NAF Fast Track Assessment 2024-2025

Introduction

The Fast Track Assessment is used by existing career academies applying to become a NAF academy. The self-evaluation tool assesses the alignment of current practices with the NAF Design and informs the recommended admissions program, ensuring a successful academy launch.

The Academy Design Team (ADT)[1] reviews this Fast Track Assessment sample to prepare for the online submission.

Design of the Fast Track Assessment

The Fast Track Assessment has four elements that make up the NAF Design. Each element has two to five standards that elaborate on essential aspects of NAF's design. The standards have strategic actions that describe the required academy practices to support each standard. Below is an example of a design element with its associated standard and strategic action:

- **Element »** Academy Development & Structure
- **Standard »** 1.4 Academy Leadership - Academy leadership is broad-based, strategic, and sufficiently staffed.
- **Strategic Action »** 1.4.b The academy has a designated staff member to support college and career readiness activities.
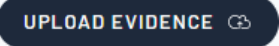- **Selection »** Yes/No

Definitions

For the online Fast Track Assessment, click on underlined words or phrases with superscripts (word [number]) to display their definitions. Review the definitions listed in the glossary at the end of the sample Fast Track Assessment.

Completing the Fast Track Assessment

The ADT members (academy lead, teachers, counselor, district/school leaders, and advisory board members) complete the assessment as a *review team*. The phases of the review process are:

1. Collaborative Review: The Academy Design Team reviews the Fast Track Assessment sample and agrees on responses to all strategic actions to ensure accuracy and identify necessary evidence.
2. Submit Online Fast Track Assessment: This will determine the academy's level of implementation of NAF's design. A provisional score of 15 or higher is required to continue with the Fast Track process.
3. Compile Electronic Evidence: Gather required evidence to verify the achievement of designated strategic actions. Upload these files directly into the online assessment at least two weeks before the graduation meeting for the portfolio manager's review.
4. Use Fast Track Evidence Checklist: This Checklist is a recommended resource for gathering the necessary evidence to demonstrate that the academy design plan aligns with NAF's design before the academy launches.
5. Confirm Graduation Readiness: Schedule a virtual session with the portfolio manager to review the uploaded evidence and address any needed clarifications or adjustments before the graduation meeting.
6. Schedule Graduation Meeting: Arrange the graduation meeting with the portfolio manager.
7. Prepare for the Graduation Meeting:
   - Hold an ADT review session to assess the evidence collection status and make any necessary adjustments.

Evidence

Click on the **UPLOAD EVIDENCE** icon to upload evidence that supports a strategic action selection or the **NOTES** icon to add a note about a strategic action selection. The icon is only visible in the online Fast Track Assessment adjacent to each strategic action, and there are also links to required evidence templates. No additional evidence is necessary if academies use evidence templates. Download the templates using the links provided, fill in the templates, and upload the completed templates into the Fast Track Assessment evidence section in Academy Support Hub (ASH).

Scoring

The review team participates in a graduation meeting to validate that the academy's evidence supports the accomplishment of strategic actions and alignment with the NAF Design. The portfolio manager finalizes the assessment after ensuring all necessary data and required evidence are included, completing the admissions process.

An academy that earns a final score of 15 or above during the validation process is eligible to become an open academy in NAF's network. The Fast Track Assessment results inform the action plan for continuous improvement during the launch year.

Academy Development & Structure

1.1 Student Recruitment & Enrollment
The academy supports open choice enrollment that maximizes students' access to career and college opportunities and results in academy membership that reflects the school's demographics.

Evidence

1.1.a   Provide a link to district policy or an academy application/brochure describing an open choice enrollment process.
- [Brochure Template](#)

1.1.a All students are eligible to enroll in the academy, and open choice enrollment[2] results in academy membership that reflects the school's demographics.
- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Evidence

1.1.b   Provide the academy enrollment for each operating grade.
- [Academy Enrollment Template](#)

1.1.b Recruitment efforts increase student enrollment each year to meet the threshold[3] criteria.

The academy program is:
- ○ Fully operational (Students enrolled in grades 11-12 for a 2-year program, grades 10-12 for a 3-year program, and grades 9-12 for a 4-year program)
- ○ Not fully operational

The academy:
- ○ Enrolls at least 20 students per grade level
- ○ Enrolls less than 20 students per grade level

1.2 Personalized Learning Environment
The academy creates a personalized learning environment that is inclusive, promotes student agency, and encourages positive relationships to enhance student well-being and achievement.

Evidence

1.2.a   Provide examples of how the academy fosters a personalized learning environment for each checked selection.
- [Personalized Learning Environment Template](#)

1.2.a The academy fosters a personalized learning environment[4] that promotes student success and attainment of college and career goals. The academy team (select all that apply):
- ❏ Connects learning to students' interests, abilities, and aspirations.
- ❏ Implements academy structures to encourage peer relationships and develop a sense of belonging among academy members.
- ❏ Develops personalized academy learning plans that the academy team regularly reviews to assess student progress towards college and career goals.
- ❏ Engages a network of teachers, family, mentors, alumni, and advisory board members who connect with academy students to provide support for accomplishing their college and career goals.
- ❏ None of the above

1.3 Data Collection & Review

The academy participates in the ongoing review of academy data to enhance academy development and benchmark student progress.

Evidence

1.3.a   Provide examples of how the academy uses data to inform academy practices for each checked selection.

- Data Review Process Template

1.3.a   The academy collects, analyzes, and reports academy and student-level data to inform academy practices and ensure educational equity for students.
The academy reviews (select all that apply):

❏ Academy-level data
❏ Student-level data
❏ Disaggregated data to identify achievement gaps among student groups
❏ None of the above

Evidence

1.3.b   Provide an action plan with goals and strategic actions or a link to the district action plan related to academy development.

- Action Plan Template

1.3.b The academy uses data from various sources to develop an action plan for continuous academy development.

○ Yes
○ No

1.4 Academy Leadership

Academy leadership is broad-based, strategic, and sufficiently staffed.

Evidence

1.4.a   Provide the names and roles of staff responsible for managing the academy program.

- Team Roster Template

1.4.a   The academy has a designated academy leader with release time or an academy team with clearly defined responsibilities for managing all aspects of the academy program.

○ Yes
○ No

Evidence

1.4.b   Provide the names and roles of staff who support college and career readiness activities.
If applicable, refer to 1.4.a evidence.

1.4.b The academy has a designated staff member to support college and career readiness[5] activities.

○ Yes
○ No

Evidence

1.4.c   Provide example(s) of how academy leaders share college and career readiness best practices for each checked selection.

- Ambassadors' Template

1.4.c The district, school, and academy leaders are ambassadors for the academy. The academy leaders (select all that apply):

❏ Use social media to promote academy practices and events.
❏ Share impact stories/data to increase support and advocacy for their academy programs.
❏ Share college and career readiness best practices with other leaders at local, state, or national levels.
❏ None of the above

1.5 Professional Learning

District, school, academy leaders, and advisory board members participate in regularly scheduled professional learning sessions and collaboration meetings.

Evidence

1.5.a   Provide a schedule of common planning or agenda/minutes from the academy team's most recent collaborative planning session.

- Meeting Agenda Template

1.5.a The academy team (of more than three members) participates in common planning or other formal collaboration time to prepare for curricular integration, student support systems or interventions, and college and career activities across the curriculum and grade levels. Common planning occurs with an academy team of more than three members:

○ Weekly
○ Bi-Weekly
○ Monthly
○ Not Regularly

Evidence

1.5.b   Provide a list of professional learning events that include the date and attendees for each checked selection.

- Professional Learning Template

1.5.b The academy participates in NAF-sponsored or other Career Technical Education (CTE) professional learning sessions, including NAF Next[6]. The academy team attended (select all that apply):

❏ NAF Next
❏ NAF-sponsored professional learning sessions (Webinars, Advisory Board Convenings, Professional Learning Modules, Educator Certifications, or other events)
❏ Other CTE training/professional learning sessions
❏ None of the above

Advisory Board

2.1   Advisory Board Membership & Operations
A formally organized advisory board operates with broad-based community representation.

___

Evidence

2.1.a   Provide advisory board roster with roles and responsibilities.
- AB Roster Template
- Starting AB Checklist

2.1.a Advisory board membership includes at least ten (10) members representing business, industry, government, alumni, community, and postsecondary education leaders.
The advisory board includes (select all that apply):

❏ At least ten (10) members.
❏ At least 80% business, industry, government, alumni, community, and postsecondary education leaders OR the academy pathway is within the Education Career Cluster.
❏ None of the above

Evidence

2.1.b   Provide a current annual strategic plan and current by-laws.
- AB Strategic Plan Template
- AB By-laws Template

2.1.b The advisory board created operational documents, including a strategic plan with clear annual outcomes informed by academy data and by-laws to help the academy grow and sustain academy needs.
The advisory board developed (select all that apply):

❏ Strategic Plan
❏ By-laws
❏ None of the above

2.2   Support for Learning

Advisory board members actively support <u>work-based learning</u>[7] activities, the program of study, and academy program design.

<u>**Evidence**</u>

2.2.a   Provide an example of how the advisory board supports student learning for each checked selection.

- [AB Support for Learning Template](#)

2.2.a Advisory board members actively support student learning focusing on career awareness, exploration, and preparation activities. The advisory board supports student learning by (select all that apply):

❏ Securing and coordinating work-based learning experiences outlined in the academy's work-based learning calendar/plan.
❏ Participating in virtual or in-person classroom activities or projects.
❏ Collaborating with academy leaders to inform, supplement, and/or update the career-focused curriculum.
❏ Providing professional learning opportunities for academy staff.
❏ None of the above

2.3   Support for Sustainability

Advisory Board members seek to increase academy success and sustainability by advocating for support and sharing academy impact with community, postsecondary, and civic leaders.

<u>**Evidence**</u>

2.3.a   Provide an example of how the advisory board promotes the academy in alignment with workforce development needs for each checked selection.

- [AB Activities Template](#)

2.3.a The 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. The advisory board (select all that apply):

❏ Promote academies as a local workforce development strategy in their communities.
❏ Raise funds for paid internships, work-based learning activities, and/or scholarships.
❏ Recruit other business partners and postsecondary institutions to support WBL and college and career readiness.
❏ None of the above

Program of Study (Curriculum & Instruction)

3.1 Academy Coursework

The academy's career-connected program of study features a comprehensive sequence of courses that adheres to OCTAE's Programs of Study Design Framework, with a particular focus on authentic project-based learning experiences[8] and conducting competency-based assessments[9].

Evidence

3.1.a   Provide the academy's Program of Study courses.

- Program of Study Template

3.1.a The academy offers a career-connected Program of Study[10] consisting of a sequence of courses aligned with the US Department of Education's 16 career clusters and associated pathways.

◯ Yes
◯ No

Evidence

3.1.b   Provide the academy's career-themed integration plan using authentic project learning experiences with examples for each checked selection.

- Authentic Project Learning Template

3.1.b Students demonstrate attainment of career-readiness competencies through authentic project learning experiences, like NAF's Expeditions[11]and KnoPro[12] challenges, with industry-professional to solve real-world challenges. Academy Students (check all that apply):

❏ Complete extended-length (10+ days) authentic project learning experiences that provide innovative solutions to real-world challenges.
❏ Engage industry professionals in completing authentic projects.
❏ Showcase original, relevant, and career/community-connected outcomes using dynamic presentation media or technology apps.
❏ None of the above

3.2 College & Career Readiness

Academy intentionally builds students' college knowledge, provides advanced academic opportunities, and helps students achieve certifications to enhance their college and career readiness.

Evidence

3.2.a   Provide example(s) of how academy assists students for each checked selection.

- [College & Career Readiness Template](#)

3.2.a The academy intentionally builds students' college knowledge by helping them understand the postsecondary system and culture, research college options, visit college campuses, and navigate issues such as testing, applications, and financial aid. The academy provides students with assistance for (select all that apply):

❏ College application preparation including FAFSA
❏ College preparation and entrance examinations (SAT, ACT, PSAT)
❏ Scholarship resources and applications
❏ College visits/fairs
❏ None of the above

Evidence

3.2.b   Provide academy's advanced academics and postsecondary education options for each checked selection.

- [Advanced & Postsecondary Template](#)

3.2.b The academy students experience advanced academics by participating in Advanced Placement (AP), Cambridge, or International Baccalaureate (IB) courses and enroll in postsecondary education options through industry certifications and dual enrollment. The academy provides (select all that apply):

❏ Industry recognized credentials/certifications
❏ Dual enrollment, AP, Cambridge, or IB courses
❏ None of the above

Evidence

3.2.c   Provide a letter of support from the district or school leader detailing support for NTC if a NAF membership agreement is unavailable.

3.2.c Academy students achieve NAFTrack Certification[13] to enhance their college and career readiness. The district/school commits to ensuring all seniors achieve NAFTrack Certification.

○ Yes
○ No

Work-Based Learning

4.1 Work-Based Learning Program

The academy plans and implements a high-quality work-based learning (WBL) program that features a full continuum of work-based learning experiences for students including career awareness, career exploration, and career preparation.

Evidence

4.1.a   Provide the work-based learning calendar for each operating grade in the academy for each checked selection.

- WBL Plan and Calendar Template
- WBL Activity Definitions

**4.1.a The academy's work-based learning experiences include a continuum of <u>career awareness</u>[14], <u>exploration</u>[15], and <u>preparation</u>[16] activities that build in sophistication, duration, and intensity.
The academy provides (select all that apply):**

Career Awareness
- ❏ Career Fairs
- ❏ Guest Speakers
- ❏ Worksite Tours

Career Exploration
- ❏ Informational Interviews
- ❏ Job Shadows
- ❏ Mentorships
- ❏ Mock Interviews
- ❏ Partner Engagement Projects
- ❏ Resume Coaching/Review
- ❏ Skills Workshops

Career Preparation
- ❏ Apprenticeships/Youth Apprenticeships
- ❏ Clinicals
- ❏ Internships
- ❏ Mentored Industry Projects
- ❏ None of the above

Evidence

4.1.b   Provide example(s) of how academy supports students for each checked selection. Example: Notes/reports from school/district generated student check-in forms.

- Overview of 3 Outcomes of ODWBL

4.1.b The academy's work-based learning plans intentionally focus on supporting the development of students' <u>aspirations</u>[17], <u>skills</u>[18], and <u>connections</u>[19]. The academy work-based learning plan support students' (select all that apply):

- ❏ Aspirations
- ❏ Skills
- ❏ Connections
- ❏ None of the above

Evidence

4.1.c   Provide the process the academy will use to collect student input to guide work-based learning program planning.
Example tools: NAF WBL Reflection Form, NAF Student Survey.

- WBL Reflection Form Questions

4.1.c Student voice and input are solicited and used to guide work-based learning program planning.

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

4.2   Work-Based Learning Participation & Equity
The academy collects and analyzes work-based learning data to ensure full and equitable student participation.

Evidence
4.2.a   Provide the academy's procedure to collect and analyze student participation in work-based learning activities.
- ODWBL Overview for Educators
- WBL Participation Tracker & Reflection Form Overview

4.2.a The academy tracks and analyzes work-based learning data at both the academy and student levels to ensure equitable student participation in the entire continuum of work-based learning experiences. The academy (select all that apply):
❏ Tracks participation at the academy level.
❏ Tracks participation at the student level.
❏ Analyzes student-level data to ensure equitable participation in the entire continuum of WBL experiences.
❏ None of the above

Evidence
4.2.b   Provide evidence that supports at least 15% of graduating seniors completing a career preparation experience.
- Prepare for Internships

4.2.b The academy students complete a career preparation activity[20] of at least 80+ hours (or two 40+ hours) before graduation. At least 15% of last year's graduating seniors completed a qualifying experience.
○ Yes
○ No

No Evidence
4.2.c   Provide evidence that supports chosen selection.

4.2.c New for 2025-26 (unscored) The academy students complete at least one work-based learning activity per year.
○ Yes
○ No

No Evidence
4.2.d   Provide evidence that supports chosen selection.

4.2.d New for 2025-26 (unscored) The academy seniors complete at least two different phases of the WBL continuum in any year (i.e., career awareness, career exploration, career preparation).
○ Yes
○ No

Glossary/Definitions

1 **Academy Design Team (ADT):** The ADT is created to focus on designing a NAF academy based on the four elements of the NAF Design. This representative stakeholder team includes school and academy staff, district and school administration, parents, students, and business and postsecondary education partners. After completing the admissions process, the ADT transitions to the academy team in the launch year.

2 **Open choice enrollment:** NAF academies facilitate diversity, equity, inclusion, and access by accepting students based on student agency rather than educational records. Students who can accommodate the academy's program of study are eligible to enroll in the academy regardless of academic or disciplinary history. Academy selection may be subject to a lottery system that randomly selects academy students.

3 **Threshold:** NAF's Academy Assessment establishes thresholds or minimum performance requirements on selected strategic actions in the Academy Assessment. Academies must meet the designated thresholds as one of the prerequisites for achieving a Model or Distinguished academy level.

4 **Personalized-learning environment includes:**
   - Connecting learning to students' interests, abilities, and aspirations;
   - Implementing academy structures that encourage peer relationships and develop a sense of belonging among academy members;
   - Developing personalized academy learning plans that the academy team regularly reviews to assess student progress towards college and career goals;
   - Engaging a network of teachers, family, mentors, and advisory board members who connect with academy students to provide support for accomplishing their college and career goals

5 **College and career readiness include:**
   - Building students' knowledge of college through an awareness of the postsecondary system and culture and completing credit-bearing college courses that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials or certificates
   - Engaging students in work-based learning opportunities throughout high school, including career awareness, exploration, and preparation activities that develop students' competency in employability skills for entry into the workforce

6 **NAF Next (NN):** NAF's annual professional learning conference brings together teachers, academy leaders, counselors, advisory board members, business partners, and district administrators to address some of the most significant challenges facing education and the economy.

7 **Work-Based Learning:** Work-based learning is an educational approach designed to help students connect what they learn in the classroom with what is expected in the workplace by integrating learning with real-world applications in partnership with industry professionals.

8 **Authentic Project Learning Experiences:** Authentic project learning experiences promote students' transfer of their expertise as they solve real-world challenges in their career industry or community. Students exercise agency in selecting their passion projects to demonstrate content knowledge and career-readiness competencies by developing innovative solutions with industry-professional guidance to design and produce original, relevant, and community-connected outcomes.

9 **Competency-Based Assessment:** A competency-based assessment is a way to measure industry skillsets or competencies. To prove their competency, students must demonstrate the ability to transfer their content knowledge and career readiness competencies to solve real-world challenges using the benchmarks provided by industry-defined standards.

Glossary/Definitions

10 **Program of Study:** NAF's Program of Study maximizes students' opportunities for achieving NAFTrack Certification by capitalizing on multiple options to pursue career pathways. In addition to NAF's five career themes, the NAF Program of Study aligns with the US Department of Education's 16 career clusters and associated career pathways. NAF academies apply for NAFTrack Certification approval for dual enrollment/early college and state-approved career-cluster courses to meet the curricular requirements of NAFTrack Certification.

11 **NAF's Expeditions:** NAF's Passport are authentic project learning experiences that energize learners to identify passion projects and inspire them to imagine innovative solutions to real-world challenges in partnership with industry professionals. Learners engage in the Future Ready Learning Framework: Reflect, Stretch, Innovate, & Showcase using design thinking strategies or the engineering design process. Expeditions also infuse technology applications and online resources to create dynamic solutions. Access NAF's Future Ready Learning for career-pathway expeditions.

12 **KnoPro:** KnoPro is a 100% FREE new platform provided by NAF for high school students who want to develop in-demand skills by completing real-world projects for cash and other prizes. KnoPro is an educator-designed platform that connects students and teachers with authentic industry challenges and professional mentors that help students build skills and develop their career aspirations. Unlike similar products that tend to focus on college students using text-heavy interfaces or charge schools or students for access, our platform was built specifically for (and with) high school students and teachers, with engaging videos, fun activities, essential resources, and opportunities to earn rewards and recognition.

13 **NAFTrack Certification (NTC):** NTC is NAF's employability credential that serves as NAF's seal of college and career readiness.

14 **Career awareness activities:** Students build career awareness and begin to identify areas of interest. Students' primary role is to observe, receive information, and ask questions to acquire knowledge.

15 **Career exploration activities:** Students gain a deeper understanding of the workplace. Students play an active role in the experience and apply knowledge in interactions with adults.

16 **Career preparation activities:** Students apply learning through practical experiences with industry professionals. Students engage in activities that have connection and value beyond the classroom and can be evaluated by professionals.

17 **Student Aspirations:** Each student will have defined and mapped a plan for at least one career path. Learn more.

18 **Student Skills:** Each student will have worked to develop the six Future Ready skills, received continuous feedback from industry partners, Advisory Board members, and/or local community professionals, and be able to articulate their strengths.

19 **Student Connections:** Each student will develop at least three professional connections. Learn more.

20 **Career Preparation Activity requirements for NAFTrack Certification:**
Students, and subsequently their academies, will get credit for internships, clinical experiences, youth apprenticeships/apprenticeships, and mentored industry projects that meet the following criteria:
- 80+ hours (or two 40-hour experiences)
- Paid, compensated, or volunteer
- Direct supervision by an accountable adult who is not the student's teacher
- Proficiency on an employer-validated skill assessment completed by the student's supervisor (not teacher, parent, or guardian)

These experiences should seek to strengthen students' skills and resumes, support student career exploration, increase students' social capital and network, and ideally and where appropriate, result in student payment.