About the Education Criteria for Performance Excellence
The Baldrige Education Criteria empower your organization to reach your goals, improve results, and become more competitive by aligning your plans, processes, decisions, people, actions, and results.

How to Use This Booklet
You can use the material in this booklet as a reference, for self-assessment, or as the basis of an award assessment. Your experience with the Education Criteria will help you decide where to begin.

Education Criteria for Performance Excellence Framework and Structure
The Education Criteria requirements are embodied in seven integrated, interconnected categories. The categories are subdivided into items and areas to address.

Education Criteria for Performance Excellence Items and Point Values

Scoring System
Responses to Education Criteria items are scored on two evaluation dimensions: process and results.

How to Respond to the Education Criteria
These guidelines explain how to respond most effectively to the Education Criteria item requirements.

Core Values and Concepts
The core values and concepts are a set of embedded beliefs and behaviors found in high-performing organizations.

Changes from the 2011–2012 Education Criteria

Glossary of Key Terms
The glossary includes definitions of terms presented in SMALL CAPS in the Education Criteria and scoring guidelines.

Index of Key Terms

On the Web

Category and Item Commentary (http://www.nist.gov/baldrige/publications/education_criteria.cfm)
This commentary on the Education Criteria provides additional examples and guidance.
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:

- It helps you identify gaps in key information and focus on key performance requirements and results.
- 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 your responses to the Criteria requirements in categories 1–7.

**Preface: Organizational Profile**

The Organizational Profile is a snapshot of your organization, the KEY influences on HOW it operates, and the KEY challenges it faces.

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

Describe your operating environment and your KEY relationships with students, other CUSTOMERS, suppliers, PARTNERS, and STAKEHOLDERS.

In your response, answer the following questions:

**a. Organizational Environment**

1. **Educational Program and Service Offerings** What are your main educational program and service offerings (see the note on the next page)? What is the relative importance of each to your success? What mechanisms do you use to deliver your educational programs and services?

2. **Vision and Mission** What are your stated purpose, vision, values, and mission? 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/staff groups and segments? What are the educational requirements for different faculty/staff groups and segments? What are the key elements that engage them in achieving your mission and vision? What are your workforce diversity and job diversity? What are your organized bargaining units? What are your organization’s special health and safety requirements?

4. **Assets** What are your major facilities, technologies, and equipment?

5. **Regulatory Requirements** What is the regulatory environment under which you operate? What are the applicable occupational health and safety regulations; accreditation, certification, or registration requirements; education industry standards; and environmental, financial, and educational program and service regulations?

**b. Organizational Relationships**

1. **Organizational Structure** What are your organizational structure and governance system? What are the reporting relationships among your governance board, 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 of your educational programs and services, student and other customer support services, and operations? What are the differences in these requirements and expectations among market segments, student and other customer groups, and stakeholder groups?

3. **Suppliers and Partners** What are your key types of suppliers, partners, and collaborators? What role do they play in your work systems, especially in producing and delivering your educational programs and services and your student and other customer support services? What role do they play in enhancing your competitiveness? What are your key mechanisms for communicating with suppliers, partners, and collaborators? What role, if any, do these organizations play in contributing and implementing innovations in your organization? What are your key supply-chain requirements?

Terms in SMALL CAPS are defined in the Glossary of Key Terms (pages 44–51).
Notes

P. Your responses to the Organizational Profile questions are very important. They set the context for understanding your organization and how it operates. Your responses to all other questions in the Baldrige Criteria should relate to the organizational context you describe in this Profile. Your responses to the Organizational Profile questions thus allow you to tailor your responses to all other questions to your organization’s uniqueness.

P.1a(1). “Educational program and service offerings” are the activities you offer in the market to engage students in learning or contribute to scientific or scholarly investigation. Mechanisms for delivering programs and services to your students might be direct or might be indirect, through partners and collaborators.

P.1a(2). “Core competencies” are your organization’s areas of greatest expertise. They are those strategically important capabilities that are central to fulfilling your mission or provide an advantage in your market or service environment. Core competencies are frequently challenging for competitors or suppliers and partners to imitate and frequently preserve your competitive advantage.

P.1a(3). Workforce or faculty/staff groups and segments (including organized bargaining units) might be based on the type of employment or contract reporting relationship, location, work environment, use of certain family-friendly policies, or other factors.

P.1a(5). Organizations that also rely on volunteers to accomplish their work should include volunteers as part of their workforce.

P.1b(2). Customers include the users and potential users of your educational programs and services. They are the direct users of your programs and services (students and possibly parents), as well as others who use or pay for your programs and services.

P.1b(2). Student and other customer groups might be based on common expectations, behaviors, preferences, or profiles. Within a group, there may be customer segments based on differences and commonalities. You might subdivide your market into market segments based on educational programs, services, or features; distribution channels; geography; or other factors that you use to define a market segment.

P.1b(2). The requirements of your student and other customer groups and your market segments might include special accommodation, customized curricula, safety, security, reduced class size, multilingual services, customized degree requirements, student advising, dropout recovery programs, administrative cost reductions, electronic communication, and distance learning. The requirements of your stakeholder groups might include socially responsible behavior and community service.

P.1b(3). Communication mechanisms should be two-way and use understandable language, and they might involve in-person contact, e-mail, the World Wide Web, or the telephone. For many organizations, these mechanisms may change as market, student, other customer, or stakeholder requirements change.

For additional guidance on this item, see the Category and Item Commentary (http://www.nist.gov/baldrige/publications/education_criteria.cfm).
P.2 Organizational Situation: What is your organization’s strategic situation?

Describe your competitive environment, your KEY STRATEGIC CHALLENGES and ADVANTAGES, and your system for PERFORMANCE improvement.

In your response, include answers to the following questions:

a. Competitive Environment
   (1) Competitive Position What is your competitive position? What are your relative size and growth in your education sector or the markets you serve? How many and what types of competitors do you have?
   (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 your education sector? What KEY sources of comparative data are available from outside your education sector? What limitations, if any, affect your ability to obtain or use these data?

b. Strategic Context
   What are your KEY STRATEGIC CHALLENGES and ADVANTAGES in the areas of EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES, operations, societal responsibilities, and WORKFORCE?

c. PERFORMANCE Improvement System
   What are the KEY elements of your PERFORMANCE improvement system, including your PROCESSES for evaluation and improvement of KEY organizational projects and PROCESSES?

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. This competition may involve other education organizations, as in competition for grant funding 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 and advantages might relate to technology; educational programs and services; finances, your operations; your parent organization’s capabilities; your students, other customers, and markets; your education sector; globalization; your community; and people. Strategic advantages might include differentiators such as tuition and fees, instructional design and delivery services, reputation, innovation rate, geographic proximity, and accessibility.

P.2c. The Baldrige scoring system (page 28) uses performance improvement through learning and integration as a dimension 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 approach you use should be related to your organization’s needs. Approaches that are compatible with the overarching systems approach provided by the Baldrige framework might include implementing PDSA methodology; completing accreditation self-studies; applying nationally validated systems to improve teaching performance; and performing independent institutional, departmental, or program assessments. It also might include using a Lean Enterprise System, applying Six Sigma methodology, using standards from the International Organization for Standardization (ISO; e.g., 9000 or 14000), using decision science, or employing other improvement tools.

For additional guidance on this item, see the Category and Item Commentary (http://www.nist.gov/baldrige/publications/education_criteria.cfm).
3.2 Customer Engagement: How do you serve students’ and other customers’ needs to engage them and build relationships? (45 pts.)

Describe HOW you determine EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AND SERVICE offerings and communication mechanisms to support your students and other CUSTOMERS. Describe HOW you build relationships with students and other CUSTOMERS.

In your response, include answers to the following questions:

a. Program and Service Offerings and Student and Other CUSTOMER Support

(1) Program and Service Offerings  HOW do you determine student, other CUSTOMER, and market requirements for EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AND SERVICE offerings? HOW do you identify and adapt program and service offerings to meet the requirements and exceed the expectations of your student and other CUSTOMER groups and market SEGMENTS (identified in the Organizational Profile)? HOW do you identify and adapt program and service offerings to enter new markets, to attract new students and other CUSTOMERS, and to create opportunities to expand relationships with current students and other CUSTOMERS, as appropriate?

(2) Student and Other CUSTOMER Support  HOW do you enable students and other CUSTOMERS to seek information and support? HOW do you enable them to obtain EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES from you and give feedback on your programs, services, and student and other CUSTOMER support? What are your KEY means of student and other CUSTOMER support, including your KEY communication mechanisms? HOW do they vary for different student and other CUSTOMER groups or market SEGMENTS? HOW do you determine your students’ and other CUSTOMERS’ KEY support requirements? HOW do you ensure that these requirements are DEPLOYED to all people and PROCESSES involved in student and other CUSTOMER support?

(3) Student and Other CUSTOMER Segmentation  HOW do you use information on students, other CUSTOMERS, markets, and EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AND SERVICE OFFERINGS to identify current and anticipate future student and other CUSTOMER groups and market SEGMENTS? HOW do you consider competitors’ students and other CUSTOMERS as well as other potential students, other CUSTOMERS, and markets in this segmentation? HOW do you determine which student and other CUSTOMER groups and market SEGMENTS to emphasize and pursue for growth?

b. Building Relationships with Students and Other CUSTOMERS

(1) Relationship Management  HOW do you market, build, and manage relationships with students and other CUSTOMERS to

• acquire students and other CUSTOMERS and build market share;
• retain students and other CUSTOMERS, meet their requirements, and exceed their expectations in each stage of their relationship with you; and
• increase their ENGAGEMENT with you?

HOW do you leverage social media to enhance student and other CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT and students’ and other CUSTOMERS’ relationships with your organization?

(2) Complaint Management  HOW do you manage students’ and other CUSTOMERS’ complaints? HOW do you ensure that complaints are resolved promptly and EFFECTIVELY? HOW does your management of these complaints enable you to recover your students’ and other CUSTOMERS’ confidence and enhance their satisfaction and ENGAGEMENT?

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Notes

3.2. “Customer engagement” refers to your students’ and other customers’ investment in or commitment to your organization and your educational program and service offerings. Characteristics of engaged students and other customers include retention and loyalty, willingness to make an effort to obtain educational programs and services from you, and willingness to actively advocate for and recommend your organization and its program and service offerings.

3.2a. “Educational program and service offerings” are the activities you offer in the market to engage students in learning or contribute to scientific or scholarly investigation. In identifying educational program and service offerings, you should consider all their important characteristics and their performance in each stage of students’ and other customers’ relationship with you. The focus should be on features that affect students’ and other customers’ preference and loyalty—for example, features that differentiate your programs and services from those of competing or other organizations. Those features might include curricular focus, student placement following completion of the educational goal or training objective, workforce composition, extracurricular activities, or tuition and associated costs. Key program and service features might also take into account how transactions occur and factors such as the privacy and security of student and other customer data. Your results on performance relative to key educational program and service features should be reported in item 7.1, and those for students’ and other customers’ perceptions and actions (outcomes) should be reported in item 7.2.

3.2a(2). The goal of student and other customer support is to make your organization easy to receive educational programs and services from and responsive to your students’ and your other customers’ expectations.

3.2b. Building relationships with students and other customers might include developing partnerships or alliances with them.

For additional guidance on this item, see the Category and Item Commentary (http://www.nist.gov/baldrige/publications/education_criteria.cfm).