**Examiner Tip Sheet** | Independent Review

**Welcome to Independent Review!**

The purpose of Independent Review is for each team member to independently evaluate the applicant’s processes and results by identifying areas of strength and opportunities for improvement (OFIs) relative to the Baldrige Excellence Framework. The following pages contain helpful tips and step-by-step instructions for completing your Independent Review.

Many examiners have found this stage of the evaluation process to be both challenging and valuable. As you immerse yourself in gathering evidence and suggesting insights to help your applicant organization improve, your own personal learning on how to apply the Baldrige framework will add tremendous value to your organization and enhance your personal effectiveness in your own role.

***A few things to remember before you begin…***

1. Start early! Set a schedule that works for you and stick to it. **Finish your Independent Review at least two weeks prior to the consensus meeting** to allow time for category leaders to synthesize.
2. Your goal is to help the applicant take the next step. Focus on what is important to them.
3. Your teammates are going to rely on your Independent Review work. Make sure it is as clear and concise as possible (make note of page numbers, figure numbers, etc. for quick reference).
4. Information is not always in the designated area; you may need to pull from other sections of the application.
5. Remember: We are evaluating the applicant only against the Baldrige Excellence Framework.
6. Be sure to refer to the resources that are available on the Examiner Resources page of KyCPE’s website.
7. If you have trouble downloading documents from Examiner Resources, try updating your web browser (e.g. Internet Explorer, Mozilla FireFox, etc.) or contact KyCPE for additional assistance.
8. You can ***always*** contact KyCPE for help at (XXX) XXX-XXXX or **contact@tncpe.org**.

***Trust the Process!***

**Step-by-Step Instructions**

**For Independent Review**

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| **STEPS** | **ACTIONS** |
| ***Step 1:* Assemble your materials** | In order to complete your independent review, you will need the following materials:1. The assigned application
2. Access to the 2015 Baldrige Excellence Framework

The Baldrige Excellence Framework booklet contains the *Criteria for Performance Excellence,* the Scoring Guidelines, and the Core Values and Concepts.1. These **step-by-step instructions.**
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| ***Step 2:*****Read the Intent to Apply and the Organizational Profile to determine any potential Conflict of Interest*****(1 Hour)*** | Determine if you have a Conflict of Interest.If you do, call Dan Dufresne (502) 472-8882If not, complete the No Conflict of Interest and send to Dan Dufresne. (dgd5385@aol.com) |
| ***Step 3:*****Review the Baldrige Excellence Framework*****(1 hour)*** | Now that you are ready to begin your independent review, the first step is to review the Baldrige Excellence Framework:* *Criteria for Performance Excellence* (Pages 4-29)
* Scoring System and Scoring Guidelines (pages 30-35)
* Criteria Response Guidelines (pages 36-38)
* Core Values and Concepts (pages 39-43)

***\*Tip:*** *Put a paperclip or tab on the Glossary of Key Terms (pages 47-54)* |
| ***Step 4:*****Read the application*****(3 – 5 hours)*** | Read the entire application from beginning to end.* As you read, make note of the applicant’s key processes and any results you would expect to see related to these processes.
* Consider highlighting key words in each paragraph, or using separate highlighters for A-D-L-I or the different categories. It’s okay to mark up and make notes on the application – find the system that works for you!
* Also note any initial thoughts you have regarding gaps in the applicant’s responses or things to watch for as you begin your evaluation.
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| ***Step 5:*****Identify Key Factors** | **Create a list of key factors for the applicant.**A ***key factor*** is an attribute of an organization or its environment that influences the way the organization operates and key challenges its faces. **Examiners use key factors to focus their assessments on what is most important to the applicant.*** Access the Key Factors Worksheet on the QE Workbook
* Read the Criteria questions for items P.1 and P.2.
* As you read the Org. Profile, which responds to these questions, identify key factors (organizational attributes that influence how the organization operates),
* A majority of key factors will be found in the Org. Profile. However, you may also find them in the applicant’s responses to the Criteria items, the Intent to Apply form, etc.
* Enter these key factors into the Key Factors Worksheet.
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| ***Step6:******Evaluate each Item in Categories 1 – 7******(2 – 3 hours per item)*** | **Complete the seven-step item evaluation process for each item and record your observations in the appropriate Worksheet.**1. **Read the Criteria**

Read the Criteria item to refresh your memory and help you understand the item requirements. For example, when evaluating item 2.1, read Criteria item 2.1.1. **Assign key factors**

Determine the most relevant key factors for the item.* Review the master list of key factors you developed from the Org. Profile
* Considering what the Criteria is asking, which of these organizational attributes would have the greatest influence on the applicant’s responses to the item requirements?
* Click on the appropriate Item Worksheet
* Enter the relevant key factor number in the Key Factor cell next to the appropriate Item Ref.
1. **Read the relevant section of the application**

For example, when evaluating item 2.1, read the applicant’s response to item 2.1. For **process items** (Categories 1-6), identify **processes** the applicant uses to address item requirements or and **gaps** between the Criteria and the applicant’s response. For **results items** (Category 7), fill out the appropriate **results** **matrix** using the color coding to identify strengths and gaps. 1. **Analyze the applicant’s processes and results using evaluation factors.**

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| **Processes (A-D-L-I)**Evaluate the **processes** you have identified in the application using the process evaluation factors:  |

* Evaluate the applicant’s ***Approach (A)*** by considering whether the applicant’s process is appropriate, effective, and systematic (well-ordered, repeatable, and uses data).
* Evaluate the extent of the applicant’s ***Deployment (D)*** by considering whether the approach you identified is applied consistently and by the appropriate work units.
* Evaluate the applicant’s cycles of ***Learning (L)*** by considering how the approach has been refined or improved, how it encourages innovation, and whether improvements are shared across other work units and processes.
* Evaluate the extent of the applicant’s ***Integration (I)*** by considering whether the approach you identified is aligned with the organization’s needs identified in the Org. Profile and how the process interacts with the applicant’s other processes (e.g. Have the correct measures been chosen? Does this approach provide output or data that should be used by another process?).

**Results (Le-T-C-I)** Evaluate the **results** you have identified in the application using the process evaluation factors: * Evaluate the applicant’s ***Performance Levels (Le)*** by considering its current performance on a meaningful measurement scale. Performance levels permit evaluation relative to past performance, projections, goals and appropriate comparisons.
* Evaluate the applicant’s ***Performance Trends (T)*** by considering the direction and rate of change of its results. Generally, a minimum of three historical data points is needed to begin to ascertain a trend.
* Evaluate the applicant’s ***Comparisons (C )***  by considering its performance relative to its competitors, organizations providing similar products and services, industry averages, or best-in-class organizations. The maturity of the organization should help determine which comparisons are most relevant.
* Evaluate the extent of the applicant’s ***Integration (I)*** by considering which results measures address important customer, product/service, market, and action plan performance requirements identified in the Org. Profile and in process items; include valid indicators of future performance; and are harmonized across process and work units to support the organization-wide goals.

***Tip:*** *Review the* ***Process & Results Item Evaluation Factors*** *documents on the Examiner Resources page of KyCPE’s website.*1. **Write 6 – 10 strength and OFI observations for the item**

Based on your analysis, identify the 6 – 10 most critical strengths and OFIs for the applicant and document them in the appropriate Item Worksheet.* For **process items** (Categories 1-6), begin by reviewing the **processes** and **gaps** you noted during Step #3. Consider whether any of the gaps you identified are important to the applicant. If so, these may be potential OFI observations.
* For **results items** (Category 7), begin by reviewing the **results** and **gaps** you noted during Step #3. Consider whether any of the gaps you identified are important to the applicant. If so, these may be potential OFI observations.

Next look at the analysis you completed during Step #4 using A-D-L-I (process items) and Le-T-C-I (results items).* For **process items**, identify areas of strength (evidence of systematic approaches, evidence of appropriate deployment, evidence of cycles of learning, evidence of integration) and areas of opportunity (lack of an approach, incomplete deployment, unclear cycles of learning, no evidence of integration).
* For **results items**, identify areas of strength (good organizational performance levels, beneficial trends, relevant comparisons, or evidence of integration) and areas of opportunity (lack of performance levels, missing or adverse trends, little to no comparative data, or no evidence of integration). Use the analysis of the Results Matrix to help identify areas of strength and areas of opportunity.

Using the applicant’s key factors, determine which of these strength and OFI observations may be most critical, and enter them into the appropriate Item Worksheet in the QE Workbook. * For the Item Ref. being addressed, enter your initials in the cell provided.
* Enter the Key Factor number(s) relevant to the observation.
* For strength observations, select the Strength Evidence cell and write the “nugget” of your strength observation. For example for Item Ref. 2.1a(1), you might enter “Systematic strategic planning process, includes broad stakeholder input, systematic reviewed for improvement.”
* List the specific evidence you observed in the application. **Use figure numbers where appropriate to refer to evidence charts, tables, and graphics found in the application.**
* Use the provided checkboxes to indicate which evaluation factors your strength references. For example, checking A, D and L indicates a systematic approach, deployed appropriately with cycles of learning.
* In Column O, enter H, M, or L to indicate the priority of the strength. “H” flags a high-priority strength or a “Double Strength”**.**
* For OFI observations, select the Opportunity for Improvement cell and write the “nugget” of your OFI observation. For example for Item Ref. 2.1b, you might enter “It is not clear how strategic objectives align with balanced scorecards.”
* Use the provided checkboxes to indicate which evaluation factors your OFI references. For example, checking Approach and Deployment for an OFI observation indicates that approach and deployment are lacking.
1. **Score the Item**

Determine a scoring range and final score for the item you evaluated: * Review the Criteria requirements.
* Review the strength and OFI observations you drafted for the item, particularly noting any ++ or -- observations.
* Note the balance and importance of these observations relative to the item requirements and key factors.
* For **process items**, begin by reading the description of the 50-65% range in the Process Scoring Guidelines. Consider whether this range accurately describes the applicant’s **Approach (A), Deployment (D), Learning (L), and Integration (I)** for the item.
* For **results items**, begin by reading the description of the 50-65% range in the Results Scoring Guidelines. Consider whether this range accurately describes the applicant’s **Levels (Le), Trends (T), Comparisons (C), and Integration (I)** for the item
* Move up or down the six ranges until you find the “best fit.” The “best fit” range takes into account the descriptions of all the individual evaluation factors. Considering the applicant’s performance holistically, click on the most appropriate range from the drop-down box at the bottom of the screen.

*The applicant does not need to demonstrate all the characteristics in the selected range; rather, the score is based on a holistic view of the four evaluation factors in aggregate.* * Finally, determine a percentage score that is a multiple of 5 for the item. Select the “best fit” percentage score in the “Item Score” box and click “Save.”
1. **Write two feedback-ready comments for the item: one strength and one OFI**

The purpose of a comment is to tell the applicant what it does well or what is needed to improve. Good comments convey a single thought and provide the applicant with meaningful (value-added) feedback that is easy to understand. Use this process to draft your comment: * Be sure your comment is grounded in the Criteria.
* **Start with a sentence stating the “nugget” or main point of your comment**, which links to an evaluation factor (A-D-L-I or Le-T-C-I).
* **Give one or two supporting examples from the application**. If your OFI refers to a gap (something missing from the application), tell what is missing (e.g. “The applicant lacks comparative data for many of its operational effectiveness measures”).
* **Finish with a “so what” statement** to indicate why this comment is important or relevant to the applicant. The “so what” is usually based on a key factor.
* Type your comment in the box labeled “Feedback Ready Comment” on the Strength or Opportunity for Improvement panel.
* Indicate an item reference and whether the comment is a double-strength or double-OFI in the boxes to the right.
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