QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK, VOLUME 3

Trainer's Manual

RTI INTERNATIONAL

NOTE ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

This document is part of a set of training resources for the Quality Assessment Framework, or QAF, designed by RTI International. The QAF forms, rubric, processes, and other tools are intended to help technical and vocational education and training centers worldwide to assess their own strengths and weaknesses, the demands of the workplace in their context, national or subnational education policies, and the corresponding services they should offer to students and prospective employers.

The framework's premise is that, in order to meet current and future workforce needs, promote sustainable program quality, and ensure longstanding impact for individual students and the larger economy,

- Training centers must provide a comprehensive set of services;
- Governments must adopt a comprehensive set of quality standards that apply universally to all programs;
- Industry partners must have confidence that training programs are aligned with labor market demands; and
- International aid organizations will benefit from working from a similar set of criteria.

The training resources in this set are:

1. **Overview** – Summarizes the critical need globally for better educational opportunities that lead directly to youth employment in particular, and sets the stage for the QAF
2. **Framework** – Elaborates upon the rationale for the QAF, and describes its components
3. **Trainer's manual** – Serves as a guide for master trainers and facilitators responsible for training others in how to roll out the use of the QAF across networks of technical training centers
4. **Appendices** – Consists of reproducible handouts, forms, and other resources to accompany the trainer's manual
5. **PowerPoint slide deck** – Contains slides to accompany the trainer's manual

About the Compiler

Peter Joyce led the compilation of the QAF toolkit while serving as the general manager of RTI's Global Center for Youth Employment. He remains a recognized expert on the challenges associated with the evolving global labor market and with youth employment and prosperity. Dr. Joyce's commitment to this effort stemmed from his belief that today's workforce is all about skills—and ensuring that schools and training centers have the capacity to deliver on high-quality and relevant skills to youth.

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This package of training materials is available for free download from RTI International's education resources website, https://shared.rti.org.

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PURPOSE OF THE TRAINER'S MANUAL

This trainer's manual was designed for use by those responsible for rolling out the use of the Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) across networks of technical training centers. It is for those ready to make the strategic move to improve the quality of youth training so they can pursue employment and productive livelihoods.

The materials in the guide will be used by three key types of **actors or "players."** Trainers are needed at three stages, during which this manual and the other volumes in the set can serve as resources:

- **Master trainers** have deep experience with the QAF and can train others who will serve as facilitators for training improvement activities. Master trainers might be staff from RTI International or other interested nongovernmental organizations; officers from a host-country government; industry representatives; representatives from individual training centers; or leaders of training center networks. The master trainers lead the facilitator trainees through interactive activities to teach them about the Quality Assurance Framework and the self-assessment and action planning processes.
- **Facilitators** convene **clusters of relevant stakeholders** in a central location to assess the technical and vocational education training centers that they represent. The clusters typically consist of 8–12 people. The clusters review and reach consensus on the current level of quality of their training center, scoring the center using the QAF rubric.
- Facilitators also assist the same clusters from the self-assessment to reassemble for action planning. With guidance from the facilitators and with their rubric scores at the center, they identify specific, practical Action Items and responsible parties for the 3–5 highest priority areas of growth or improvement for the training center.

This manual is to be used along with a set of nine appendices (in a separate volume) that contain additional resources and handouts; and a PowerPoint slide deck.

TRAINING OVERVIEW

Context

Many international aid projects have a goal of improving the quality of technical training so that more youth, particularly those who are poor and vulnerable, can develop the skills to be gainfully employed and enjoy greater earning power and economic stability.

The tools that constitute the Quality Assurance Framework, including this trainer's manual, are intended to advance that goal.

Quality Assurance Framework

The QAF is an evidence-based and evidence-producing tool that may be used to assist technical training centers to:

Tools of the QAF

The QAF includes several tools, the most important of which are listed and described in ***Exhibit 1.***

Exhibit 1. Key Tools and Instruments of the Quality Assurance Framework

Tool	Description
Quality Criteria	The QAF assessment system, which has 23 research-based quality criteria, organized into 5 categories, or domains: Leadership, Partnerships, Equity and Access, Teaching and Learning, and Operations. This comprehensive set of criteria defines the dimensions that contribute to training centers operating at a level of high quality. See **Appendix B.**
Self-Assessment Rubric	Descriptive stages of development for each of the quality criteria. Training centers may use the rubric to determine whether they are at the "foundational" level, or "emerging," "advancing," or "sustaining" levels. See **Appendix C.**
Action Plan Template	A formatted worksheet that training centers may use to create an Action Plan for improvement. The Action Plan addresses the highest priority areas of growth identified during the self-assessment process. See **Appendix G.**

Tool	Description
Trainer's Manual	This document, designed to guide master trainers and facilitators through the processes of helping training centers complete a self-assessment (using the rubric) and Action Plan (using the Action Plan Template). The appendices and PowerPoint slides that accompany the trainer's manual are available in two additional separate files.

Intended Audience

This QAF trainer's manual is for master trainers and facilitators responsible for rolling out the use of the QAF across networks of technical training centers. As mentioned above, master trainers will be individuals who already have significant hands-on experience with the QAF. Facilitators at the next level may include any of the following:

- District, provincial, or regional government leaders who wish to encourage or require use of the QAF by all technical training centers in the designated area
- Leaders from companies that partner with many technical training centers and wish for all partner training centers to use the QAF to improve the quality of their training
- Leaders of networks of technical training centers who wish to support all centers participating in the network to improve their quality
- Leaders from postsecondary partners who support local or regional technical training centers and wish to facilitate processes to improve training centers.

Scheduling

The QAF General Training, the self-assessment process, and the action planning may be scheduled on sequential days, or they may be separated by a week or more. The master trainers and facilitators will determine the preferred timing by discussing availability, preference, and convenience with leaders from the participating training centers. A full day of work is typical for each stage.

Master Trainers' Preparation

The master trainers will use this trainer's manual and accompanying resources to train the facilitators responsible for guiding the center self-assessments and the action planning processes.

Master trainers may also want to prepare by seeking out and reviewing other resources about facilitation, such as these English-language texts: Ingrid Bens, *Facilitating with Ease!: Core Skills for Facilitators, Team Leaders and Members, Managers, Consultants, and Trainers* (4th ed., 2017); or Roger Schwartz, *The Skilled Facilitator: A Comprehensive Resource for Consultants, Facilitators, Coaches, and Trainers* (3rd ed., 2017).

Facilitators

Once the master trainers have trained the facilitators, the facilitators may work one-on-one with individual training centers, or they may work with multiple training centers

simultaneously. In order to roll out the use of the QAF more quickly and aggressively, many regions will choose to work with multiple training centers. The QAF designers recommend limiting assignments to *three training centers per facilitator*. However, even if the ratio of facilitators to training institutions is one-to-one, the facilitators should work in teams (of two or three) in order to benefit from collaboration and be more cost-effective by serving more training centers simultaneously.

As an example, two facilitators working together could guide QAF self-assessments for up to six training centers on the same day in the same meeting hall; or three facilitators could collaborate to simultaneously support up to nine training centers. Please note, however, that a gathering for that many centers would require a space that could accommodate about 100 participants for both the self-assessment and the action planning processes.

Exhibit 2 summarizes how the QAF process might be staffed.

Exhibit 2. Recommended Leadership and Participants

Session and purpose	Leader(s)	Participants
1. QAF General Training session	1–2 master trainers	8–15 facilitator trainees
2. Self-assessment process	2–3 trained facilitators per venue	Cross-stakeholder teams of 8–12 individuals from participating technical training center(s)
3. Action planning process	1–2 trained facilitators per venue (with master trainers advising as available or as needed)	If feasible, for economies of scale: at least 2 but no more than 3 centers per facilitator

Organization of This Trainer's Manual

This trainer's manual is divided into three major sections:

1. Master trainers' leadership of the QAF GENERAL TRAINING SESSION
2. Facilitators' guidance of training-center clusters for the SELF-ASSESSMENT process
3. Facilitators' guidance to clusters during the ACTION PLANNING process

Materials

As noted, the manual also includes several appendices (in a separate volume) with handouts and other resources that facilitators will need.

At the QAF General Training session, the master trainers will distribute to the facilitator trainees copies of the trainer's manual (both paper and soft copy) and the other accompanying resources. The facilitators then will reuse the trainer's manual and many of the handouts as they lead the self-assessment and action planning sessions.

Other required materials are listed in the notes for each session.

It is strongly recommended, if feasible, to have available a laptop loaded with the Microsoft Office suite and connected to a projector for displaying PowerPoint slides. The toolkit contains a PowerPoint deck of slides for each of the three different sessions.

The slides—and all the other documents in this set—can be downloaded for free onto a flash drive or laptop from the web address on the “Note about this document” page.

MASTER TRAINERS' GENERAL TRAINING SESSION FOR NEW FACILITATORS:

ABOUT THE QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK (QAF)

GENERAL INFORMATION

In this section, the instructions for actions to be taken are directed to master trainers. The term "participants" refers to facilitator trainees.

Purpose

This section of the manual presents content for a training session that introduces new facilitators to the key tools that make up the Quality Assurance Framework. It also prepares them to facilitate stakeholder teams from technical and vocational training centers as they engage in a process to self-assess their center's quality and develop Action Plans for improvement.

The content in this manual presents a proven concept for improving the quality of technical training within a variety of schools and centers. Further, it was written to share information and activities that are flexible to meet the needs of a country or geographical area. Although one full day or two half-days are recommended for the training format, other effective formats might be feasible, depending on the context.

Intended Audience

As noted earlier in this manual, the QAF General Training session for aspiring facilitators is intended for staff from interested nongovernmental organizations; government officers; industry representatives; representatives from individual training centers; leaders of training center networks; and the like.

Objectives

- Introduce the Quality Assurance Framework to facilitator trainees
- Prepare participants to facilitate the self-assessment and action planning processes

Expected Outcomes for Participants

1. Thorough understanding of the purpose and use of the Quality Assurance Framework
2. Ability to use the QAF to shift the conversation of training center improvement from "impossible" to "doable"
3. Ability to use this turn-key approach—i.e., all aspects of the training and facilitation are packaged, ready to use, and easy to execute—to facilitate the self-assessment and action planning processes for cross-stakeholder teams from training centers
4. Awareness of and attention to the need to use the self-assessment and action planning processes to model desired behaviors and, in doing so, begin the process of shifting organizational culture (i.e., to one that promotes collaboration, builds sustainable partnerships, ensures transparency, uses data and evidence to ensure mutual accountability, promotes continuous improvement)

Workshop Structure

To optimize impact, the training session will use the follow learning modalities or methodologies:

Information sessions – presentations that outline important information. Not much group interaction; simply questions and answers.

"Lightning talks" – very short, high-energy presentations by which speakers introduce key concepts. The goal is to explain the information quickly and concisely but not overwhelm the participants.

Collaborative exercises – hands-on activities conducted in groups.

PREPARATION AND SET-UP

Facilities

For this QAF training workshop, it is best to identify a facility that

- Is ***large enough*** to accommodate the intended number of participants;
- Allows ***space*** to move around easily;
- Allows participants to remain ***comfortable*** through the day;
- Is ***free of distractions***, such as excess noise, activity, food, etc.;
- Has a space nearby that is ample for ***food service*** **and dining**; and
- Includes ample ***electrical outlets*** to charge the master trainer's[1] equipment as well as participants' devices.

Furniture

The room should include an adequate number of either round or rectangular tables that accommodate 4–6 participants each, as well as chairs that are easy to move.

[1] Although more than one master trainer is recommended, the singular form is used here for grammatical simplicity.

Technology

This training requires:

- Master trainer's **laptop** (with power cord),
- **Projector** (with power cord and connector cable), and
- **Screen** large enough to be seen easily by all participants in the room.

It is helpful if the master trainer has a **hand-held remote control** that may be used to advance slides and to serve as a laser pointer.

Meals

Participants appreciate when they are well-fed and have plenty to drink. If affordable, hot meals are preferred over cold ones. No matter the type or amount of food, the food service should be fast so that it does not detract from the time needed to complete the training session. It is best to move to *a different room* (or outdoors) for meals, as having food in the meeting room is a distraction.

Materials

The following materials will be necessary to conduct the QAF General Training session:

- PowerPoint deck (from flash drive, or available from web address on the "Note about this document" page above) loaded to master trainer's laptop
- Easel
- Pad of flipchart paper
- Colored markers
- Tape
- Copies of QAF General Training agenda (see below) – one per participant
- Copies of **Appendix A:** "Austin's Butterfly" – one per participant
- Copies of **Appendix B:** Quality Criteria; and **Appendix C:** Self-Assessment Rubric – one of each appendix per participant
- Copies of **Appendix D:** Sample Training Center Profile – one per participant
- Copies of **Appendix E:** Record Sheets for Self-Assessment – one set per participant
- Copies of **Appendix G:** Action Plan Template – one per participant
- Copies of **Appendix H:** Sample Action Item – one per participant
- Copies of **Appendix I:** Record Sheet for Action Planning – one set per participant

Photocopies

Photocopies of all materials—enough for every anticipated participant or small group, plus some extras—should be produced, stapled, and organized in advance of the training so that they can quickly and easily be distributed at the right time.

Master Trainer Preparation

Especially when a team of master trainers will be working together, it is important for them to determine beforehand which will lead each session, and to discuss transitions to ensure that they are smooth.

Well in advance of the training session, the master trainers should review all materials in this trainer's manual. A few days prior to the session, the master trainers also should do a "dry run" (i.e., practice session)—preferably in front of co-trainers who can give feedback—in order to rehearse the sections, test the technology, and ensure effective implementation.

Support Staff

The master trainers will need support staff on the day of the training to help with registration, parking logistics, meal preparation and set-up, communications, distribution of materials, and more. The master trainers should be in place and available at all times to conduct the QAF General Training session and interact with participants. Other responsibilities may easily distract them from their key role.

Trainings will vary based on time and resources. While the agenda and the other content in this training manual represent best practices, they are meant to be adapted based upon circumstances of the country and region involved. The ultimate goal is to ensure a strong working knowledge of the tool and associated processes so that the trained facilitators can share this knowledge with school and center stakeholder teams who will be taking responsibility for the quality assurance self-assessment and action planning.

Exhibit 3. Agenda: QAF General Training Session, Led by Master Trainers

Time	Section	Details	Master trainer
8:30–9:00 AM	Registration		
9:00–9:30	Welcome and Introductions	• Welcome; overview of the improvement process • Introduction of staff, teams, partners, and guests • Expected session outcomes; agenda review • Collaborative Exercise 1: Setting ground rules	
9:30–10:00	Icebreaker: Focus on Quality and Continuous Improvement	• Lightning Talk 1: "Austin's Butterfly" story • Debrief and discussion	
10:00–10:30	Introduction to Framework	• Collaborative Exercise 2 (table groups): What is a high-quality training center? • Lightning Talk 2: "Secret Recipe" • Introduction to the Quality Assurance Framework and supportive tools	

Time	Section	Details	Master trainer
		• Lightning Talk 3: “Honoring Different Points of View”	
10:30–10:45	Break		
10:45–12:15 PM	Self-Assessment Practice	• Silent reading: Case study of Sample Training Center • Collaborative Exercise 3 (groups of 3–4): Applying the QAF to “Sample Training Center” • Debrief and discussion • Introduction to the processes for self-assessment and action planning	
12:15–12:30	Q&A		
12:30–1:30	Lunch		
1:30–3:30	Action Planning Process and Practice	• Lightning Talk 4: “Wellness” • Collaborative Exercise 4 (table groups): What makes an effective Action Plan? • Introduction to the Action Plan Template and samples • Collaborative Exercise 5 (groups of 3–4): Practice writing Action Items • Collaborative Exercise 6 (paired groups of 3–4): The feedback protocol • Collaborative Exercise 7 (full group): Monitoring progress	
3:30–4:00	Preparation	• Preparation for upcoming self-assessment and action planning processes, including discussion of individual roles • Thank you’s	
4:00 PM	Adjournment		

WORKSHOP ACTIVITY DESCRIPTIONS

Workshop Structure

- INFORMATION SESSION 1 – Getting Started
- COLLABORATIVE EXERCISE 1 – Setting Ground Rules
- LIGHTNING TALK 1 – "Austin's Butterfly"
- COLLABORATIVE EXERCISE 2 – What Is a High-Quality Training Center?
- LIGHTNING TALK 2 – Secret Recipe
- INFORMATION SESSION 2–The QAF and Supportive Tools
- LIGHTNING TALK 3 – Honoring Different Points of View
- COLLABORATIVE EXERCISE 2 – Applying the QAF to "Sample Training Center"
- INFORMATION SESSION 3 – Processes
- LIGHTNING TALK 4– Wellness
- COLLABORATIVE EXERCISE 4 – What Makes an Effective Action Plan?
- INFORMATION SESSION 4 – Action Plan Template and Samples
- COLLABORATIVE EXERCISE 5 – Practice Writing Action Items
- COLLABORATIVE EXERCISE 6 – The Feedback Protocol
- COLLABORATIVE EXERCISE 7 – Monitoring Progress
- INFORMATION SESSION 5 – Preparation for Self-Assessment and Action-Planning

Information Session 1: Getting Started (20 minutes)

After the welcome statements, the introductory PowerPoint slides structure the "big picture" of the training session. Before the workshop proceeds, introduce the facilitator trainees to:

1. The purpose and goals of the QAF (slide: "Scenic Overview: The Quality Assurance Framework")
2. Expected outcomes: What they will learn (slide: "Expected Training Outcomes")
3. Broad outlines of the training schedule (slide[s]: "Training Schedule") [Note: The training schedule slides are intended to be tailored]

Collaborative Exercise 1: Setting Ground Rules (10 minutes)

One of the first participant tasks is to jointly set ground rules for the session. These rules can then serve as models that can be further tailored for the self-assessment and action planning workshops.

Use the slides “What Are Ground Rules, and Why Have Them” and “Ground Rules” (2 slides) as a resource. Groups should always devise and tailor their own working rules.

Lightning Talk 1: “Austin’s Butterfly” – The Benefits of Constructive Feedback and Continuous Improvement (30 minutes)

“Austin’s Butterfly” story (13 slides plus **Appendix A**) – This story and the accompanying illustrations describe how constructive, encouraging feedback, with multiple opportunities for revision, helped a first grader improve his work and produce a very self-satisfying outcome. This unusual method of teaching high expectations and persistence may be unfamiliar to many but useful in the training of youth and young adults.

Collaborative Exercise 2: Table Groups – What Is a High-Quality Training Center? (5 minutes)

Objective:

Participants begin with what they know about the quality of training and vocational education centers and set the tone for the day by focusing their thinking on quality and the pursuit of it.

Materials:

- Flipchart pad or large paper in front of room
- “What Is a High Quality Training Center?” (4 slides, plus handout: **Appendix B**)

Process

STEP 1:

In their table groups, ask participants to

- Select a table-group facilitator and a recorder.
- Take 6–8 minutes to brainstorm and record: *What are the characteristics of a high-quality technical and vocational training center?*

After the time is up, ask each table to share one key item from its list with the larger group. Record the ideas on the paper at the front of the room. Call on each group, then continue soliciting characteristics until all ideas have been shared (i.e., moderating the discussion to avoid repetition).

STEP 2:

With the participants back to work as a large group, ask the participants to refer to the Appendix B handout. As a group, cross-reference the list they generated with the headings of the QAF to see how they did.

Lightning Talk 2: Secret Recipe (5 minutes)

Secret Recipe: "The Best Blueberry Muffins" (5 slides) – The blueberry muffin lightning talk is an analogy that compares the key ingredients of a secret recipe with the QAF's five openly shared key elements (the domains) for delivering high-quality training and education for youth: Leadership, Partnerships, Operations, Equity and Access, and Teaching and Learning. No secrets here. Just basic ingredients.

Information Session 2: The Quality Assurance Framework and Supportive Tools (15 minutes)

This information session is a presentation of the Quality Assurance Framework itself. The presentation covers each of the five domains and the corresponding quality criteria.

See the PowerPoint deck for 7 slides introducing the overall framework and the assessment tools to the full group of facilitator trainees.

Lightning Talk 3: Honoring Different Points of View (5 minutes)

As trainees become familiar with this self-assessment tool, it is important to understand that people actually see things differently. This talk (7 slides) uses images and optical illusions with humor to make the point that "perception is reality"—that is, what individuals perceive is real to them and should be honored; and not all perspectives are the same.

The slides are designed to be used interactively. In each case, the master trainer will ask what the participants can (or cannot) see.

Collaborative Exercise 3: Applying the Quality Assurance Framework to "Sample Training Center" (60 minutes)

Have the participants, in groups of 3–4, go through the exercise of assessing "Sample Training Center."

Objective:

Participants familiarize themselves with the content (rows and columns) of the self-assessment rubric.

Materials:

1. Copies of the self-assessment rubric for each participant – See **Appendix C**
2. Copies of the Sample Training Center Profile, a description of a fictitious center, for each participant – See **Appendix D**
3. One copy for each small group of the blank Record Sheets for Self-Assessment – See **Appendix E**
4. Large newsprint
5. Markers to compile and record the small groups' scores on the newsprint and discuss as a large group

Process

Each table will practice using the self-assessment tool by applying it to the description of the fictitious Sample Training Center. Each small group will focus on two (out of five) sections of the rubric, to get a flavor of its layout and design, level of detail, and usefulness.

STEP 1:

- Distribute the Sample Training Center Profile.
- Give participants 10 minutes to read the profile silently (or to take turns reading aloud).
- Ask the table groups to subdivide into groups of 3–4.
- Ask each small group to assign a facilitator, recorder, and reporter.
- Distribute the rubrics and the blank record sheets.

STEP 2:

Assign two domains from the rubric to each small group. Ideally, each domain will be assigned to more than one group. Then introduce the small-group task by referring to the PowerPoint slide titled "Assessing 'Sample Training Center,'" which reads substantially as follows:

- As a group, begin with the first of your assigned sections – 1. Leadership, 2. Partnerships, 3. Equity and Access, 4. Teaching and Learning, or 5. Operations.
- Open to the assigned section of both the rubric and the Sample Training Center Profile.
- Discuss the Sample Training Center Profile while referencing that section of the rubric.
- Determine the appropriate level at which to assess Sample Training Center, based on the evidence found in the profile.
- Come to agreement on a rating for each row. Record it on the paper record sheets. Be prepared to defend it.
- If there is not enough information to make an assessment for a row, mark "N/A" for "not available."
- **REPEAT** the process for the second assigned section of the rubric and the Sample Training Center Profile.

Debrief and Discussion:

When the small groups finish their work, record their consensus scores on newsprint at the front of the room. Look for disparities in the domain scores and discuss those, in order to collectively understand the developmental stages of the criteria.

Suggested questions to consider as a full group:

- How easy or difficult was it to individually determine indicator scores?
- Did it become easier with practice?
- When compiling results, what strategies did your small group use to reach consensus? Were some of the indicator composite scores easier to reconcile among the group members than others?
- Based on this experience, when you are facilitating a self-assessment workshop, will you have some additional advice to give to the participating stakeholders before they begin their scoring work?

Information Session 3: Processes (30 minutes)

Turn to the diagram slide titled “Guided Self-Assessment and Action planning Processes.” Engaging with the full group, analyze the steps and explain the iterative nature of the processes.

Lightning Talk 4: Wellness (5 minutes)

“My Journey to Wellness” (1 slide) – This talk compares the steps for improving training quality to an activity with which many participants will be familiar: striving for personal fitness or wellness goals. Key points of this exercise are: (1) The more specific and actionable the goals are, the more feasible it is to stick with them and attain them; and (2) wellness requires holistic attention to many aspects of a person’s lifestyle.

The master trainer (or other recruited presenter) discusses his/her “journey to wellness,” focusing on weight loss or fitness or diet, or some other aspect. In doing so, he/she discusses his/her “Action Plan,” during which he/she may suggest some “bad” targets/goals (e.g., “eat healthier food” – vague; or “exercise more” – not quantifiable).

The presenter solicits from the listeners some better examples (e.g., eliminate fried foods and processed foods, undertake physical exercise 5 days per week for at least 20 minutes).

Collaborative Exercise 4: Table Groups – What Makes an Effective Action Plan? (10 minutes)

Objective:

Participants begin with what they know about action planning and build on that collective experience to appreciate the format of the Action Plan Template.

Assumption:

All participants have previously seen, created, and/or used an action plan.

Materials:

- Flipchart pad/paper in front of room
- "What Makes an Effective Action Plan?" (1 slide)

Process:

Have the facilitator trainees continue to sit with their table groups of 4–6 people. Direct the groups to do the following (using slide "What Makes an Effective Action Plan?"):

- Select a table group facilitator, recorder, and reporter.
- Take 5 minutes to brainstorm and record: What features of an action plan make it "actionable" and "effective"?
- Have the nominated recorder make a list.
- Have the table group facilitator try to lead the group toward a consensus.

When the table groups have finished, ask the reporters to share their key points with the whole group, again starting with one idea per table. Record their inputs on the paper at the front of the room.

If helpful, return to the diagram slide "Guided Self-Assessment and Action planning Processes" (1 slide) for a review.

Information Session 4: Action Plan Template and Samples (25 minutes)

Move to the "Action Plan Template and Samples" section of the PowerPoint deck that contains a portion of the Action Plan Template (see also **Appendix G**) and samples of completed Action Plan pages (see also **Appendix H**). Engaging with the full group and drawing from the explanatory text in **Appendix G**, point out the various sections to be completed, the types of entries that are expected in each cell of the table, and the rationales for recording the information.

Collaborative Exercise 5: Practice Writing Action Items (40 minutes)

Groups:

Use the same groups of 3–4 from Collaborative Exercise 3, "Applying the QAF to 'Sample Training Center.'"

Objective:

Participants will gain confidence in drafting Action Items that adhere to best practices. The table group facilitator will collect samples from the groups and the reporter will share them with the full group.

Materials:

- Copies of Action Plan Template, one copy per person – See **Appendix G**
- Copies of Sample Action Item, one copy per person – See **Appendix H**

Process:

Participants will practice drafting next steps using the Action Plan Template. Display the slide "Practice Writing Action Items" to help explain the task.

- Use the Action Plan Template and Sample Action Item as handouts.
- To begin, have each team of 3–4 select one of the quality criteria assessed for Sample Training Center as being "foundational" or "emerging."
- For that criterion, the team will write (1) an Action Item, (2) the narrative, and (3) 4–6 Action Steps. They should check to be sure they have adhered to the list of best practices.
- If time permits, they may continue with one or more additional quality criteria, perhaps selected from different sections of the rubric (i.e., Leadership, Partnerships, Equity and Access, Teaching and Learning, Operations)

Collaborative Exercise 6: The Feedback Protocol (25 minutes)

Groups:

Combine the groups of 3–4 from the previous exercise by pairing them to create groups of 6–8.

Objective:

Participants will assure themselves of their capability to write actionable Action Items.

Materials:

"The Feedback Protocol" slide with instructions (1 slide)

Process:

Have each group of 3–4 pair with another team for feedback, based on the question, "Is the Action Item actionable?"

- Team A shares and explains (i.e., defends) their Action Items. Team B asks clarifying questions, "soft" questions, and then "hard" questions:
  - Clarifying questions – Seek merely to clarify information in order to understand the context, intent, language, etc.

- “Soft” questions – Inquire based on curiosity, and better understanding of group’s intent and thinking
- “Hard” questions – Challenge the group’s intent and thinking

- After 15 minutes, have the teams reverse roles.

Collaborative Exercise 7: Monitoring Progress (15 minutes)

Explain to the participants that every completed Action Plan will require follow-up and monitoring to ensure that the Action Items are carried out, or to adjust implementation as events demand. Systematized monitoring requires tailored **structures** and **processes.**

Display “Monitoring Progress” (1 slide). Lead the full group through the examples; encourage them to name even more specific options from their own experiences if they can.

Information Session 5: Preparation for Self-Assessment and Action planning (30 minutes)

Remind the newly trained facilitators that they will be responsible for convening a cluster of stakeholders representing the center with which they are most closely associated. They will also help set up follow-up sessions for the self-assessment and also for the action planning process for the areas of growth that the clusters decide to prioritize.

Especially for pairs or groups of facilitators who represent a single training center, suggest that they consult among themselves now to make preliminary plans regarding options for the self-assessment session: date, time, location, invitees.

FACILITATING THE SELF-ASSESSMENT PROCESS WITH CROSS-STAKEHOLDER TEAMS FROM TRAINING CENTERS

USING THE QAF SELF-ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

GENERAL INFORMATION

In this section, the instructions for actions to be taken are directed to trained facilitators who participated in the QAF General Training and will now guide the self-assessment process. The term "participants" refers to training centers' cross-stakeholder teams.

Purpose

The self-assessment is designed to guide cross-stakeholder teams through a process to agree on the level of quality of their technical training center, with a score for each criterion identified in the QAF. Including the perspectives of multiple stakeholders adds value and validity to the results of the self-assessment.

Intended Audience

Each participating training center should bring a cross-stakeholder team of 8–12 individuals, representing:

• Parents	• Students	• Board members
• Director	• Lead teacher(s)	• Other instructors
• Alumni	• Business partners	• School managers
• District government officials		

OBJECTIVES

The participants will:

- Complete a self-assessment of the training center using the QAF rubric.
- Prioritize 3–5 key areas for growth.

Expected Outcomes for Participants

1. Sense of satisfaction in completing a comprehensive self-assessment of the training center in a way that honors input from multiple stakeholders.
2. Common understanding of, and agreement on, the strengths and areas of growth for the training center.
3. List of prioritized areas of growth for the coming year, based on results of the self-assessment.
4. Agreement to continue working together to support the continuous improvement of the training center.
5. Stronger partnerships and improved collaboration among stakeholders.

Process

Point out the five domains of the QAF: (1) Leadership, (2) Partnerships, (3) Equity and Access, (4) Teaching and Learning, and (5) Operations. For each of the five domains (in the rubric), ask the participant teams to follow this sequence:

- Individually review and score each of the 23 quality criteria.
- Record individual scores on flipchart paper.
- Compare scores and note similarities and differences.
  - If there is substantial agreement, attempt to quickly come to consensus.
  - If there are substantial differences, have a discussion to better understand others' rationale and to share information that may promote consensus.
- Come to consensus (or at least general agreement) on a group score.
- Record the group consensus / agreement for each criterion.

PREPARATION AND SET-UP

Facilities

For the self-assessment process, it is best to identify a facility that

- Is *large enough* to accommodate the intended number of participants;
- Allows *space* to move around easily;
- Allows participants to remain *comfortable* through the day;
- Is *free of distractions*, such as excess noise, activity, food, etc.;
- Has a space nearby that is ample for *food service* and dining;
- Includes ample *electrical outlets* to charge the facilitators'[2] equipment as well as participants' devices; and
- Has lots of *wall space* for teams to post the results of their self-assessment.

Furniture

The room should include one large round, rectangular, or square table for each team. Each large table must accommodate a team of up to 12 participants. The room should include enough chairs to seat all participants.

Equipment and Supplies

Each team will need:

- Easel
- 5 Record Sheets for Self-Assessment (one for each QAF domain), prepared beforehand using flipchart paper (see **Appendix E**)
- 3–5 additional sheets of blank flipchart paper for taking notes
- 3–5 colored markers

[2] Because 2–3 facilitators are likely at a given venue, the plural form is used in this section for grammatical simplicity.

- Tape
- Markers or multicolored “sticky dots” for voting and prioritization

Technology

This session requires:

- Facilitators’ **laptop** (with power cord)
- **Projector** (with power cord and connector cable)
- **Screen** large enough to be seen easily by all participants in the room

It is helpful if the facilitators have a **hand-held remote control** which may be used to advance slides and serve as a laser pointer.

Meals

Participants appreciate when they are well fed and have plenty to drink. If affordable, hot meals are preferred over cold ones. No matter the type or amount of food, be sure that the food service is fast so that it does not detract from the time needed to complete the team task. It is important to have lunch in a different room (or outdoors) because groups will be on slightly different schedules, thus starting and ending lunch at different times. Having food in the meeting room would be a distraction for those teams still working.

Materials

For the self-assessment process, the facilitators will need:

- PowerPoint deck loaded to laptop (from flash drive, or available from web address on the “Note about this document” page above)
- Pre-made set of 5 large flipchart pages (see **Appendix E**) for each team (one QAF domain per page)
- Photocopies of the QAF Self-Assessment Rubric (see **Appendix C**) – one per participant
- Copies of the self-assessment agenda – one per participant

Facilitator Preparation

Assign responsibilities. Especially when a team of facilitators will be working together, it is important to determine in advance which facilitator will lead each session, and to discuss transitions to ensure that they are smooth.

Review materials and rehearse. Well in advance of the training session, each facilitator should review all materials in this trainer’s manual and tailor the PowerPoint deck for this session (i.e., move, copy/paste, add, and adapt slides). A few days prior to the event, the facilitators also should do a “dry run” (i.e., practice session)—preferably in front of colleagues who can give feedback—in order to rehearse the sections, test the technology, anticipate problems, and ensure effective implementation.

Select story retellers for the lightning talks. Before the start of the self-assessment process, the facilitator team should seek out 2–3 individuals who participated in the QAF General Training session (preferably those representing

training centers) and ask them to be prepared to share “lessons learned” from each of the four “lightning talks” (Austin’s Butterfly, Secret Recipe, Honoring Different Points of View, and Wellness).

Support Staff

The facilitators will need support staff on the day of the session to help with registration, technology set-up, parking logistics, meal preparation and set-up, communications, distribution of materials, and more. Facilitators should be in place and available at all times to interact with participants. Other responsibilities may easily distract facilitators from playing their key role effectively.

Exhibit 4. Agenda: Self-Assessment Process, Led by Trained Facilitators for Cross-Stakeholder Teams

Time	Section	Details	Facilitator
8:30–9:00 AM	Registration		
9:00–9:30	Getting Started: Welcome and Introductions	• Welcome and overview of the task • Introduction of staff, teams, partners, and guests • Session outcomes, agenda review, and ground rules	
9:30–10:00	Lessons Learned from QAF General Training	Collaborative Exercise 1: Review and debrief of the QAF General Training lightning talks, “Austin’s Butterfly,” “Secret Recipe,” “Honoring Different Points of View,” and “Wellness”	Centers’ participants in QAF General Training
10:00–10:30	Introduction to Framework	Introduction to the QAF and supportive tools	
10:30–10:45	Break		
10:45–11:00	Self-Assessment Process	Collaborative Exercise 2: Explanation of the self-assessment process	
11:00–11:45	Leadership Domain	Collaborative Exercise 3: The self-assessment process Leadership self-assessment: Record individual scores and group consensus	
11:45–12:30 PM	Partnership Domain	Partnership self-assessment: Record individual scores and group consensus	
12:30–1:30	Lunch		
1:30–2:00	Equity and Access Domain	Equity and Access self-assessment: Record individual scores and group consensus	
2:00–2:45	Teaching and Learning Domain	Teaching and Learning self-assessment: Record individual scores and group consensus	
2:45–3:15	Operations Domain	Operations self-assessment: Record individual scores and group consensus	

Time	Section	Details	Facilitator
3:15–3:30	Prioritization	Collaborative Exercise 4: Individuals use colored markers or “sticky dots” to prioritize areas of growth for coming year	
3:30–4:00	Preparation	Prepare for upcoming action planning session	
4:00 PM	Adjourn		

SUGGESTIONS FOR FACILITATORS

Tone and pace. Try to maintain a positive, supportive tone throughout the day. It is a long work session and some participants will have greater levels of interest and patience than others. Keep things moving along so that participants feel good about their progress. Remember to celebrate the completion of each section of the rubric and congratulate them for staying focused, listening to one another, and coming to agreement.

Inclusion. It is important to articulate at the beginning of the day that (for this team task) all participants are entitled to an equal voice. Some participants will be more vocal and/or confident than others. Your job is to bring out the voices of those who tend to listen first rather than speak, or who are shyer or less confident. Remember: All participants offer valuable perspectives. As the facilitator, it is your job to promote a collaborative spirit that honors everyone’s voice and perspective. That said, you may need to publicly acknowledge that the director of the training center is the one who knows the most overall about aspects of the center. So, from time to time, you may need to defer to him/her to clarify or resolve conflicting information. Even so, the director should not dominate conversation.

Shifting roles. At the beginning of the self-assessment workshop, the facilitators who attended the QAF General Training will need to assume the lead role. However, once the stakeholder teams have moved through the first and second domains of the QAF (Leadership, Partnerships), other team members may be able and willing to facilitate, as the trained facilitators shift to a coaching or guiding role. That is a healthy development, as it allows the team to take greater ownership of the process and resulting product. Encourage different team members to try facilitation. Doing so will demonstrate the “equal voice” rule articulated at the beginning of the day and will empower multiple team members, rather than only one.

Reflection. At the end of a work session like this, it is nice to give participants an opportunity to offer some reflective feedback about the process. To do so, go around the room, asking each participant to make one brief statement (sentence) about the day. Each may express an observation, gratitude, acknowledgement, recognition, suggestion, etc. Facilitators should also offer reflective feedback.

Closing. Be sure to express your gratitude for participants’ honesty, openness to learning, and commitment to stay the entire day.

Clean-up. Both the facilitators and the center director should take photos of the results of the day. Either the facilitators or center director should keep the hard copies of the record sheets, which can be hung again at the beginning of the action planning session, to remind the team of their prior achievement and prioritized areas of growth.

WORKSHOP ACTIVITY DESCRIPTIONS

Information Session 1: Getting Started (30 minutes)

After the welcome statements, the introductory PowerPoint slides structure the "big picture" of the training session. Before the workshop proceeds, introduce the training center stakeholders to:

1. The purpose and goals of the QAF (slide: "Scenic Overview: The Quality Assurance Framework")[3]
2. Review of agenda
3. Expected outcomes: What they will learn (slide: "Expected Outcomes for Cross-Stakeholder Teams Completing the Self-Assessment Process")
4. Ground rules (slides: "What Are Ground Rules, and Why Have Them?" and "Ground Rules")

Collaborative Exercise 1: Review of the Lightning Talks (30 minutes)

Call on the pre-selected 2–3 individuals who participated in the QAF General Training session to recall the four lightning talks (Austin's Butterfly, Secret Recipe, Honoring Different Points of View, and Wellness).

[3] Note that some listed slides appear earlier in the PowerPoint deck—based on their sequence in the QAF General Training—and are not repeated in the self-assessment section. Before the workshop, you may wish to copy or rearrange slides for smoother flow.

This segment should take no more than 5 minutes per lightning talk. Encourage each pre-selected training participant to briefly retell the story and then highlight the key lesson(s) learned.

Information Session 2: Introduction to the Framework and Supportive Tools (30 minutes)

Use the 7 slides that give a deeper introduction to the QAF to lay the groundwork for the hands-on effort for which the training center stakeholders will be responsible during the session.

Take time to walk through one line of the rubric (**Appendix C**, Vision and Mission), clarifying how the columns progress from "foundational" to "emerging," "advancing," and "sustaining."

As you explain the self-assessment process (diagram slide: "Guided Self-Assessment and Action planning Processes"), take time to clarify the importance of each person's perspective. Doing the assessment individually first allows everyone to read at their own pace, reflect on their own unique knowledge and experiences, and make their own independent assessment. It limits the ability of any one individual to overly influence the decision of the group.

Collaborative Exercise 2: Explanation of the Self-Assessment Process (15 minutes)

Groups:

If representatives from more than one training center are present, have them group themselves near each other.

At the beginning of the workshop, any individuals attending who participated in the QAF General Training but are not serving as workshop facilitators will be especially useful in serving as table facilitators and recorders.

Materials:

- Prepared beforehand: a set of flipchart-sized record sheets for each center, for each of the five QAF domains
- Summary slides: "Self-Assessment Process," "Reminder; Our Goal Is Not to Overwhelm…" and "Suggested Agreements for Self-Assessment."

Process:

Display the slide "Self-Assessment Process" and discuss the steps shown there. Also use the humorous slide "Reminder: Our Goal is Not to Overwhelm…" to remind participants that the goal is to make quality improvements more feasible, not less.

Assign each participant a number (the reason for this is explained below) and record each individual's name on the appropriate large record sheet for the "Leadership" domain. You will copy the numbers and names to each of the four remaining domain record sheets for that center.

Display the slide "Suggested Agreements for Self-Assessment." Explain that there may be instances when the participants from a particular training center feel that their center does not yet reach the level indicated by a quality criteria description for "1 – Foundational." When that is the case, it is OK for individuals to select a rating of "0 – Basic."

Explain that as they finish their own independent assessments for the quality criteria under the first domain (Leadership), you will record their results on the appropriate flipchart paper in front of the room. Once all of the scores are recorded on the flipchart paper, everyone can look at the scores.

Collaborative Exercise 3: The Self-Assessment Process (~3.5 hours)

From this point, the groups of attendees can begin a discussion among themselves about their training center. If there is almost unanimous agreement about their scoring, then the discussion can be brief. If there are substantial differences, the discussion will need to be longer. The participants can think of the discussion as a great opportunity to learn about all aspects of the training center.

One full day will not be enough for the groups to engage in discussion about all 23 individual criteria, so they should be strategic about (1) when a discussion is needed, (2) how long the discussion needs to be, and (3) when to "call for the question," i.e., "Can we all agree that for this criterion, our center is at a level 2 – Emerging?"

When it is difficult or impossible to come to agreement, recommend that they agree on the lower rating and prioritize the criterion for rapid improvement to move to the next level in the coming weeks or months.

For the remaining domains, other participants will take on more responsibility for the recording and discussion. The next several subsections explain by domain how the self-assessment will proceed. Again, if multiple training centers are represented, each group ideally should have its own table facilitator and recorder.

Leadership Domain (45 minutes):

As noted, tell the participants that you (or their assigned small-group facilitator) will be recording the independent ratings first; there will be time for discussion after. For "1a Vision and Mission," start with person #1 and go around the table asking for each participant's independent ranking. For "1b Leadership," start with person #5; and for "1c Culture," start with person #9, etc. Beginning with different people will ensure that

individuals are not overly influenced by the scores before him/her, which may lead an underconfident team member to change a score on the spot. For the Leadership domain, the facilitator (or a designated recorder) should write down the individual scores on the flipchart paper.

Partnerships Domain (45 minutes):

For the Partnerships domain, rather than asking each person to read out their scores for the facilitator/recorder to record, instead everyone can move forward and write their own scores (for all criteria at once) on the flipchart paper. Doing this allows the process to move faster, encourages everyone to "own" their ratings, and gives the participants an opportunity to move around. Otherwise, the process is the same as for the "Leadership" domain.

Equity and Access Domain (45 minutes):

By the time the participants reach this domain, they will be well familiar with the process and likely can move more quickly through this section.

Teaching and Learning Domain (45 minutes):

This section will likely take longer, for two reasons: (1) There are five to eight quality criteria, and (2) most—if not all—stakeholders will have experience with many of these criteria, thus possibly holding stronger opinions.

Operations Domain (30 minutes):

This section is likely to move fairly quickly, for two reasons: (1) Most participants will be tired and eager to finish, and (2) few will have direct knowledge and experience with these topics.

Collaborative Exercise 4: Prioritization (15 minutes)

For this exercise, for the participants' reference, show the slide "Process for Prioritizing Areas of Growth."

With all five record sheets for each center hanging on the walls, review the lists and identify each of the criteria for which the group(s) agreed on a rating of either “0 – basic” or “1 – Foundational.”

Show the slide “Prioritized Areas for Growth.” Ask the participants to identify the four (different) areas that they believe should be highest priority for immediate action for their center. Give them 3–4 minutes at their seats to consider their options and jot down their choices.

Then, invite them to go to the lists and indicate their votes by making dots with colored markers or placing their “sticky dots.”

Once all are completed, count the voting marks and circle the 3–5 most-marked areas that the group(s) identified collectively. Be sure that each center director keeps the prioritization sheets for future reference.

Information Session 3: Preparation for Action Planning (30 minutes)

Remind participants that they will come together again as a group in a follow-up session to develop Action Plans for the prioritized areas of growth. Share the details of the next session: date, time, location.

FACILITATING THE ACTION PLANNING PROCESS WITH CROSS-STAKEHOLDER TEAMS FROM TRAINING CENTERS

USING THE QAF ACTION PLAN TEMPLATE

GENERAL INFORMATION

In this section, the instructions for actions to be taken are directed to trained facilitators who participated in the QAF General Training and will now guide the action planning process. The term "participants" refers to training centers' cross-stakeholder teams.

Purpose

The action planning step is designed to guide cross-stakeholder teams through a process to create a set of Action Items for the 3–5 highest priority areas of growth for the training center. Including the perspectives of multiple stakeholders adds value to the resulting Action Plan.

Intended Audience

Each participating training center should bring the same cross-stakeholder team of 8–12 individuals who participated in the self-assessment process, representing, for example:

- Parents
- Students
- Board members
- Director
- Lead teacher(s)
- Other instructors
- Alumni
- Business partners
- School managers
- District government officials

Objectives

- Complete an Action Plan for 3–5 high-priority areas of growth for the training center.
- Establish structures and processes for monitoring progress on the Action Plan.

Expected Outcomes for Participants

1. Completed Action Items for each of 3–5 high priority areas of growth for the training center
2. Sense of satisfaction in completing an Action Plan in a way that honors ideas and input from multiple stakeholders
3. Agreed-upon structures and process for monitoring progress of Action Plan
4. Agreement by members of the cross-stakeholder team to remain engaged to support the successful completion of the Action Plan, and meet again to refresh it in 3–6 months

Process

The recommended process divides the group from each training center into 3–5 small teams, each taking responsibility for developing the details for a single Action Item and bringing the proposed details back to their larger group for discussion and agreement. Specifically, each cross-stakeholder team of 8–12 participants is requested to follow the below sequence (see the slide "Step-by-Step Process for Action Planning"):

1. In small teams, discuss and agree on the wording of the ACTION ITEM.
2. Back together as large group, share and agree on wording of each Action Item.
3. In small teams, discuss, agree, and complete the SECTION NARRATIVE (executive sponsor, time frame, key findings, desired outcomes, risks, workgroup leader).
4. Back together as large group, share and agree on details of Section Narrative.
5. In small teams, discuss and complete ACTION STEPS.
6. Back together as large group, share and agree on Action Steps.

PREPARATION AND SET-UP

Facilities

For the action planning process, it is best to identify a facility that

- Is *large enough* to accommodate the intended number of participants;
- Allows *space* to move around easily;
- Allows participants to remain *comfortable* through the day;
- Is *free of distractions*, such as excess noise, activity, food, etc.;
- Has a space nearby that is ample for *food service* and dining;
- Includes ample *electrical outlets* to charge the facilitators' equipment as well as participants' devices; and
- Has lots of *wall space* for teams to post the results of their action planning.

Furniture

The room should include one large round, rectangular, or square table for each team. Each large table must accommodate a team of up to 12 participants. The room should include enough chairs to seat all participants.

Equipment and Supplies

Each team will need:

- Easel
- 5 pre-prepared "Record Sheets for Action Planning" on flipchart paper (see **Appendix I**)
- 3–5 additional sheets of blank flipchart paper for taking notes
- 3–5 colored markers
- Tape

Technology

This session requires:

- Facilitators' **laptop** (with power cord)
- **Projector** (with power cord and connector cable)
- **Screen** large enough to be seen easily by all participants in the room

It is helpful if the facilitators have a **hand-held remote control** which may be used to advance slides and serve as a laser pointer.

Meals

Participants appreciate when they are well-fed and have plenty to drink. If affordable, hot meals are preferred over cold ones. No matter the type or amount of food, be sure that the food service is fast so that it doesn't detract from the time needed to complete the team task. It is important to have lunch in a different room (or outdoors) because groups will be on slightly different schedules, thus starting and ending lunch at different times. Having food in the meeting room would be a distraction for those teams still working.

Materials

For the action planning process, the facilitators will need:

- Copies of the agenda, one for each participant
- PowerPoint slide deck loaded onto facilitators' laptop (from flash drive, or available from web address on the "Note about this document" page above)
- Pre-made set of five large flipchart papers (see content in **Appendix I**) for each team
- Copies of the Action Plan Template (see **Appendix G**) – one per participant
- Copies of the Sample Action Item (see **Appendix H**) – one per participant
- Original flipchart papers from the self-assessment process for each team

Facilitator Preparation

Especially when a team of facilitators will be working together, it is important for them to determine in advance which facilitator will lead each session, and also to discuss transitions to ensure that they are smooth.

Well in advance of the training session, the facilitators should review all materials in this trainer's manual and tailor the PowerPoint deck for this session (i.e., move, copy/paste, add, and adapt slides). A few days prior to the event, the facilitators should do a "dry run" (i.e., practice session)—preferably in front of observers who can give feedback—in order to rehearse the sections, test the technology, anticipate problems, and ensure effective implementation.

Support Staff

The facilitators will need support staff on the day of the session to help with registration, technology set-up, parking logistics, meal preparation and set-up, communications, distribution of materials, and more. Facilitators should be in place

and available at all times to interact with participants. Other responsibilities may easily distract facilitators from playing their key role effectively.

Exhibit 5. Agenda: Action Planning Process

Time	Section	Details	Facilitator
8:30–9:00 AM	Registration		
9:00–9:30	Getting Started: Welcome and Agenda Review	• Welcome • Re-introduction of staff, teams, partners, and guests • Expected session outcomes, agenda review, and ground rules	
9:30–9:40	Review of Prioritized Areas of Growth	• Reminder about the priority areas of growth identified during the last session • Agreements for today's process	
9:40–10:00	Introduction to the Action Plan Template	• Introduction to the Action Plan Template • Sample Action Item	
10:00–10:15	Action planning Process	• Review of today's action planning process • Divide into small teams, by priority area of growth	
10:15–10:30	Break		
10:30–11:15	Action Item	• Small teams determine proposed Action Item language • Small teams present to large group, discuss, agree	
11:15–12:30	Section Narrative	• Small teams discuss, complete Section Narrative • Small teams present to large group, discuss, agree	
12:30–1:30	Lunch		
1:30–3:00	Action Steps	• Small teams discuss, complete proposed Action Steps • Small teams present to large group, discuss, agree	
3:00–3:30	Monitoring Progress	• Discuss structures and processes for monitoring progress (and supporting) completion of Action Items	
3:30–3:45	Next Steps	• Discuss and agree on timing for next self-assessment and refresh of Action Plan	
3:45–4:00	Closing	• Reflections, gratitude, thanks	
4:00 PM	Adjourn		

SUGGESTIONS FOR FACILITATORS

Tone and pace. Try to maintain a positive, supportive tone throughout the day. It is a long work session and some participants will have greater levels of interest and patience than others. Keep things moving along so that participants feel good about their progress. Remember to celebrate the completion of each portion of the Action Plan and congratulate them for staying focused, listening to one another, and coming to agreement.

Inclusion. It is important to articulate at the beginning of the day that (for this team task) all participants are entitled to an equal voice. Some participants will be more vocal and/or confident than others. Your job is to bring out the voices of those who tend to listen first rather than speak, or who are more shy or less confident. Remember: All participants offer valuable perspectives. As the facilitator, it is your job to promote a collaborative spirit that honors everyone's voice and perspective. That said, you may need to publicly acknowledge that the director of the center is the one who knows the most overall about aspects of the center and ultimately will have responsibility for ensuring that the Action Plans are completed. So, from time to time, you may need to defer to him/her to ensure that Action Steps are appropriate and reasonable. That may be necessary, but the director should not be the sole decision-maker.

Distributed roles. The success of the day depends on every member of the team playing an active role and assuming responsibility for the completion of the assigned Action Item. Some individuals will need more support than others. As small teams are formed, facilitators should help to ensure that the teams are balanced. For example, it may not be wise for a small team to be composed of only a student and alumni. Similarly, it may not be wise for a small team to include two teachers.

Time constraints. Depending upon how seriously the team takes the action planning process, this work could take substantially more than a day. Encourage the team to make as much progress as possible, but not become anxious if they do not finish. The goal is to ensure that the team understands the process and has the knowledge and capacity to proceed on their own, if needed.

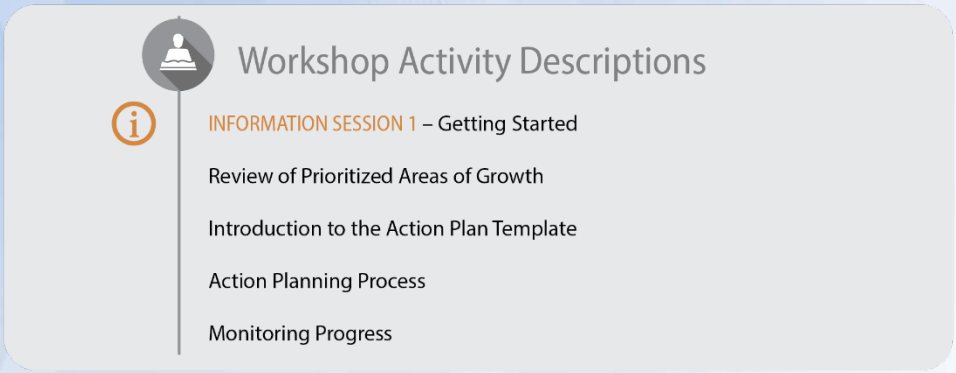
Reflection. At the end of a work session like this, it is nice to give participants an opportunity to offer some reflective feedback about the process. To do so, go around the room, asking each participant to make one brief statement (sentence) about the day. Each may express an observation, gratitude, acknowledgement, recognition, suggestion, etc. Facilitators should also offer reflective feedback.

Next steps. Each team should discuss and agree on the timing for their next full self-assessment and refresh of the Action Plan, preferably sometime in the next 3–6 months. This step will help reinforce the concepts that the action planning work is iterative and the Action Plan itself is a living document.

Closing. Be sure to express your gratitude for participants' honesty, openness to sharing ideas and learning from one another, and commitment to stay the entire day and complete the task.

Clean-up. Both the facilitators and the center director should take photos of the results of the day. Either the facilitators or the center director should keep the hard copies of the record sheets.

WORKSHOP ACTIVITY DESCRIPTIONS



Information Session 1: Getting Started (30 minutes)

After the welcome statements, the introductory PowerPoint slides structure the "big picture" of the training session. Before the workshop proceeds, introduce the training center stakeholders to:

1. The purpose and goals of the QAF (slide: "Scenic Overview: The Quality Assurance Framework")[4]
2. Review of agenda
3. Expected outcomes: What they will learn (slide: "Expected Outcomes for Cross-Stakeholder Teams Completing the Action planning Process")
4. Working agreements (slide: "Suggested Agreements for Action Planning")
5. Ground rules (slides: "What Are Ground Rules, and Why Have Them?" and "Ground Rules")

Review of Prioritized Areas of Growth (10 minutes)

For this agenda item, it is valuable to post the original flipchart papers generated by the group during the self-assessment process. Doing so serves as a reminder to the team and ensures they are honoring the prior work. Ask the full group if they have questions or additional comments about the previous session's self-assessment exercise.

Introduction to the Action Plan Template (20 minutes)

Review the slide "For 'Action Item,' Use S.M.A.R.T. Goals," with examples. You can use the "Vision and Mission" example in the Action Plan sample to ensure that

[4] Note that some listed slides appear earlier in the PowerPoint deck—based on their sequence in the QAF General Training—and are not repeated in the self-assessment section. Before the workshop, you may wish to copy or rearrange slides for smoother flow.

participants understand the importance of being specific about intent. Once small teams develop their proposed language, it is very important for the larger group to discuss each, revise language as necessary, and agree not only with the broader intent, but also with the specific language.

Take time to walk through every item in the template, explaining its purpose. Spend even more time walking through the Vision and Mission domain in the sample Action Item (**Appendix H** and accompanying slides), as it serves to help all participants understand how the template is used, and the level of detail appropriate as they develop their own plans. As you go through, be sure to explain the difference between "resources they have" and "resources they need." Note the examples on the sample Action Item. Tell them to ignore the "Tracking Progress" column on the right edge of the table. It is for later use.

Action Planning Process (~3.5 hours)

For this exercise, focusing on their center's prioritized areas of growth, each stakeholder team will jointly fill out as much of the Action Plan as feasible in the allotted time. Facilitators' guidance follows, by section of the template. For reference, display the slide "Step-by-Step Process for Action Planning," and have ready the four slides displaying the pages and samples of the Action Plan Template.

Action Item (45 minutes):

The Action Item portion of the session is likely the most important of the day. Even though each Action Item is merely one line (i.e., one sentence) of the Action Plan Template, it defines clearly what the training center proposes to achieve. Everything else in the template follows from this one statement.

Section Narrative (75 minutes):

The Section Narrative portion of the Action Plan provides important context. It is the "thought piece." To be sure that they are completing the section correctly, team members should refer to the instructions on their printed copies of the Action Plan Template (from **Appendix G**). They will not have a record of the conversations from the self-assessment process in order to complete the "Key Findings" section, but they should do so to the best of their recollection. Once small teams complete the Section Narrative, they can share one section at a time with the larger group and ask, "Is all of this accurate?" and "What did we miss?"

Action Steps (90 minutes):

The challenge with Action Steps is knowing the level of detail to include (or "grain size"). Any Action Item should include from 4–8 Action Steps. Fewer may be too general; more may be too detailed. These Action Steps represent the actions that must be monitored to ensure progress. Later, the workgroup leader or another team member may need to break the item down into smaller steps. That's fine, but it's not necessary for this level. The small teams should record these Action Steps on large flipchart paper to ease the reporting to the larger group.

Monitoring Progress (30 minutes)

As indicated on the slide "Structures and Processes to Monitor Progress," it is not enough to have an Action Plan. Explain to the participants that there must be

structures and processes in place to monitor progress and support effective completion of each Action Item. An example of a “structure” would be a leadership team or committee to which the workgroup leaders report their progress and/or request assistance and support.

An example of a “process” would include the frequency and form of reports, ways of seeking assistance, and access to leaders who can remove roadblocks, if they appear. Each training center should devise its own constructs to ensure they can monitor progress.

Next Steps (15 minutes)

At this point, the stakeholders can discuss and agree on the timing for the next full self-assessment and refresh of the center’s Action Plan.

In addition, as a final step for this session, ask whether the stakeholders feel they have all they need to continue the action planning and continuous assessment:

- personnel trained in the domains and steps of the QAF;
- prioritized Action Items to be elaborated in a complete Action Plan;
- champions to ensure progress;
- a reasonable timeline;
- forms, rubrics, and other tools;
- plans for budgeting support; and
- identified structures and processes to monitor progress and adapt.

If some are not sure, brainstorm with the full group ideas for how to get what they need to successfully complete and implement their Action Plans.