2016 Step-by-Step Instructions for
INDEPENDENT REVIEW Scorebook Preparation

Introduction	The most important product you will deliver as an examiner is your scorebook—your written evaluation of an award applicant. Your team's final scorebook ultimately ends up in the hands of the applicant and provides its staff members with a Criteria-based assessment of their organization's strengths and opportunities for improvement (OFIs). The following instructions take you through a process for completing your Independent Review. The strengths and OFIs that you develop at this stage will become inputs for a team of examiners to use in developing a Consensus Scorebook.
Before You Begin	• **Schedule 50-70 hours** to complete your Independent Review Scorebook, which will include a Key Factors (KFs) Worksheet and one worksheet for each Criteria item. Please track the time you spend on the scorebook via the *"Log Time"* link in the Baldrige Online Scorebook Solution (BOSS). • Review the materials in your evaluation mailing, and **complete the Conflict of Interest (COI) form**. • Log on to the BOSS Web site (https://www-s.nist.gov/boss), using the username and password sent to you in two different emails. Answer the three security questions and change the temporary password. Complete the COI screen.
Steps *(Details for each step are on the following pages.)*	☐ **Review the appropriate Baldrige Excellence Framework, which includes the Criteria.** ☐ **Read the application.** ☐ **Log on to BOSS to record your evaluation.** ☐ **Document your thoughts as you progress through the evaluation (optional).** ☐ **Draft an initial list of KFs.** ☐ **Read and begin to evaluate each item.** ☐ **Analyze the applicant's response to each item, selecting KFs and listing strengths and OFIs with their evidence.** ☐ **Draft two feedback-ready comments, one strength and one OFI, for each item.** ☐ **Score the item.** ☐ **Review your work to check for conflicts across items.** ☐ **Finalize the KFs.** ☐ **Mark the scorebook as "Complete."**

STEPS	INSTRUCTIONS
Review the Baldrige Excellence Framework.	Review these sections of the appropriate Baldrige Excellence Framework (Business/Nonprofit, Education, or Health Care): • Criteria requirements for each item • Criteria Response Guidelines • Core Values and Concepts • Scoring System and Scoring Guidelines
Read the application.	**Read the entire application, highlighting and/or noting the applicant's key processes—the methods used to address item requirements—and noting results you would expect to see related to these processes.**
Log on to BOSS.	Open a browser, and navigate to https://www-s.nist.gov/boss. Enter your username and password. *See the "Welcome to BOSS Sample Email Message for IR" (MS-Word) file on the "Independent Review" page (http://www.nist.gov/baldrige/examiners/resource_center/independent_review.cfm)*
Document your initial thoughts (optional).	An option to consider is to use space in the *Initial Thoughts* tab in BOSS to record ideas for potential key themes, list results to look for in category 7, or record other notes. This information will remain part of your scorebook but will not be shared with the team during Consensus Review.

Draft an initial list of KFs.	**Definition**: A "key factor" is an attribute of an organization or its environment that influences the way the organization operates and the key challenges it faces. Examples may include mission, vision, and values; strategic challenges; and workforce groups and segments. KFs do not include descriptions of processes. Examiners use KFs to focus their assessments on what is important to the applicant.
	
	• Read the Criteria questions for items P.1 and P.2.
	• Read the applicant's Organizational Profile, which responds to these questions.
	• Draft an initial list of KFs on the *Key Factors* tab in BOSS. For each KF
	  — Click *Add New Key Factor*. Indicate the area of the Organizational Profile that applies to the KF.
	  — Record a name and the text for the KF.
	• Note that the development of KFs is an iterative process. You may find other KFs in the Eligibility Certification Form or in the applicant's responses to the Criteria requirements; add these KFs at any time.
	
	For a sample partial set of KFs, see the Key Factors Worksheet in the Examiner Resource Center on the "Independent Review" page (http://www.nist.gov/baldrige/examiners/resource_center/independent_review.cfm)

Read and begin to evaluate each item.
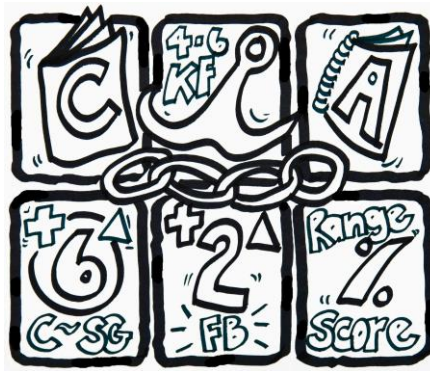
ITEM EVALUATION STEPS

For each item, complete the six-step item evaluation process. In BOSS, record the relevant KFs and the strengths and OFIs with their evidence, score the item, and develop two feedback-ready comments—one strength and one OFI.

1. **Read the Criteria item to refresh your memory and understand the item requirements.**

2. **Determine and select the most relevant KFs for the item.**

    — In BOSS, review your list of KFs to determine the attributes of the organization that would influence its responses to the item requirements.

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

    BOSS Tip: To select noncontiguous parts of a KF, select them as two separate KFs. You may select more than six KFs if it is necessary in order to obtain more KF specificity.

3. **Read the relevant section of the application.**

    — **Identify the processes or approach the applicant uses to meet item requirements.**
    — **Flag, mark up, and/or take notes as needed.**

    - On the application, in the items, or on the *Initial Thoughts* page, note any measure/indicator you expect to see reported in category 7—results.
    - Note any ideas, threads, or patterns that recur in multiple items or categories.
    - In noting the processes or approach, record the applicant's wording from the application rather than using your own words.

  Analyze the applicant's response to each item, and record the strengths and OFIs.	**4. Continue to develop the Independent Review (IR) Worksheet.** — Identify and document **around six strengths and OFIs**, recording brief statements with their accompanying evidence. Note that more mature applicants may benefit from additional strengths and OFIs, while fewer strengths and OFIs may be more appropriate for less mature applicants. — For each strength or OFI • Select the relevant KFs that influence this approach or process (e.g., varied employees, shifts, sites, a specific key strategic advantage). • 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 KFs. • Provide the evidence that supports the statement as a strength (e.g., the approach XYZ has six steps, was expanded in 2013, 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 these factors and associated questions in mind (*refer to the appendix to this document*). Consider the specific evidence that you observed and that best reflects the applicant's maturity level. • Determine the strength's (or OFI's) significance to your evaluation of the applicant and whether it should be doubled. • Provide the item's specific areas to address and headings 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. — Eliminate any conflicts between strengths and OFIs. *For a sample of a completed IR Worksheet, go to the Examiner Resource Center and click on the "Independent Review" page (http://www.nist.gov/baldrige/examiners/resource_center/)*

Draft two feedback-ready comments.	**5. Draft a feedback-ready strength and a feedback-ready OFI.**
	
	— Select the strength and the OFI that you have prioritized as the most important to give the applicant. Use the Comment Guidelines to craft two actionable, feedback-ready comments that capture the findings of your analysis.
	
	— Each strength or OFI should include
	
	    • a concise opening statement of the main idea (the "nugget"); one main idea per comment
	
	    • language that shows relevance by tying the main point to one of the applicant's KFs. You can also ask, "What evaluation factor (approach, deployment, learning, integration) is relevant to that 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).
	
	    • one or two examples to support the main idea
	
	*Note for Team Leaders: At your discretion, you may make this step optional for your **New examiners only** to allow them to focus their efforts on providing a thorough Step 4 analysis and identification of around six Strengths and OFIs.*

Score the item.	**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 the strengths and OFIs, including those that are doubled and those that are relative to item requirements and the KFs. — 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 Scoring Guidelines.*** — 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.
Review all your IR Worksheets.	• When you have completed all of the items, review them to check for any conflicts across items.

Finalize the KFs.	• Compare the KFs on your IR Worksheets with the initial list at the *Key Factors* tab. • Determine whether to add any of your originally identified but unused KFs to your IR Worksheets. Alternatively, consider eliminating any unused KFs from the list at the *Key Factors* tab.
On completion….	• **… of the Independent Review process, mark the scorebook "complete" on the *Scorebook Progress* page on BOSS.**

APPENDIX: Evaluation Factors

Process Item Evaluation Factors

Approach (A)

> **Definition**: "Approach" refers to the methods used by an organization to carry out its processes. Approach includes the appropriateness of the methods to the item requirements and to the organization's operating environment, as well as how effectively the organization uses those methods.

— Is the approach systematic (i.e., well-ordered, repeatable, and exhibiting the use of reliable data and information so that learning is possible)?
— Is there evidence that the approach is effective in accomplishing the process?
— Is this approach (or collection of approaches) a key organizational process? Is the approach important to the applicant's operating environment?

Deployment (D)

> **Definition**: "Deployment" refers to the extent to which an organization applies an approach in addressing the requirements of a Baldrige Criteria item. Evaluation of deployment considers how broadly and deeply the approach is applied to relevant work units throughout the organization.

— Is deployment addressed?
— What evidence is presented that the approach is in use in one, some, or all appropriate work units, facilities, locations, shifts, organizational levels, and so forth?
— Does the approach address item requirements that are relevant and important to the organization?
— Is the approach applied consistently?

Learning (L)

> **Definition:** "Learning," in the context of the evaluation factors, refers to new knowledge or skills acquired through evaluation, study, experience, and innovation.

— Has the approach been refined through cycles of evaluation and improvement? If it has, was the evaluation and improvement conducted in a fact-based, systematic manner (e.g., was it regular, recurring, data driven)?
— Is there evidence of organizational learning (i.e., evidence that the learning is achieved through research and development, evaluation and improvement cycles, ideas and input from workforce and stakeholders, the sharing of best practices, and benchmarking)?
— Is there evidence of sharing of refinements and innovation with other relevant work units and processes within the organization (e.g., evidence that the learning is actually used to drive innovation and refinement)?

Integration (I)

> **Definition:** As a process evaluation factor, "integration" covers the range from organizational "alignment" of approaches in the lower-scoring ranges to "integration" of approaches in the higher ranges.
>
> "Alignment" refers to a state of consistency among plans, processes, information, resource decisions, workforce capability and capacity, actions, results, and analyses to support key organization-wide goals. It 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 organization level, the key process level, and the work unit level.
>
> "Integration" refers to 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 a performance management system operate as a fully interconnected unit.

— How well is the approach aligned with the organizational needs the applicant has identified in the Organizational Profile and other process items?

— Are the applicant's measures, information, and improvement systems complementary across processes and work units?

— How well is the approach integrated with organizational needs to support organization-wide goals (i.e., plans, processes, results, analyses, learning, and actions are harmonized across processes and work units)?

Examples of organizational needs are generally listed as KFs—strategic challenges, objectives, and related action plans; organizational mission, vision, and goals; strategic advantages; key processes and measures; key customer/market segments and requirements; and workforce groups and requirements.

Results Item Evaluation Factors

Performance Levels (Le)

> **Definition**: "Performance levels" refer to numerical information that places or positions an organization's results and performance on a meaningful measurement scale. Performance levels permit evaluation relative to past performance, projections, goals, and appropriate comparisons.

— What levels are provided?
— Is the measurement scale meaningful?
— Are key results missing?

Trends (T)

> **Definition**: "Trends" refer to numerical information that shows the direction and rate of change for an organization's results or the consistency of its performance over time. A minimum of three data points generally is needed to begin to ascertain a trend.

— Are trends provided for few, many, or most areas addressed in the item requirements?
— Is the interval between measures or frequencies appropriate?
— Are the trends positive, negative, or flat?
— What is the rate of performance improvement or continuation of good performance in areas of importance (slope of the trend)?
— Are significant variations in trends explained in the text of the application?

Comparisons (C)

> **Definition:** "Comparisons" refer to how the applicant's results compare with the results of other appropriate organizations. Comparisons can be made to the results of competitors, organizations providing similar products and services, industry averages, or industry leaders. The maturity of the organization should help determine what comparisons are most relevant.

— Are comparisons provided?
— Are the comparisons to key competitors, industry-sector averages, or industry leaders or benchmark organizations?
— How does the applicant compare against these other organizations?

Integration (I)

> **Definition**: "Integration" refers to the extent to which results measures (often through segmentation) address important performance requirements relating to customers, products and services, markets, processes, and action plans identified in the Organizational Profile and in process items; include valid indicators of future performance; and reflect harmonization across processes and work units to support organization-wide goals.

— To what extent do results link to KFs and process items?
— Are results segmented appropriately (e.g., by key customer, patient, or student segment; employee type; process/education program or service; or geographic location) to help the applicant improve?