

SPQA



Examiner Guide 2019



Our Mission

To promote continual improvement strategies and provide training, mentoring, and recognition to organizations in pursuit of performance excellence.

SPQA

United States Senate Productivity and Quality Award
for Virginia and the District of Columbia

www.spqa-va.org

October 2018

Dear Colleagues in Performance Excellence,

The U.S. Senate Productivity and Quality Award for Virginia and Washington D.C. (SPQA) is celebrating over 30 years of service to organizations in our region. From its beginnings, SPQA has been a national leader in spreading excellence in organizational performance. Every organization in Virginia and the District of Columbia that participates is a winner!

SPQA endorses the *Baldrige Excellence Framework* used by hundreds of organizations to improve their performance and to stay ahead of their competition.

Whether large or small, and whether in manufacturing, business service, education, health care or government, organizations can benefit from the application of the *Baldrige Excellence Framework*.

Your interest in serving as an Examiner is highly valued. We hope you will take this challenge and become part of an elite group of volunteers in service to the Commonwealth and the District of Columbia.

Sincerely,



Eric Fletcher
Chairman, SPQA Board of Directors

Key Dates for SPQA Examiners

	<i>Date</i>	<i>Activity</i>
Year-round Self-Assessment submissions by Participant Discovery Organizations	October, 2018	Examiner Recruitment Opens
	December 1, 2018	Examiner Recruitment Closes
	January 9, 2019	Inquirer's Guide to the Baldrige Excellence Framework (Criteria Training)
	January 10, 2019	On Site Training for All New Examiners
	January 21-24, 2019	On Site Training for All Award Examiners (optional for Discovery and Ones to Watch Examiners)
	January 25, 2019	Award Examination Cycle Begins
	April/May 2019	Award Site Visits
	June 2019	Award Delivery of Feedback Reports
	July/August 2019	Award Applicant Feedback Meetings
	Discovery Program - year around in 6-week examination cycles upon receipt of Discovery Self-Assessments	

The information above summarizes key dates and activities relevant to the Virginia and D.C. SPQA Discovery and Award Programs, and the Examiner Community. The Ones to Watch 6-week examination cycle varies from year to year. Individuals who are part of the SPQA master mailing list are notified of the dates, locations, and of registration information well in advance of training. To subscribe to the master mailing list, contact executive.director@spqa-va.org with a request to be added.

About SPQA & its Examiners

The United States Senate Productivity and Quality Award for Virginia and D.C. (SPQA) recognizes and provides performance improvement feedback to applicants/participants in Virginia, the District of Columbia, and sometimes other states, using the Malcolm Baldrige **Criteria for Performance Excellence (CPE)** contained in the *Baldrige Excellence Framework*. This feedback is based on evaluations by dedicated and trained volunteer examiners. SPQA offers three programs where examiners are critical to success –Award, Discovery and Ones to Watch programs.



Award Program - Organizations “apply” for the United States Senate Productivity & Quality Medallion award. The Award Program is like the national Malcolm Baldrige Award Program. Award applicants submit written applications based on the **CPE**. Each application is assigned to a Team, and each Examiner on the Team conducts an independent evaluation/review of the assigned application. Each Examiner reviews, writes an analysis, and scores only one application. After each Examiner’s independent review, the Team comes together for Consensus on all the Examiners’ individual findings and scoring of the application and produces a Consensus Report. A panel of Judges reviews the Consensus Report and nearly all applicants receive an onsite visit where the Team seeks to clarify and verify findings in the Consensus Report. Examiners then prepare a Final Feedback Report for the applicant. Site visits may require travel, and travel expenses for the site visit may be reimbursed

by SPQA. The panel of Judges then reviews each Examiner Team's Final Feedback Report as well as findings from each of the site visits and makes Award determinations.

In addition to providing a service for the applicant, Examiners assigned to an award application receive an **extraordinary learning experience** – especially when a site visit is conducted. To ensure the best assessment of applications, Examiner Teams are diverse and are comprised of new and experienced Examiners and Examiners from different business sectors and backgrounds. Examiners are exposed to a myriad of knowledge and experience. Examiner team size varies for the Award Program, but normally ranges from five to eight individuals.



Discovery Program - Organizations that are relatively new to the *Baldrige Excellence Framework* “submit” a self-assessment based on a template provided by SPQA. The self-assessment is based on **CPE** fundamentals, but at a more basic level. As an added benefit to participant organizations, SPQA appoints a mentor/coach to help them navigate the **CPE** and the Discovery self-assessment process. Although participation is recognized, there are no awards or site visits. The Discovery Program requires smaller (2-4 person) Examiner teams. While exceptions may be made, the Discovery Program relies on Examiners who have participated in at least one cycle of the Award Program. For the Discovery Program, the Examiner Team develops written “observations” based on the face value of the participant organization’s self-assessment.



Ones to Watch Program uses the same process as Discovery. Ones to Watch is a collaborative program with the Commonwealth of Virginia and is designed to help Virginia small businesses improve their bottom line and increase jobs in Virginia. Small business participants are selected by the Commonwealth and benefit from performing a self-assessment, receiving an independent evaluation and receiving help developing and executing an improvement plan for their company during this one-year long program. As in Discovery, Ones to Watch businesses also benefit from being assigned a mentor/coach to assist them throughout the cycle.

In all three programs, to the extent practical, and ensuring there is no conflict of interest, efforts are made to assign Examiners to sectors (e.g. government, healthcare, education, business, etc.) in which they have experience. However; SPQA recognizes that examiner teams with members from several sectors are needed to produce an optimal perspective for the applicant. Examiners also benefit from the opportunity to work with team members from other sectors.

Program Cycles

The Award Program works on an annual schedule with defined dates for Examiner training, review, site visits, and feedback development. The Examiner’s time in the Award program is primarily focused on the first six months of the calendar year, with specific timeframes for each activity to take place. The Discovery Program operates year around and the Ones to Watch cycle, although once per year, is variable. While there are no Discovery or Ones to Watch site visits; there are defined steps and timeframes within the actual submission and feedback period that the Examiner Team must follow.

Benefits of Being an SPQA Examiner

SPQA Examiners are experts in business, health care, government, and education and are selected from industry, service businesses, professional and trade organizations, government agencies, other not-for-profit groups, and the ranks of the retired.

SPQA Examiners receive training in the *Baldrige Excellence Framework* and the **Criteria for Performance Excellence (CPE)**, as well as training in how to use the **CPE** as the basis for evaluating applications in the Award Program, or self-assessments in the Discovery and Ones to Watch programs. Examiners can capitalize on this learning experience and become performance excellence champions within their own organizations. Many organizations have found it very valuable to have some staff trained as examiners to assist their journey to performance excellence.

Returning and new Examiner applicants are welcomed and encouraged. New Examiner Orientation and Examiner Training workshops are provided at no cost. New Examiners attend a one-day orientation about one month before the three-day Examiner Training, and mentoring is available for new Examiners to help orient and facilitate their growth and development. The skills and experiences gained because of being an Examiner are valuable professional development opportunities, especially in the areas of critical and analytical thinking, synthesis, and evaluation. Examiners will receive a letter of appreciation signed by the Virginia Senators, which can be an important addition to one’s professional file, and the designation as a SPQA Examiner can be a great addition to one’s resume. Continued personal learning and career development, as well as continuing education

for recertification, are additional benefits of serving as an Examiner. Further, many SPQA Examiners have become Examiners for the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Program.

SPQA Examiners can take advantage of opportunities to network with other professionals in a variety of career fields such as Quality, Organizational Development, Human Resources, and Leadership, as well as being a part of the SPQA community. Examiners are also called upon to evaluate their Examiner experience and make recommendations to the SPQA Board of Directors for program improvements.

Examiner Eligibility, Application & Ethics

Individuals must complete short online application each year to return as an SPQA Examiner or become a New SPQA Examiner. Applications are accepted in October – November for the coming year's Program cycle. The application can be found at www.spqa-va.org. Examiners must be citizens or permanent residents of the United States and reside in the United States or its territories. Although most examiners reside in Virginia or the District of Columbia, SPQA's primary service areas, we encourage individuals from anywhere in the U.S. to apply. No one is denied consideration or appointment as an Examiner on the grounds of race, creed, national origin, age, gender or disability. SPQA's reputation and credibility are heavily tied to its Examiners. As such, those serving in this role must achieve and maintain certain education and training, as well as performance requirements.

CPE Training Requirements

SPQA Examiners are expected to maintain a foundational knowledge of the *Baldrige Excellence Framework* and the **Criteria for Performance Excellence (CPE)**

Individuals who apply to become an Examiner, are expected to have had some training in or experience with the most current version of the *Baldrige Excellence Framework* **CPE**, which is updated every two years; or to obtain this training prior to attending examiner training in January.

NOTE for Returning Examiners who are only interested in examining Discovery and/or Ones to Watch self-assessments:

Just in time training is provided to Discovery and Ones to Watch Examiner Teams therefore you may elect to but are not required to attend annual Examiner Training

This requirement can be met either by attending SPQA's one-day *An Inquirer's Guide to the Baldrige Excellence Framework* workshop, offered at a modest cost and conducted regionally throughout the year; or a comparable training program upon approval of SPQA. SPQA's one-day workshop is usually offered in the fall and again in January to give potential examiners an opportunity to attend. If you have not met the CPE training requirement, contact programs.services@spqa-va.org or check the SPQA website www.spqa-va.org to find out the dates and locations of the upcoming CPE classes.

A Perk for Returning Examiners:

You can receive a financial discount when attending a regional offering of *An Inquirer's Guide to Baldrige Excellence Framework*. Please contact programs.services@spqa-va.org for the registration information.

Comprehensive Examiner Training Requirements

In addition to the required **CPE** training, SPQA also requires training that focuses on the fundamentals of evaluating an application, including scoring practices, and writing actionable comments for the Award applicant's feedback report.

Individuals who apply to become an Examiner for the first time and/or renew their status with the intention of examining an application in the Award Program are required to attend SPQA's Examiner training. All examiners (new and returning) who wish to be part of an Award Program Examiner Team must attend the 3-day comprehensive examiner training, typically offered in January. New examiners attend an additional day of training/orientation about one month prior to regular examiner training. Current National Baldrige examiners are required to attend only the last day of the 3 days of the comprehensive examiner training. Comprehensive Examiner training is offered at no cost but is done so with the expectation that individuals who attend training will serve as members of the SPQA Board of Examiners and meet the resulting commitments. If you wish to attend the training but not participate as an SPQA examiner, SPQA will charge a fee for your training.

Usually only returning Examiners, who have completed at least one Award Cycle are selected to become Discovery or Ones to Watch Examiners; however, new examiners that haven't completed an Award Cycle may be selected to participate as a 'Discovery/Ones to Watch Intern Examiner'. Intern Examiners will receive additional training and be assigned a mentor in addition to the Examiner Team Just in Time training that occurs immediately prior to an examination cycle.

Examiner Application Period

Individuals who wish to become or return as an SPQA Examiner in 2019 will be able to apply starting in October 2018 through November 2018. The Examiner application can be found on the SPQA website www.spqa-va.org/examine/. In addition to ensuring we have a capable Examiner Community, this process helps us understand our capacity to respond to Award, Discovery and Ones to Watch programs' demand.

Board of Examiners Designation

Examiner applicants will be notified of *provisional* acceptance to become a member of the 2019 Board of Examiners for SPQA not later than December 5, 2018. Status as a member of the Board of Examiners is achieved by fully completing the training requirements (**Criteria for Performance Excellence (CPE)** Training, New Examiner Orientation and Examiner Training), and fulfilling the requirement of completing your responsibilities as a contributing member of an Award, Discovery, and/or a Ones to Watch Program Examiner Team(s). Examiners are welcome to participate in all three programs each year.

Code of Ethical Conduct

All Examiners are expected to carry out their duties and responsibilities in accordance with the SPQA Code of Ethical Conduct (**see Appendix I**) and must commit to such as part of the application. All materials relating to an Examination are confidential. Examiners are expected to strictly adhere to the confidentiality requirements that are reviewed at Examiner Training. SPQA takes ethical conduct and confidentiality requirements **very seriously**. Failure to adhere to these requirements damages the integrity of SPQA and its programs, therefore, Examiners who violate these requirements may be removed from the Board of Examiners.

Disclosure of Conflict of Interest

All Examiners must provide information regarding conflicts of interest with respect to participant and applicant organizations to be examined. Disclosure considers employers, significant ownership, and client relationships. Such information is used only for purposes of Examiner assignments and will otherwise be kept confidential. The Conflict of Interest Statement is explained during Examiner Training and signed by Examiners after Examiner Team assignments are made. This requirement helps ensure that Examiners provide an objective and unbiased review of their assigned Award applicant or Discovery/ Ones to Watch participant. Individuals who have a conflict will be assigned to another Examiner Team to the extent possible.

Adherence to the Process & Methods

Whether part of an Award, Discovery or Ones to Watch Program Team, Examiners are expected to conduct examinations fairly and competently within the prescribed approaches and methods associated with each Program.

Assignment and Compensation

Supply and Demand Note

The need for Examiners in each year depends on how many organizations participate in the Award, Discovery and Ones to Watch programs. Normally it works well, but there may be times when the Examiner supply for the year is greater than the need. In these cases, Virginia SPQA works to make accommodations.

Examiner Assignment

SPQA seeks to provide the fairest, most competent evaluation for its Programs. Accordingly, Examiners are assigned on the basis of their knowledge and experience, consistent with the requirements to avoid conflicts of interest, to apportion the application load equitably, and to adhere to Program schedules. To the extent possible, attempts are made to balance each Team with: new and returning Examiners, and those who have experience within the sectors, i.e., government, education, manufacturing, business, service and technology, healthcare, etc.

Examiner Compensation

SPQA is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit, non-member organization and we keep our fees low to encourage broad participation in programs that we are committed to and that we are certain will help organizations achieve excellence. Therefore, SPQA operates with maximum voluntary support. Individual Examiner expenses for the Award Program site visits and feedback meetings are reimbursed in accordance with SPQA reimbursement policies. SPQA encourages examiners to seek financial support from their employers for expenses incurred during an examination cycle. Reimbursement is not provided for expenses incurred for training or consensus meetings. Discovery and Ones to Watch Team training and meetings are conducted by teleconference and do not require travel.

Examiner Development and Recognition

Examiner Development

SPQA has created an Examiner Skills Progression matrix and Examiner evaluation process to facilitate examiner development and ensure that Examiners, who wish to, can progress through the many available roles - Team Leader, Assistant Team Leader, Editor, Mentor, Trainer, Judge, et cetera. Examiners can progress based on their maturity, longevity, experience, and performance as Examiners with SPQA. A 360° Evaluation, conducted after consensus and site visit, is part of the development path.

Recognizing Examiner Service

SPQA recognizes the critical importance of Examiners to the success of its programs. Recognition for Examiners who have fulfilled their obligations includes the following:

- ◆ Certificate of completion for relevant Training courses
- ◆ Discounts for SPQA training and events.
- ◆ Recognition Ceremony
- ◆ A Certificate of Appreciation, signed by the Senators
- ◆ A Letter of Appreciation sent to your employer
- ◆ Individual Examiner Press Release
- ◆ Eligibility for Special Examiner Awards based on performance and achievement (Rookie Award, Above & Beyond, and Examiner of the Year)

Time Commitments

In addition to the training requirements, the amount of time devoted to being an Examiner varies by program: Award Program, Discovery Program, Ones to Watch Program. For example, in the Award Program, the time is increased if a site visit is conducted. Other factors affecting time commitment include how well the organization has prepared its application (or self-assessment in the Discovery/Ones to Watch Programs), how long discussions with the team take during consensus and after site visit, and the individual examiners level of experience. Also, team leaders, assistant team leaders, mentors, and editors can expect to spend additional time because of their expanded roles.

Teams Can Customize Schedules within a Framework

Whether working independently or together as a Team, Examiners have flexibility to schedule their time provided key deliverables are met. All Examiners must be willing to honor the time commitments, including potential travel, and be able to accommodate time-critical review periods – primarily the consensus meeting and site visit. Dates for these critical periods are identified and set early in the examination cycle.

Award Program Time Estimates for Examiners

Most of the Examiner activity in the Award Program occurs between mid-January and mid-June. SPQA recognizes that unplanned situations occur, which could impact participation in a site visit or the applicant feedback meeting. However, evidence of commitment for acceptance to and/or maintaining status as a member of the Board of Examiners depends on the level of individual engagement and contribution during the **total** examination process. The table below provides estimated time expenditures for each Phase of the Award Program for a typical Examiner. These estimates are based on historical averages.

Phase	Event	Time	Dates
Training	<i>An Inquirer's Guide to the Baldrige Excellence Framework (For all new and returning Examiners who have not received this or comparable training in the last 2 years.)</i>	8 hours (only required every two years)	Workshops typically offered quarterly For additional information and to register, go to www.spqa-va.org or email programs.services@spqa-va.org
	New Examiner Orientation	8 hours	January
	Examiner Training Pre-Work	8-12 hours	Pre-work materials & instructions & requirements sent to Examiners prior to training
	Examiner Training	8-24 hours (National Examiners need only attend 1 of 3 days)	January
	Training for Team Leaders, Assistant Team Leaders, Editors, Mentors, Judges	2-4 hours	January
Evaluation	Independent Review	45-60 hours	January through February
	Team Consensus Meeting	10-26 hours	March
Site Visit (If Selected)	Site Visit Training	2 hours	April/May
	Site Visit Preparation	8-20 hours	April through May
	Site Visit	24-30 hours	April/May
Report	Feedback Report	8-12 hours	May/June
Feedback	Applicant Feedback Meeting	4 - 8 hours	July/August
Total Estimated Hours per year		111-214 hours	January - August

Discovery Program Time Estimates

Examiner activity associated with the Discovery Program occurs year around. The Ones to Watch Program uses the Discovery process so the activities and hours are nearly the same. While less labor intensive than the Award Program, Examiners in the Discovery Program must still perform within the established timeframes. Participant organizations submit their Intent to Participate form to SPQA, are assigned a mentor and have up to six months to prepare their Self-Assessment. The mentor signals when the Examiner Team will be needed. This triggers the creation of a 2-4-person Examination Team and Just in Time training. For Discovery, other than training and Team formation, the effort starts in earnest for a six-week cycle after the Examiner Team receives the Organization's Self-Assessment submission. The table below shows estimates of time required for each phase of the Discovery Program for a typical Examiner. The phases and related events are recommendations, Team alterations are acceptable provided the Feedback Report is available for editing in Week 6 or sooner.

Phase	Event	Time	Dates
Training	<i>An Inquirer's Guide to the Baldrige Excellence Framework</i> (For all new and returning Examiners who have not received this or comparable training in the last 2 years.)	8 hours (required every two years)	Workshops typically offered quarterly For additional information and to register, go to www.spqa-va.org or email programs.services@spqa-va.org
	Examiner Training Pre-Work*	8-12 hours	Pre-work materials & instructions sent to Examiners prior to training
	Examiner Training*	8-24 hours (National Examiners only attend 1 of 3 days)	January
	JIT Discovery Examiner Tutorial	1-2 hours	Phone call or by webcast as scheduled just prior to receiving the organization's Self-Assessment submission
Team Formation & Preparation	Team Formed and Trained	N/A	60 days prior to receipt of the participant organization's Self-Assessment.
Initial Evaluation & Independent Review	Team Members Review Submission, develop Key Factors & conduct Independent Review	28-38 hours	Weeks 1 & 2
Team Consensus Feedback Development	Category Leads consolidate & refine team members' comments; Team Consensus phone call is held	25 – 30 hours	Week 3
Team Consensus & Feedback Refinement	Post-consensus refinement by Category Leads & overall Observation Summary development	15-20 hours	Weeks 4-6
Feedback Telecon	Available on request from the organization	2-3 hours	TBD – within 60 days
Total Estimated Hours per cycle		71-137 hours	Year around Discovery cycles

* Attendance is optional for Returning Examiners who wish only to participate in the Discovery Program.

SPQA

Appendix I

SPQA Code of Ethical Conduct for Examiners (Abbreviated)

As a U.S. Senate Productivity and Quality Award for Virginia and Washington, DC (SPQA) Recognition, Ones to Watch and Discovery Examiner, I pledge to uphold this Code of Ethical Conduct in the fulfillment of my responsibilities as defined in the bylaws that established SPQA. In promoting high standards of public service and ethical conduct, as an Examiner, I will:

- *Conduct myself professionally, with truth, accuracy, fairness, respect, and responsibility to the public.*
- *Avoid representing conflicting or competing interests or placing myself in such a position where my interest may be in conflict, or appear to be in conflict, with the purposes and administration of the SPQA Award, Discovery or Ones to Watch Programs.*
- *Safeguard the confidences of all parties involved in the examination of present or former participant businesses or organizations.*
- *Protect confidential information and avoid disclosures that may in any way influence the Programs' integrity or processes, currently or in the future.*
- *Not serve any private or special interest in my fulfillment of the duties as an Examiner; therefore, excluding, by definition, the examination of any organization (or subordinate component or parent organization of an organization) that employs me or has a consulting arrangement in effect or anticipated with me for a period of five (5) years before and after the examination cycle.*
- *Not serve as an Examiner for a primary competitor, customer, or supplier of any organization (or subordinate component or parent organization of an organization) that employs me, that I have a financial interest in, or with which I anticipate a consulting arrangement, or are otherwise involved, for a period of five (5) years before and after the examination cycle.*
- *Not intentionally communicate false or misleading information that may compromise the integrity of the Award, Ones to Watch or Discovery processes or decisions therein.*
- *Make it clear, when establishing links from my own Web sites to the SPQA Web site that users will be taken to the official SPQA Web site.*
- *Never approach an organization I have examined for my personal gain, including the establishment of an employment or consulting relationship, and, if approached by an organization I have examined, do not accept employment from that organization for a period of five (5) years after the completion of the examination cycle.*
- *Treat as confidential all information gained about the applicant or participant and its operations gained during the Award, Discovery or Ones to Watch examination cycles, specifically through the Application or Self-Assessment evaluation processes.*
- *Physically safeguard all information concerning the applicant or participant and its operations.*
- *Report any violations of the SPQA Code of Ethical Conduct, confidentiality, or Conflict of Interest (COIs) to the SPQA Award, Ones to Watch or Discovery Program Director or to the SPQA Board.*
- *Upon successful completion of all Examiner responsibilities, I may use the following designation: Award, Discovery and/or Ones to Watch Examiner, Mentor, Editor, or Judge, U.S. Senate Productivity and Quality Awards (SPQA) Program for Virginia and D.C., and year(s) served. However, the SPQA logo may not be used in advertising or promotion, or on my business cards.*
- *Furthermore, I pledge that as an Award, Discovery or Ones to Watch Examiner in good standing, I will strive to enhance and advance the SPQA Award, Discovery, and Ones to Watch programs, which serve to stimulate organizations in Virginia and the District of Columbia to improve quality, productivity, and overall performance.*