

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

Domain 2: Academy Development & Structure

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

Domain 3: Advisory Board		
12. Advisory board members articulate an understanding of the advisory board's role in the academy's mission.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A: <i>What is the advisory board's role within this academy?</i> ➤ A: <i>Describe examples of how you help the academy accomplish its goals.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Advisory board members illustrated examples of how they help the academy to accomplish goals and promote growth and development.</i>
13. 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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A: <i>What are the advisory board's specific goals and objectives for this year?</i> ➤ A: <i>Describe the process the advisory board uses to update its strategic plan including yearly goals.</i> ➤ A: <i>How does the advisory board use data to inform its work?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Advisory board members showcased the goals and objectives of the strategic plan.</i> • <i>Advisory board described the process it uses to update its strategic plan and yearly goals.</i> • <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>
14. 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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A: <i>Describe partnerships the advisory board helped to cultivate between the academy and the community that promote workforce development.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <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>
15. Advisory board meets regularly and strategically plans to provide supports for students and teachers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A: <i>Describe how the advisory board is structured and how frequently it meets.</i> ➤ A: <i>Do you provide supports for students and/or teachers? If yes – what are some examples?</i> ➤ A: <i>How do you determine which supports to provide for students and/or teachers?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Advisory board meets at least quarterly.</i> • <i>Advisory board strategically provides support in areas of need to students and/or teachers.</i>
16. Advisory board members support learning by providing work-based learning, informing career pathway curriculum alignment, and providing professional learning opportunities for teachers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A: <i>How is the board involved in planning and providing work-based learning activities, and what are some examples?</i> ➤ A: <i>How does the board support the academy teachers' understanding of industry needs?</i> ➤ A: <i>How has the board helped shape the curriculum or program of study for academy students?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <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>

Domain 4: Program of Study (Curriculum & Instruction)

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

Domain 5: Work-Based Learning

<p>22. Students demonstrate well-developed future ready skills, particularly in communicating and engaging with adults and peers.</p>	<p>➤ N/A</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Students presented themselves with confidence, made eye contact, and engaged with the review team during the student focus groups.</i>
<p>23. 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>➤ L: <i>Describe the work-based learning continuum that occurs in each operating grade and how you track student participation in work-based learning.</i> ➤ T: <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> ➤ S: <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"> <i>Academy staff describe their processes and protocols for engaging ALL students in a wide variety of work-based learning activities.</i> <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>
<p>24. Students learn about various career pathways within a career cluster.</p>	<p>➤ S: <i>What career options have you explored through your academy?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Students expanded on the various career pathways available within their academy's career cluster.</i>
<p>25. Students use future ready skills beyond the scope of the academy classroom.</p>	<p>➤ S: <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"> <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>

