis, process does not necessarily imply formal sequences of steps. Rather, it implies general understandings of competent performance in such areas as timing, options to include, evaluation, and reporting. Sequences might arise as part of these understandings.

Process is one of the two dimensions (along with results) evaluated in a Baldrige-based assessment. This evaluation is based on four factors: approach, deployment, learning, and integration.

PRODUCTIVITY. Measures of the efficiency of resource use.

Although the term is often applied to single factors, such as the workforce (labor productivity), machines, materials, energy, and capital, the concept also applies to the total resources used in producing outputs. Using an aggregate measure of overall productivity allows you to determine whether the net effect of overall changes in a process—possibly involving resource trade-offs—is beneficial.

PROJECTIONS, PERFORMANCE. See PERFORMANCE PROJECTIONS.

RESILIENCE. An organization's ability to anticipate, prepare for, and recover from disasters, emergencies, and other disruptions, and when disruptions occur, to protect and enhance workforce and customer engagement, supply-network and financial performance, organizational productivity, and community well-being.

Beyond the ability to "bounce back" to a prior state when a disruption occurs, resilience means having a plan in place that allows your organization to continue operating as needed during disruptions. To achieve resilience, leaders must cultivate the agility to respond quickly to both opportunities and threats, adapt strategy to changing circumstances, and

have robust governance with a culture of trust. Organizations must adopt an ecosystem mindset, embrace data-rich thought processes, and equip their faculty and staff with ongoing learning of new skills.

RESULTS. Outputs and outcomes achieved by your organization. Results are evaluated based on current performance; performance relative to appropriate comparisons; the rate, breadth, and importance of performance improvements; and the relationship of results measures to key organizational performance requirements.

Results are one of the two dimensions (along with processes) evaluated in a Baldrige-based assessment. This evaluation is based on four factors: levels, trends, comparisons, and integration.

SEGMENT. One part of your organization's student, other customer, market, program or service offering, or workforce base. Segments typically have common characteristics that allow logical groupings. In Education Criteria results items, segmentation refers to disaggregating results data in a way that allows for meaningful analysis of your organization's performance. It is up to each organization to determine the factors that it uses to segment its students, other customers, markets, programs, and services, and workforce.

Understanding segments is critical to identifying the distinct needs and expectations of different student and other customer, market, and workforce groups and to tailoring programs and service offerings to meet their needs and expectations. For example, you might segment your market based on program or service delivery channel (e.g., classroom or web); by students' career interests, learning styles, living status (e.g., residential versus commuter), mobility or special needs; or, if applicable, by designated accountability subgroups. You might segment the workforce based on geography, skills,

needs, work assignments, or job classifications.

SENIOR LEADERS. Your organization's senior management group or team. In many organizations, this consists of the head of the organization and his or her direct reports. Senior leaders might include administrators, department heads, and faculty leaders.

STAKEHOLDERS. All groups that are or might be affected by your organization's actions and success. Key stakeholders might include customers, parent organizations, the workforce, collaborators, governing boards, alumni, employers, other schools, regulatory bodies, funders, taxpayers, policy makers, suppliers, partners, and local and professional communities.

See also CUSTOMER.

STRATEGIC ADVANTAGES. Those benefits that exert a decisive influence on your organization's likelihood of future success. These advantages are frequently sources of current and future competitive success relative to other providers of similar educational programs and services. Strategic advantages generally arise from either or both of two sources: (1) core competencies, which focus on building and expanding on your organization's internal capabilities, and (2) strategically important external resources, which your organization shapes and leverages through key external relationships and partnerships.

When an organization realizes both sources of strategic advantage, it can amplify its unique internal capabilities by capitalizing on complementary capabilities in other organizations.

See STRATEGIC CHALLENGES and STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES for the relationship among strategic advantages, strategic challenges, and the strategic objectives your organization articulates to address its challenges and advantages.

STRATEGIC CHALLENGES. Those pressures that exert a decisive influence on your organization's likelihood of future success. These challenges are frequently driven by your organization's anticipated collaborative environment and/or competitive position in the future relative to other providers of similar educational programs and services. While not exclusively so, strategic challenges are generally externally driven. However, in responding to externally driven strategic challenges, your organization may face internal strategic challenges.

External strategic challenges may relate to student, other customer, or market needs or expectations; changes in educational programs and services; technological changes; or budgetary, financial, societal, and other risks or needs. Internal strategic challenges may relate to capabilities or human and other resources. Politically based perspectives may drive challenges at the local, regional, and/or national levels with a direct or indirect impact on the organization.

See STRATEGIC ADVANTAGES and STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES for the relationship among strategic challenges, strategic advantages, and the strategic objectives your organization articulates to address its challenges and advantages.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES. The aims or responses that your organization articulates to address major change or improvement, competitiveness or social issues, and business advantages. Strategic objectives are generally focused both externally and internally and relate to significant student, other customer, market, program, service, or technological opportunities and challenges (strategic challenges). Broadly stated, they are what your organization must achieve to remain or become competitive and ensure its long-term success. Strategic objectives set your organization's longer-term directions and guide resource allocation and redistribution.

See ACTION PLANS for the relationship between strategic objectives and action plans and for an example of each.

STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITIES. Prospects for new or changed products, services, processes, business models (including strategic alliances), or markets. They arise from outside-the-box thinking, brainstorming, capitalizing on serendipity, research and innovation processes, nonlinear extrapolation of current conditions, and other approaches to imagining a different future.

The generation of ideas that lead to strategic opportunities benefits from an environment that encourages nondirected, free thought. Choosing which strategic opportunities to pursue involves consideration of relative risk, financial and otherwise, and then making intelligent choices (intelligent risks).

See also INTELLIGENT RISKS.

SYSTEM. A set of interrelated leadership and management elements of an organization used to integrate approaches, establish policies and objectives, and manage processes to achieve those objectives. The overarching performance system depicted by the Baldrige Excellence Framework consists of six process categories and a results category. Organizational systems establish processes, procedures, and responsibilities for achieving policies and objectives; and they may contain elements such as management structures (e.g., groups or committees), measurements, and multiple integrated systematic approaches used to conduct the work and support the organization. Organizational systems are generally focused internally, whereas the broader concept work systems includes internal work processes and external resources of the organization.

See also WORK SYSTEMS.

SYSTEMATIC. Well-ordered, repeatable, and exhibiting the use of data and information so that learning is possible. Approaches are systematic if they build in the opportunity for evaluation, improvement, and sharing, thereby permitting a gain in maturity.

TRENDS. Numerical information that shows the direction and rate of change of your organization's results or the consistency of its performance over time. Trends show your organization's performance in a time sequence.

Ascertaining a trend generally requires a minimum of three historical (not projected) data points. Defining a statistically valid trend requires more data points. The cycle time of the process being measured determines the time between the data points for establishing a trend. Shorter cycle times demand more frequent measurement, while longer cycle times might require longer periods for a meaningful trend.

Examples of trends called for by the Education Criteria and scoring guidelines include data on student learning; results for student, other customer, and workforce satisfaction and dissatisfaction, budgetary and financial performance, market performance, and operational performance, such as cycle time and productivity.

VALUE. The perceived worth of a program, process, asset, or function relative to its cost and possible alternatives. Organizations frequently use value considerations to determine the benefits of various options relative to their costs, such as the value of various educational program and service combinations to students and other customers. Your organization needs to understand what different stakeholder groups value and then deliver value to each group. This frequently requires balancing value among customers and other stakeholders, such as your workforce and the community.

VALUES. The guiding principles and behaviors that embody how your organization and its people are expected to operate. Values influence and reinforce your organization's desired culture. Values influence and reinforce your organization's desired culture. They support and guide the decisions made by every workforce member, helping your organization accomplish its mission and attain its vision appropriately. Examples of values include demonstrating integrity and fairness in all interactions, exceeding students' and other customers' expectations, valuing individuals and diversity, protecting the environment, and striving for performance excellence every day.

VISION. Your organization's desired future state. The vision describes where your organization is headed, what it intends to be, or how it wishes to be perceived in the future.

VOICE OF THE CUSTOMER. Your process for capturing student- and other customer-related information. Voice-of-the-customer processes are intended to be proactive and continuously innovative to capture stated, unstated, and anticipated student and other customer requirements, expectations, and desires. The goal is to achieve customer engagement. Listening to the voice of the customer might include gathering and integrating various types of student and other customer data, such as survey data, focus group findings, social media data and commentary, complaint data, that affect students' and other customers' relationship and engagement decisions.

WORK PROCESSES. Your organization's most important internal value-creation processes. They might include program and service design and delivery; student support; business and support processes. They are the processes that involve the majority of your organization's workforce and produce student, other customer, and stakeholder value.

Your key work processes are always accomplished by your workforce. They frequently relate to your core competencies, the factors that determine your success relative to competitors and organizations offering similar programs and services, and the factors your senior leaders consider for important for organizational growth. In contrast, projects are unique work processes intended to produce an outcome and then go out of existence.

WORK SYSTEMS. The coordinated combination of internal work processes and external resources that you need to develop and produce educational programs and services, deliver them to your students, and succeed in your market. Within your work systems, internal work processes are those that involve your workforce. External resources may include processes performed by your key suppliers, partners, contractors, and collaborators, as well as other components of your supply network needed to produce and deliver your educational programs and services and carry out your business and support processes. These internal work processes and external resources function together to accomplish your organizations work.

Decisions about work systems are strategic. These decisions involve protecting and capitalizing on core competencies and mitigating risk. These decisions you make have implications for your organizational structure, people, work processes, and equipment/technology.

WORKFORCE. All people actively supervised by your organization and involved in accomplishing your organization's work, including paid faculty and staff (e.g., permanent, part-time, temporary, on-site, and remote, as well as contract faculty and staff supervised by your organization) and some volunteers (e.g., students/interns), as appropriate. Your workforce includes administrators and supervisors at all levels.

WORKFORCE CAPABILITY. Your organization's ability to ensure sufficient staffing levels to accomplish your work processes and deliver your programs and services to students and other customers, including the ability to meet seasonal or varying demand levels.

WORKFORCE ENGAGEMENT. The extent of workforce members' emotional and intellectual commitment to accomplishing your organization's work, mission, and vision. Organizations with high levels of workforce engagement are often characterized by high-performance work environments in which people are motivated to do their utmost for their students' and other customers' benefit and the organization's success.

In general, workforce members feel engaged when they find personal meaning and motivation in their work and receive interpersonal and workplace support. An engaged workforce benefits from trusting relationships, a safe and cooperative environment, good communication and information flow, empowerment, and accountability for performance. Key factors contributing to engagement include training and career development, effective recognition and reward systems, equal opportunity and fair treatment, and family-friendliness.

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