**Instructions for Completing   
training Prework**

**NEW Examiners**

**Note: You must have completed the nine online learning modules on the** [**On-Boarding page**](http://www.nist.gov/baldrige/examiners/resource_center/onboarding.cfm) **under the Online Learning section prior to beginning this part of your prework.**

The purposes of this prework assignment are (1) to prepare you for a successful classroom experience and (2) familiarize you with the Independent Review portion of the application evaluation process through your creating a partial Independent Review (IR) Scorebook. **Pre work must be completed prior to the classroom session**. For those using BOSS, your progress will be checked. Those paying tuition are on the honor system.

The following seven-part process and Web page links will guide examiners in creating the partial IR Scorebook as well as analyzing the meaning of selected portions of the *Criteria for Performance Excellence* booklet.

**PART ONE: You will need the *Criteria for Performance Excellence* booklet to complete your prework. To obtain the Criteria, you must log in to the** [**Examiner Application Program**](https://www-s.nist.gov/BaldrigeExamAppl/index.cfm)**with your username and password (same username and password you used to submit your training week preference and post-selection data).**

**PART TWO: You are likely to be on the correct Web page already to find the following prework materials. If not, go to the** [**On the Board page**](http://www.nist.gov/baldrige/examiners/resource_center/ontheboard.cfm) **of the Baldrige Web site now. Locate and become familiar with these resources in the Examiner Training Prework section:**

1. 2014 Buckeye City Schools Case Study (Please print a copy.)
2. 2014 Code of Ethical Conduct (Please print a copy.)
3. Process Sample Item 5.1 Independent Review (IR) Worksheet and Results Sample Item 7.3 IR Worksheet (In Part Three below, please follow these examples, paying particular attention to format, brevity, and clarity.)
4. [Step-by-Step for Independent Review](http://www.nist.gov/baldrige/examiners/resource_center/upload/2013_Step_by_Step_for_Independent_Review.pdf) (Please print a copy.)
5. Comment Guidelines (We recommend that you print a copy.)
6. 2014 Key Factors Worksheet Sample
7. 2014 Considerations for Reviewing Small Organizations (MS-Word)

**PART THREE: Access BOSS (Baldrige Online Scoring Solution).**

1. By close of business on March 25th, you will receive two e-mails from BOSSAdm@nist.gov:
   1. one with your user ID, a link to BOSS, and instructions on how to access BOSS
   2. one with a temporary password
2. [**Sign on to BOSS**](https://www-s.nist.gov/boss/)and become familiar with the navigation and functionality.
3. A Help Topics PDF document can be found in the Examiner Training Prework section.

**PART FOUR:** **Evaluate case study items 2.1, 4.1, 4.2, 5.2, 6.1, 6.2, and 7.4 (using BOSS).**

a. Read the Criteria for Performance Excellence (pages 4–27 in the 2013–2014 *Criteria for Performance Excellence* booklet).

b. Read the case study, highlighting and/or making notes on anything you feel may be important to the evaluation of this (fictitious) award applicant. **NOTE: If this organization has less than 500 employees you will need to refer to the “2014 Considerations for Small Organizations” document.**

c. Draft an initial list of *key factors*. A *key factor* is an attribute of an organization or its environment that has a significant influence on the way the organization operates and the key challenges it faces. Examples may include its mission, vision, and values; strategic challenges; and workforce groups and segments. Key factors do not include descriptions of processes. Examiners use their best judgment to determine key factors. Examiners then use key factors to focus their assessment on what is important to the applicant. Key factors are found by reading the applicant’s responses to Organizational Profile, P.1 and P.2, pages 4–6 in the 2014–2014 Criteria booklet.   
  
Your draft list of key factors should look similar to the 2014 Key Factors Worksheet Sample, which can be found in the online prework materials*.*

Now list the key factors on the ***Key Factors*** tab in BOSS.

- For each key factor you enter, click *Add Key Factor*.

- Indicate the area of the Organizational Profile that applies to the key   
 factor (e.g., P.1a, P.1b, etc.)

- Record a label and the text for the key factor.

Note: While the majority of key factors are found in the Organizational   
 Profile, they can also sometimes be found in the Eligibility Certification  
 Form as well as throughout the application.

d. For each item (2.1, 4.1, 4.2, 5.2, 6.1, 6.2 and 7.4), complete the following six-step process: (New examiners may want to start with item 5.2)

(1) **Read the Criteria** item requirements (in the Criteria booklet) to gain a good understanding of that specific item.

(2) **Determine and select the most relevant key factors for the item**.

In BOSS, review the list of key factors you created to determine the attributes of the organization that would influence its responses to the item requirements.

Select the most relevant four to six key factors for the item. These will be a  
 subset of those on your key factor list and may even be a subset of one key  
 factor (e.g., one strategic challenge that is most relevant to the item rather   
 than the entire set of strategic challenges).

(3) **Read the relevant response to the item in the application**.

Identify the processes or approach the applicant uses to meet Criteria item requirements. In noting the processes or approach, use the applicant’s wording from the application rather than using your own words.

(4) **Analyze the applicant’s response to each item.**

Read the response against the relevant Criteria requirements, and identify around six combined “strengths” and “OFIs.” Record strengths and OFIs in BOSS on the IR Worksheet. For each strength or OFI, follow these rules:

* + - Select the relevant key factors that influence this approach or process (e.g., an organization’s varied employees, shifts, sites).
    - Enter the strength (or OFI) as a brief statement of an approach. It should represent the responsiveness of the applicant to the Criteria, given its key factors.
    - Provide the evidence that supports the statement as a strength (example: “the approach XYZ has six steps, was expanded in 2011, and includes a final step for evaluation and feedback”).
    - Select the appropriate evaluation factors—approach, deployment, cycles of learning, and integration—that apply to this strength (or OFI), keeping the following factors and questions in mind. Consider the specific evidence that you observed.
      * Determine the significance of the strength(or OFI) to your evaluation of the applicant and whether it should be “doubled” (indicating high importance).
      * Provide the item’s specific areas to address to which the processes or methods relate (e.g., a[1], b[1,3], or c[1–3]).
      * Use the arrows to arrange the order of the strengths and OFIs, starting with the most important feedback to give the applicant.
      * Check your work, eliminating any conflicts between strengths and OFIs (i.e., when a strength contradicts an OFI for the same Criteria requirement).

*Sample IR Worksheets for items 5.1and 7.3 can be found in the online prework materials.*

(5)**Draft one “feedback-ready” strength comment and one “feedback-ready” OFI (opportunity for improvement) comment.**

From your strengths and OFIs, select one of each (your choice) to develop into feedback- ready comments. The purpose of this step is to allow a team leader to check and see if you are on the right track, and allow the team leader to provide you feedback on your comment writing. For the purpose of this training, you will receive feedback in your classroom training session. In writing your comments, please follow the following rules.

Use the Comment Guidelines (found in the online prework materials) to craft (in BOSS) two actionable, feedback-ready comments that capture the findings of your analysis, using the strengths and OFIs with the key evidence that you have listed.

Each strength or OFI should include

* a concise opening sentence that expresses a single thought—the “nugget” (or essence, or main point) of the comment
* one or two examples (including figure numbers, if applicable)—referring to the approach or results given in the applicant’s response to Criteria questions
* language that shows the relevance (why the comment is important) to the applicant by tying the main point to one of the applicant’s key factors. You can also ask yourself, “What evaluation factor is relevant to this strength or OFI?” Thinking this way may help you focus the comment on the importance to the applicant (e.g., if the important element of the comment is deployment, there may be no need to add text on approach, learning, and integration).

(6) **Determine the scoring range and the score for the item.**

Determine the applicant’s overall scoring range for the item. Start by reviewing the Criteria requirements and the strengths and OFIs for the item.

Note the balance and importance of strengths and OFIs, including those that are doubled and those that are relative to item requirements and the Key Factors.

On the *Scoring* page for the item, review the Scoring Guidelines descriptions and determine the range that is, overall, most descriptive of the organization’s achievement level.

***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 item.***

As a check, read the description of the ranges above and below the selected range to determine where the applicant’s score falls within that range.

Finally, determine a percentage score that is a multiple of 5 for the item. Record the percentage score in the space provided at the lower right side of the *Scoring* page.

**Repeat this process (steps 1 through 6) for all of the assigned items. Print your completed IR Worksheets, and bring them to class for feedback.**

**PART FIVE: Summarize the essential meaning of Criteria items 1.1, 1.2, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 7.1, 7.2, and 7.5. (Create a Word document to capture this work).**

1. Write a 50-word (or shorter) description of each of the Criteria items listed above, capturing the main point in your own words.
2. Write a response to this question, “Why are the Criteria requirements in this item so very important for an organization to consider?
3. ***Print out your brief descriptions and responses and bring them to class.***

**PART SIX: Review, print, and sign the 2014 Code of Ethical Conduct.**

From the Examiner Resource Center, download, print, and sign the Code of Ethical  
Conduct, and bring it to class.

**PART SEVEN:** **Bring these documents to class**.

1. Your prework materials (case study, Criteria, and related tools)
2. Your completed IR Worksheets for items 2.1, 4.1, 4.2, 5.2, 6.1, 6.2, and 7.4
3. Your brief descriptions and identified responses for items 1.1, 1.2, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 7.1, 7.2, and 7.5
4. Your signed 2014 Code of Ethical Conduct
5. Your certificate of completion for the e-learning module “Are You Ready?”

**Contact the Baldrige Examiner Help Center at** [**examtrng@nist.gov**](mailto:examtrng@nist.gov) **for fastest service, or 1-877-237-9064, option 2, if you have any problems or questions.**