

How to Conduct an Internal Assessment Using the Program Administration Scale (PAS)

NOTE: Although the PAS can be used for the purpose of internal assessment, it can also be conducted as an external assessment by a PAS trained and reliable Pennsylvania Key (PA Key) Program Quality Assessor (hereinafter referred to as “Assessor”).

When using the PAS for an internal assessment to meet the expectations for the Keystone STARS, please consult the most current version of the [Keystone STARS Performance Standards](#) and the [Keystone STARS Program Manual](#) for additional information.

The most current PAS is the third edition (PAS-3). Programs are encouraged to purchase and use this edition since it contains the latest research-based expectations. The guidance included in this document is based on the PAS-3rd edition (hereinafter referred to as PAS).

Reminder about Objective Assessment

Objective assessment means that you are viewing your program's management and leadership practices through an unbiased lens. Scoring is based on your program's current actual practices and not what you've done in the past or plan to implement in the future. By using objective assessment to view your program's management and leadership practices, you provide an accurate lens that can be used to celebrate your successes and strengthen your program through continuous quality improvement goals.

Assessment at-a-glance

- Use in center-based child care settings
- 4-6 hours to complete depending on the amount of document verification
- Administrator interview required
- No classroom observation
- Brief tour of facility/program may be requested
- Documents required for source of evidence for scoring
- Assessment based on observation, administrator interview and documentation verification

Required materials

- Program Administration Scale Third Edition ISBN 978-08077676
- [Additional Notes for Clarification \(mccormickcenter.nl.edu\)](http://mccormickcenter.nl.edu)

Supplemental materials

- Not Applicable

Purchase the POI

- There are several sources where the required book can be purchased. Searching online by resource name or ISBN number may yield several options from which to choose.
- Be sure to allow adequate time for ordering and delivery of all resources.
- Only one scale book is needed to conduct the assessment. You can continue to work from the same PAS book

each time you revisit this program observation instrument (POI), or you may want to consider ordering additional copies for future use and comparison. Using a pencil for recording observation information is recommended.

- Score sheets may not be duplicated.
- The Teaching Staff Qualifications Worksheet, Summary of Teaching Staff Qualifications Worksheet, and scoring pages for items 23, 24, and 25 may be duplicated as needed. These are also available on the [McCormick website](https://mccormick.org) for downloading,

Conduct the internal assessment with the PAS

1. Learn about the PAS

- Read the PAS book cover to cover. The more you learn about the quality practices in each subscale, the more accurate your own internal assessment will be.
- It is recommended that the administrators and internal assessment team become familiar with the expectations of the PAS, prior to the internal assessment.
- Register for the online self-paced: PA Foundations of the Program Administration Scale (PAS) on the [Professional Development \(PD\) Registry \(papdregistry.org\)](https://papdregistry.org) (available sometime in 2024/2025).
- Clarify any questions about the PAS with a Program Quality Assessor.

2. Prepare to conduct the internal assessment

- Pay close attention to the overview of the PAS scale, as well as procedures, definitions, and scoring information found on pages 1-8 of the PAS book.
- If time has elapsed since your purchase, review, or use of the PAS, or it has been a while since you attended a PAS PD, re-familiarize yourself with the scale expectations.
- Gather all the documentation required to meet each indicator. The reliable PAS Assessor can provide a list of possible documentation.
- After all potential documentation has been gathered, schedule the internal assessment during a block of time when interruptions may be minimal.
- Assure that the person responsible for the internal assessment has access to the required documentation and can devote their time to the assessment process. It is anticipated that programs will not have all documentation needed to satisfy all indicator expectations since there is always room for growth.
- Prior to starting the internal assessment be sure to have a copy of the PAS book, pencil, and the [Notes for Clarification](#) (see required materials).

3. When to conduct the internal assessment

- Since the PAS does not focus on the classroom, the assessment can be conducted anytime when the staff has time to review the documentation (internal assessment by program staff).

4. Conduct the observation (internal assessment)

- Plan to take a lot of notes. Taking notes is extremely helpful for various reasons. First, note taking will help you score accurately. If you are reviewing the assessment to check your scores, looking back at notes will help you. Second, note taking will help you create goals and make changes based on what was observed and written down. Finally, your notes will assist the Assessor in understanding your program's practices and will support deeper internal assessment consultation meeting conversations. Giving numerical scores is not enough for

growth and development. Score the assessment using the scoring rules found at the beginning of the PAS.

- Use the checkboxes on the Notes pages for each Item
- Be objective. It might be second nature to give scores based on information you think your documentation contains. The rating scale is designed to look at quality policies and practices and specific elements of the documentation.
- Read each indicator of quality carefully and be sure that **all** expectations of an indicator are met and scored appropriately.
- Read all supplemental information. Review the Notes for Clarification to assure accurate scoring. The scale book is designed to assist you by offering suggestions/examples as you work through scoring the various items.
- Scoring of the PAS is conducted as you work your way through the scale book. Each item is scored across the strand as you gather and review the required documentation. Please consult the PAS book for instructions and ask your Quality Coach and Assessor if you need assistance.

5. Determine your PAS scores

Reminder: Scores should be based on existing policies and procedures, not past practices, or future plans.

Rate the indicators and determine scores for Items 1-21

- For each item, start with the indicator in the one's column and score left to right, indicating a Y (yes) or N (no) when determining whether the indicator was met or not met. You must score each indicator in the strand even if you indicate a "No" for any previous strand indicator.
- When permitted as indicated in the scale, a rating of "not applicable" (NA) may be given when the item or indicator is not applicable to your program.
- Record notes in the "Rationale" section at the bottom of the page to support your scoring decisions.
- Refer to the scoring rules on page 5 of the PAS to determine individual item scores.
- Once you have determined the score for each item, circle the score on the bottom of the page.

Determine scores for Items 22-25 (Administrator and Teaching Staff Qualifications Worksheets)

- First, complete the Administrator Qualifications Worksheet, starting with the first indicator in the ones column and scoring left to right, indicating a Y (yes) or N (no) when determining whether the indicator was met or not met.
- Follow the scoring rules as used to rate items 1-21.
- Next, complete a Teaching Staff Qualifications Worksheet for each group of children. Use the guidance on page 5 of the PAS book.
- Use the information from the Teaching Staff Qualifications Worksheet to rate indicators 23-25.
- Complete the Summary of Teaching Staff Qualifications Worksheet. Follow the directions on page 7 of the PAS book to compute the Item average score.

Generate a Total PAS Score

- The total PAS score is the sum of the item scores.
- Calculate this score by transferring the individual item scores to the Item Summary Form found on page 65 of the PAS book.
- Additional instructions for calculating the total PAS score are found on page 6 of the PAS book.

Determine the Average PAS score using the instructions in Step 5 (page 8) of the PAS book.

Plot the scores on the PAS Profile using the instructions on page 8 of the PAS book.

6. Review findings

- Conducting a PAS assessment is only the first step of the process toward growth. Review your observation with those people responsible for implementing changes.
- Review your assessment findings with your Internal Assessment Team, Quality Coach and Assessor. They can celebrate successes with you.
- Together you can discuss areas where your team feels growth could occur.
- Identify goals to achieve growth and include them in your Continuous Quality Improvement Plan (CQI).

Next steps

- Assure everyone has contributed ideas and ensure everyone knows the next steps to take toward improvement.
- When planning for CQI goals, look toward implementing the next level's indicators.
- Start small. Focus on one indicator at a time.
- Be patient. Do not be discouraged if your initial scores do not meet your expectations. Growth takes time.
- Change what you can and accept those things that are outside of your program's ability to improve.
- Share your plan for growth/CQI plan with everyone involved on your team.
- Plan to revisit your goals and program's administrative practices regularly to assess and update as goals are achieved. The CQI process is cyclical as you continuously reflect on your practices and your drive for growth.