

# NAF Quality Review Observation Checklist 2025-2026

**Sample Question Focus Group Labels:** **S**=Student; **T**=Teacher; **L**=Leader; **A**=Advisory Board

Criteria	Sample Questions	Observation Examples
<b>Domain 1: Academy Culture &amp; Visit Preparation</b>		
<b>1.</b> Academy prepares for the visit through responsive communication with NAF's review team and creates an agenda that meets NAF's Quality Review guidelines.	➤ <i>N/A</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>School staff and academy team were aware of the virtual Quality Review visit.</i></li> <li>• <i>Pre-visit communication was responsive.</i></li> <li>• <i>Academy team created an agenda that met the designated requirements.</i></li> </ul>
<b>2.</b> A strong academy identity is evident online and through reflections of academy awareness from students, teachers, and other stakeholders.	➤ <i>N/A</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Academy has an online presence either through the school/district website or social media.</i></li> <li>• <i>Stakeholders, in focus groups, described a shared vision of the academy's identity.</i></li> </ul>
<b>3.</b> Leaders clearly articulate the function and purpose of the academy within the school, its contributions to preparing future-ready students, and their vision and support for academy growth and development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i><b>L:</b> What is the value of the academy to the school?</i></li> <li>➤ <i><b>L:</b> What is your vision for the academy's future?</i></li> <li>➤ <i><b>L, T:</b> What are the academy's best practices?</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Leaders described the academy's value within the school and a vision for its future growth and development.</i></li> </ul>
<b>4.</b> Students demonstrate pride in their academy membership and articulate the advantages of being a part of the academy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i><b>S:</b> Why did you choose to enroll in this academy?</i></li> <li>➤ <i><b>S:</b> What does it mean to you to be a member of this academy?</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Students explained their rationale for enrolling in the academy.</i></li> <li>• <i>Students described their positive experiences and significant personal growth and development.</i></li> </ul>
<b>5.</b> Students describe the positive relationships developed with their peers, school personnel, and other adults in the local community that contribute to a sense of belonging within the academy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <i><b>S:</b> Do you feel a sense of belonging to this academy? If so, what does that mean to you?</i></li> <li>➤ <i><b>S:</b> Describe any personal connections you've made with other students or adults through your academy membership.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Students described a sense of belonging within the academy.</i></li> <li>• <i>Students shared examples of positive relationships cultivated in the academy's personalized environment.</i></li> </ul>

## Domain 2: Academy Development & Structure

6. Academy offers open choice enrollment that ensures all students are eligible to participate in the academy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>L, S:</b> What is the process students use to enroll in the academy?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academy team and students described a student selection procedure that exemplified open choice enrollment.</li> </ul>
7. Academy uses clearly defined processes and activities to intentionally build students' abilities to plan their pathway by exposing them to postsecondary options throughout the academy experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>L, T:</b> Describe the academy's processes and activities that help students understand their postsecondary options.</li> <li>➤ <b>S:</b> What has the academy done to help you understand the options you have for after high school?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academy team identified the activities and processes used to build students' knowledge of postsecondary options.</li> <li>• Students described examples of how the academy helped them understand their postsecondary options and the steps required for various pathways.</li> </ul>
8. Students articulate their future aspirations related to college and career and how they plan to achieve their goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>S:</b> When you graduate, what are your plans and what steps are you taking to achieve your goals?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students, especially seniors, talked about their post-graduation goals regarding college and career.</li> </ul>
9. Leaders participate in the academy's continuous improvement process and ensure that the academy submits, reviews, and uses data to inform action planning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>L:</b> What data points are important to you when monitoring student progress and academy growth?</li> <li>➤ <b>L:</b> Please provide a specific example of when you used data to help make a decision or adjust an academy practice.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leaders articulated specific data points they use to monitor student progress and academy growth.</li> <li>• Leaders provided a concrete example of when data was used to inform action planning.</li> </ul>
10. Leaders cultivate community partnerships with local organizations that support business and workforce development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>L:</b> What organizations do you participate in or interact with to represent the academy in the areas of business and workforce development?</li> <li>➤ <b>L:</b> What partnerships have been developed to support the academy?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leaders mentioned how they interact with local organizations to build community partnerships that support academy growth and development.</li> </ul>
11. Leaders are ambassadors for the academy and participate in practices that build support and advocacy for their academy programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>L:</b> Describe the activities or structures you use to increase academy awareness and build program support.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leaders clarify activities that build academy awareness/support. Examples may include, but are not limited to: using social media, sharing impact stories, hosting events, and attending conferences on college and career readiness best practices.</li> </ul>

### Domain 3: Advisory Board

<p><b>12.</b> Advisory board members articulate an understanding of the advisory board's role in the academy's mission.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>A:</b> <i>What is the advisory board's role within this academy?</i></li> <li>➤ <b>A:</b> <i>Describe examples of how you help the academy accomplish its goals.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Advisory board members illustrated examples of how they help the academy to accomplish goals and promote growth and development.</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>13.</b> Advisory board creates a strategic plan with specific annual outcomes that directly address the need to increase work-based learning activities including internships for students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>A:</b> <i>What are the advisory board's specific goals and objectives for this year?</i></li> <li>➤ <b>A:</b> <i>Describe the process the advisory board uses to update its strategic plan including yearly goals.</i></li> <li>➤ <b>A:</b> <i>How does the advisory board use data to inform its work?</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Advisory board members showcased the goals and objectives of the strategic plan.</i></li> <li>• <i>Advisory board described the process it uses to update its strategic plan and yearly goals.</i></li> <li>• <i>Advisory board members demonstrated how data is used to inform the plan and how the strategic plan guides their work and ensures the accomplishment of benchmarks.</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>14.</b> Advisory board works to engage community, postsecondary and civic leaders to promote and sustain academies as an integral part of the local workforce and economic development systems.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>A:</b> <i>Describe partnerships the advisory board helped to cultivate between the academy and the community that promote workforce development.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Advisory board members share specific examples of how the board has expanded partnerships between the academy(ies) and community to foster workforce development.</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>15.</b> Advisory board meets regularly and strategically plans to provide supports for students and teachers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>A:</b> <i>Describe how the advisory board is structured and how frequently it meets.</i></li> <li>➤ <b>A:</b> <i>Do you provide supports for students and/or teachers? If yes – what are some examples?</i></li> <li>➤ <b>A:</b> <i>How do you determine which supports to provide for students and/or teachers?</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Advisory board meets at least quarterly.</i></li> <li>• <i>Advisory board strategically provides support in areas of need to students and/or teachers.</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>16.</b> Advisory board members support learning by providing work-based learning, informing career pathway curriculum alignment, and providing professional learning opportunities for teachers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>A:</b> <i>How is the board involved in planning and providing work-based learning activities, and what are some examples?</i></li> <li>➤ <b>A:</b> <i>How does the board support the academy teachers' understanding of industry needs?</i></li> <li>➤ <b>A:</b> <i>How has the board helped shape the curriculum or program of study for academy students?</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Advisory board members described ways in which they support learning. Examples may include, but are not limited to: providing strategically planned WBL activities, providing teacher WBL or professional development, and/or providing input on curriculum or program of study content.</i></li> </ul>

Domain 4: Program of Study (Curriculum & Instruction)		
17. Teachers and counselors ensure that academy students successfully complete an approved program of study.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>T:</b> Describe the process students use to choose and enroll in the academy's program of study courses.</li> <li>➤ <b>T:</b> How do you monitor student progress toward completing the academy's program of study?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers/counselors clarified the process used to personalize each student's program of study.</li> <li>• Teachers/counselors explained how they monitor student progress.</li> </ul>
18. Students describe the curricular content and projects that they are working on and their alignment with the designated career cluster.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>S:</b> Describe lessons, activities, or projects you have participated in that are related to your academy's career pathway.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students pointed out classroom activities and lessons related to their academy's career pathway.</li> </ul>
19. Students participate in extended-length, authentic project learning experiences that provide innovative solutions to real-world challenges.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>S:</b> Have you participated in any project that provided a solution to a real-world problem or challenge? If yes, please describe the project and how long it took to complete it.</li> <li>➤ <b>T:</b> Authentic project learning experiences provide innovative solutions to real-world challenges. Describe authentic project learning experiences available to academy students. How do industry professionals support these projects?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students expanded on authentic project learning experiences that lasted at least 10-days during a course/semester.</li> <li>• Teachers detailed several extended-length, authentic project learning experiences available to academy students.</li> </ul>
20. Teachers and academy leaders engage industry professionals to enhance student learning outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>T:</b> Describe how you use industry professionals in your classroom to enhance student learning outcomes.</li> <li>➤ <b>S:</b> Were there opportunities to interact with industry professionals in your academy classes? If yes, please describe the opportunities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers and students described how industry professionals were engaged to enhance student outcomes (i.e. helped with authentic projects, curriculum design, guest speaking, mentoring etc.)</li> </ul>
21. Industry certifications, dual enrollment, Advanced Placement (AP), Cambridge (AICE), or International Baccalaureate (IB) courses are available to academy students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>S:</b> Share any advanced courses like dual enrollment, AP, IB and/or AICE courses you have taken.</li> <li>➤ <b>S:</b> Have any of you earned industry certifications? If so, which certifications?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students offered examples of industry certifications and advanced or dual enrollment courses that they completed.</li> </ul>

## Domain 5: Work-Based Learning

<p><b>22.</b> Students demonstrate well-developed future ready skills, particularly in communicating and engaging with adults and peers.</p>	<p>➤ <i>N/A</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Students presented themselves with confidence, made eye contact, and engaged with the review team during the student focus groups.</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>23.</b> Work-based learning plans/calendars ensure <u>all</u> students experience multiple elements of the work-based learning continuum throughout their academy tenure.</p>	<p>➤ <b>L:</b> <i>Describe the work-based learning continuum that occurs in each operating grade and how you track student participation in work-based learning.</i></p> <p>➤ <b>T:</b> <i>Describe what work-based learning you've incorporated into your classroom and how that has impacted your students' career aspirations, skill development, and/or connections.</i></p> <p>➤ <b>S:</b> <i>Describe the work-based learning activities, such as job shadows, guest speakers, or internships, you've been involved with since you entered the academy.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Academy staff describe their processes and protocols for engaging ALL students in a wide variety of work-based learning activities.</i></li> <li>• <i>Students acknowledged participating in career awareness, exploration, and preparation activities during their academy program and provide examples of how these activities helped shape their aspirations, skills, and/or connections</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>24.</b> Students learn about various career pathways within a career cluster.</p>	<p>➤ <b>S:</b> <i>What career options have you explored through your academy?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Students expanded on the various career pathways available within their academy's career cluster.</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>25.</b> Students use future ready skills beyond the scope of the academy classroom.</p>	<p>➤ <b>S:</b> <i>Have you ever used information or skills you learned from academy experiences in other areas of your life? If yes, please give an example.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Students illustrated how they transfer technical and future ready skills and specific content-knowledge learned through academy experiences to areas beyond the classroom.</i></li> </ul>

