NAF Quality Review Observation Checklist 2026-2027

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		
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.	➢ *N/A*	• *School staff and academy team were aware of the virtual Quality Review visit.* • *Pre-visit communication was responsive.* • *Academy team created an agenda that met the designated requirements.*
2. A strong academy identity is evident online and through reflections of academy awareness from students, teachers, and other stakeholders.	➢ *N/A*	• *Academy has an online presence either through the school/district website or social media.* • *Stakeholders, in focus groups, described a shared vision of the academy's identity.*
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.	➢ ***L:*** *What is the value of the academy to the school?* ➢ ***L:*** *What is your vision for the academy's future?* ➢ ***L, T:*** *What are the academy's best practices?*	• *Leaders described the academy's value within the school and a vision for its future growth and development.*
4. Students demonstrate pride in their academy membership and articulate the advantages of being a part of the academy.	➢ ***S:*** *Why did you choose to enroll in this academy?* ➢ ***S:*** *What does it mean to you to be a member of this academy?*	• *Students explained their rationale for enrolling in the academy.* • *Students described their positive experiences and significant personal growth and development.*
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.	➢ ***S:*** *Do you feel a sense of belonging to this academy? If so, what does that mean to you?* ➢ ***S:*** *Describe any personal connections you've made with other students or adults through your academy membership.*	• *Students described a sense of belonging within the academy.* • *Students shared examples of positive relationships cultivated in the academy's personalized environment.*

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Domain 2: Academy Development & Structure		
6. Academy offers open choice enrollment that ensures all students are eligible to participate in the academy.	➢ ***L, S:*** *What is the process students use to enroll in the academy?*	• *Academy team and students described a student selection procedure that exemplified open choice enrollment.*
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.	➢ ***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?*	• *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.*
8. Students articulate their future aspirations related to college and career and how they plan to achieve their goals.	➢ ***S:*** *When you graduate, what are your plans and what steps are you taking to achieve your goals?*	• *Students, especially seniors, talked about their post-graduation goals regarding college and career.*
9. Leaders participate in the academy's continuous improvement process and ensure that the academy submits, reviews, and uses data to inform action planning.	➢ ***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.*	• *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.*
10. Leaders cultivate community partnerships with local organizations that support business and workforce development.	➢ ***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?*	• *Leaders mentioned how they interact with local organizations to build community partnerships that support academy growth and development.*
11. Leaders are ambassadors for the academy and participate in practices that build support and advocacy for their academy programs.	➢ ***L:*** *Describe the activities or structures you use to increase academy awareness and build program support.*	• *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.*

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Domain 3: Advisory Board		
12. Advisory board members articulate an understanding of the advisory board's role in the academy's mission.	➢ ***A:*** *What is the advisory board's role within this academy?* ➢ ***A:*** *Describe examples of how you help the academy accomplish its goals.*	• *Advisory board members illustrated examples of how they help the academy to accomplish goals and promote growth and development.*
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.	➢ ***A:*** *What are the advisory board's specific goals and objectives for this year?* ➢ ***A:*** *Describe the process the advisory board uses to update its strategic plan including yearly goals.* ➢ ***A:*** *How does the advisory board use data to inform its work?*	• *Advisory board members showcased the goals and objectives of the strategic plan.* • *Advisory board described the process it uses to update its strategic plan and yearly goals.* • *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.*
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.	➢ ***A:*** *Describe partnerships the advisory board helped to cultivate between the academy and the community that promote workforce development.*	• *Advisory board members share specific examples of how the board has expanded partnerships between the academy(ies) and community to foster workforce development.*
15. Advisory board meets regularly and strategically plans to provide supports for students and teachers.	➢ ***A:*** *Describe how the advisory board is structured and how frequently it meets.* ➢ ***A:*** *Do you provide supports for students and/or teachers? If yes – what are some examples?* ➢ ***A:*** *How do you determine which supports to provide for students and/or teachers?*	• *Advisory board meets at least quarterly.* • *Advisory board strategically provides support in areas of need to students and/or teachers.*
16. Advisory board members support learning by providing work-based learning, informing career pathway curriculum alignment, and providing professional learning opportunities for teachers.	➢ ***A:*** *How is the board involved in planning and providing work-based learning activities, and what are some examples?* ➢ ***A:*** *How does the board support the academy teachers' understanding of industry needs?* ➢ ***A:*** *How has the board helped shape the curriculum or program of study for academy students?*	• *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.*

Domain 4: Program of Study (Curriculum & Instruction)		
17. Teachers and counselors ensure that academy students successfully complete an approved program of study.	➢ ***T:*** *Describe the process students use to choose and enroll in the academy's program of study courses.* ➢ ***T:*** *How do you monitor student progress toward completing the academy's program of study?*	• *Teachers/counselors clarified the process used to personalize each student's program of study.* • *Teachers/counselors explained how they monitor student progress.*
18. Students describe the curricular content and projects that they are working on and their alignment with the designated career cluster.	➢ ***S:*** *Describe lessons, activities, or projects you have participated in that are related to your academy's career pathway.*	• *Students pointed out classroom activities and lessons related to their academy's career pathway.*
19. Students participate in extended-length, authentic project learning experiences that provide innovative solutions to real-world challenges.	➢ ***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.* ➢ ***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?*	• *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.*
20. Teachers and academy leaders engage industry professionals to enhance student learning outcomes.	➢ ***T:*** *Describe how you use industry professionals in your classroom to enhance student learning outcomes.* ➢ ***S:*** *Were there opportunities to interact with industry professionals in your academy classes? If yes, please describe the opportunities.*	• *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.)*
21. Industry certifications, dual enrollment, Advanced Placement (AP), Cambridge (AICE), or International Baccalaureate (IB) courses are available to academy students.	➢ ***S:*** *Share any advanced courses like dual enrollment, AP, IB and/or AICE courses you have taken.* ➢ ***S:*** *Have any of you earned industry certifications? If so, which certifications?*	• *Students offered examples of industry certifications and advanced or dual enrollment courses that they completed.*

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Domain 5: Work-Based Learning		
22. Students demonstrate well-developed future ready skills, particularly in communicating and engaging with adults and peers.	➢ *N/A*	• *Students presented themselves with confidence, made eye contact, and engaged with the review team during the student focus groups.*
23. Work-based learning plans/calendars ensure <u>all</u> students experience multiple elements of the work-based learning continuum throughout their academy tenure.	➢ ***L:*** *Describe the work-based learning continuum that occurs in each operating grade and how you track student participation in work-based learning.* ➢ ***T:*** *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.* ➢ ***S:*** *Describe the work-based learning activities, such as job shadows, guest speakers, or internships, you've been involved with since you entered the academy.*	• *Academy staff describe their processes and protocols for engaging ALL students in a wide variety of work-based learning activities.* • *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*
24. Students learn about various career pathways within a career cluster.	➢ ***S:*** *What career options have you explored through your academy?*	• *Students expanded on the various career pathways available within their academy's career cluster.*
25. Students use future ready skills beyond the scope of the academy classroom.	➢ ***S:*** *Have you ever used information or skills you learned from academy experiences in other areas of your life? If yes, please give an example.*	• *Students illustrated how they transfer technical and future ready skills and specific content-knowledge learned through academy experiences to areas beyond the classroom.*

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