



State of Rhode Island
Department of Education
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**POLICY AND PRACTICE GUIDANCE LETTER:
 ASSESSMENT FOR ADULT EDUCATION
 Effective 2023-2024**

[PPGL-2202 – Revised 12/22/2022]

1. Introduction

1.1. Summary

The Rhode Island Adult Education Assessment Policy establishes the need for and purpose of the assessment policy, identifies approved assessments, specifies testing requirements for in-person and distance learning programs, identifies guidelines for proctored administration of assessments and determination of educational functioning levels based on test results, and defines training requirements. Guidance is also provided for programs serving distance learning students and assessment for eligible adults with disabilities.

The table below summarizes Rhode Island’s approved assessments for Adult Education and the student type, timing of pre-test, and timing of post-test for each. Refer to Appendix A of this document for further test publisher-specific guidelines, including information on scoring and alignment with National Reporting System (NRS) levels.

Student Type	Approved Assessment	Timing of Pre-Test	Timing of Post-Test
ESL	BEST Literacy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forms B, C, and D 	Prior to 12 hours of instruction	Recommended: After 80-100 hours of instruction Minimum: After 60 hours of instruction
ESL	BEST Plus 2.0 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forms D, E, and F 	Prior to 12 hours of instruction	Recommended: After 80-100 hours of instruction Minimum: After 60 hours of instruction
ESL	CASAS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Life and Work Reading - all forms Life and Work Listening - 980 series 	Prior to 12 hours of instruction	Recommended: After 70-100 hours of instruction Minimum: After 40 hours of instruction

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading for Citizenship - Forms 951, 952, 951X, 952, 952X 		
ABE/ASE	CASAS GOALS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading Series, Math Series 	Prior to 12 hours of instruction	Recommended: After 70-100 hours of instruction Minimum: After 40 hours of instruction
ABE/ASE	TABE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forms 11/12 	Prior to 12 hours of instruction	<i>Alternate form testing:</i> Recommended (ABE levels 1-4): After 50-60 hours of instruction Minimum (ABE levels 1-4): 40 hours of instruction Recommended (ASE levels 5 and 6): After 30-49 hours of instruction.
			<i>Same form testing:</i> Recommended: After 60-80 hours of instruction

1.2. State Context and Need for Assessment Policy

The purpose of the state assessment policy is to provide guidance to programs relative to their assessment responsibilities in meeting state and federal accountability requirements. Local adult education programs must assess students using standardized assessments to report educational gains for the National Reporting System (NRS).

To promote the quality of assessment data, the Division of Adult Education and Literacy (DAEL) at the Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education (OCTAE), U.S. Department of Education (DOE) requires each state to develop and subsequently submit annually a written assessment policy. The policy describes the assessments that local programs may use, when local programs are to administer pre- and post-tests, training requirements associated with assessments, their administration, and reporting requirements. State implementation of effective assessment policy will result in valid and reliable assessment data from local programs. Uniform implementation of policy allows for data to be compared across programs in the state, and between states in the country.

Assessments can be used for both accountability purposes and for instructional purposes. NRS requirements emphasize the need for valid and reliable assessments as an accurate way to measure student progress for reporting and accountability purposes. Uniform implementation of policy ensures what is intended to be measured, is measured (i.e., literacy, language, mathematics, etc.) and consistently measured each time an assessment is administered.

This policy does not address assessment for instructional purposes. Programs are encouraged to supplement assessment for accountability with other forms of formative and summative assessments to better understand learners' needs, and to gauge learner progress and achievement.

2. General Guidelines

2.1. Students to Be Assessed

Programs must use approved standardized assessments for placement of participants into Educational Functioning Levels (EFLs) and to measure and report progress. All students that will be included in the state's NRS data submission must be tested.

Students to be assessed are all eligible adults according to Title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Specifically, an adult who is eligible for adult education services is an individual:

- Who has attained 16 years of age;
- Who is not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law; and
- Who –
 - Is basic skills deficient;
 - Does not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and has not achieved an equivalent level of education; or
 - Is an English language learner.

Exceptions may be made for students who are unable to understand or respond to the test due to low literacy or English proficiency or due to disability. However, programs must provide some alternative assessment for such students, as explained in sections 4 and 5 below. Additionally, exceptions may be made when local programs are unable to administer NRS-approved tests due to the widespread disruption of services, such as those experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic. Please see section 4.1 of this policy for guidance related to widespread disruption of services.

2.2. Approved State Assessments

Using approved-NRS assessments uniformly statewide allows for consistency and comparability across programs within the state, which is critical since state funding is increasingly tied to NRS outcomes. The state office monitors updates to the Federal Register for NRS Approved Assessments and will adjust the list of Rhode Island approved assessments as necessary.

Currently, both the NRS and Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) approve the following assessments:

ESL	ABE/ASE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● BEST Literacy - Forms B, C and D ● BEST Plus 2.0 (Computer or Print Based) - Forms D, E, F ● CASAS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Life and Work Reading - all forms ○ Life and Work Listening - 980 series ○ Reading for Citizenship - Forms 951, 952, 951X, 952, 952X 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● CASAS GOALS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reading Series ○ Math Series ● TABE - Forms 11/12

2.2.1. Overview of Approved Assessment Publishers

- [Best Literacy](#) is a print-based, combined test of reading and writing skills. The test uses authentic situations specifically geared for adult English language learners in the United States as the basis for test questions. BEST Literacy is aligned to the National Reporting System (NRS) Educational Functioning Levels and the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) Student Performance Levels (SPLs). BEST Literacy may be administered to groups or individuals in one hour or less. Training is not required by CAL, however, to ensure the accurate use and scoring of BEST Literacy as a standardized assessment, all test administrators should read and follow the instructions in the BEST Literacy Test Manual
- [BEST Plus 2.0](#) is an individually administered, face-to-face oral interview designed to assess the English language proficiency of adult English language learners in the United States. BEST Plus 2.0 is a combined test of listening and speaking skills and is aligned to the NRS EFLs and the CAL SPLs. The test is administered by a trained test administrator. To ensure reliability and validity of BEST Plus 2.0, test administrators are required to attend the BEST Plus 2.0 Test Administrator Training Workshop.
- [CASAS \(Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System\)](#) is a competency, outcome-based system for assessing adult basic reading, math, listening, writing, and speaking skills. The intended population is adults functioning at or below a high school level in attaining the basic literacy skills to function effectively on the job, in the community, and in the family. Consultation and training are required for implementation of the system.
- [TABE](#) is a standardized test of reading comprehension, vocabulary, language use, spelling, and mathematics. It can be administered either individually or in a group setting. The intended population is adults functioning at or below a high school level in attaining the basic literacy skills to function effectively on the job, in the community, and in the family.

2.3. State Training Requirements

Because assessment data informs important decisions about student progress and program improvement, all program service providers must be trained on Rhode Island's assessment policy and its application in curriculum and instruction, as well as NRS data quality standards and collection. New program staff are expected to receive trainings on the following topics within three weeks of hire or at first availability:

- RIDE and program-specific assessment policies;
- How assessments are used in student goal-setting;
- Student intake and orientation processes;
- Assessment-specific training, depending on the assessments used at the program

All new staff are required to take the self-paced NRS online course titled "Measuring Performance Under WIOA" (available on [the NRS website](#)) within three weeks of hire. They are also required to attend the orientation for new practitioners offered by RIDE's professional development provider.

The RIDE Adult Education office shall provide trainings that cover NRS policy, definition of measures, and accountability requirements. There will also be training sessions on data collection in LACES (the state's management information system or MIS), NRS data follow-up, and data analysis. These trainings, as well as a regular LACES User's Group, will address how programs use data to make programmatic decisions through compiling, analyzing, and reporting data. Programs are responsible for ensuring instructors and appropriate staff understand how to collect and analyze data to inform curricula and instruction.

Each program shall designate an Assessment Specialist to oversee program processes for administration, scoring, and reporting of assessments. Additionally, programs shall identify appropriate individuals to administer and score assessments. Assessments being used to report educational gain LACES and approved by RIDE for this purpose can only be given by staff who complete administration certification directly with the publisher or the RIDE Professional Development Provider. Programs shall keep records of which staff attended training and who conducted the training. Documentation of all assessment training and refreshers must be kept on file in the program's professional development records in case of future monitoring review.

Training will be scheduled by RIDE's PD Provider for the CASAS and BEST Plus 2.0 assessments. Currently, there is no training requirement for administering the TABE assessment; however, those administering it must closely follow the instructions contained in the TABE administration booklet.

2.4 Local Assessment Policy Requirement

Each funded provider must develop a local written assessment policy and procedures document that adheres to this state policy. The local assessment policy shall be shared with staff and participants and take into account the provider's instructional delivery system, the intensity and duration of instruction, and the student population served. It must also include the following elements:

- a description of assessments the staff in the local program may use;
- time periods when the local program expects its staff to administer pre-and post-tests;
- score ranges;
- training requirements local staff must meet associated with approved assessments, their administration, and reporting requirements; and
- a description of the proper handling and use of assessment materials to ensure test security.

Local programs must train all staff on their local assessment policy and keep records such as sign-in sheets, agendas, and attendance records that demonstrate that each staff member participated in such training. Local programs shall only use trained and certified proctors to administer assessments to ensure appropriate test administration in a proctored environment.

3. Procedures for Administering and Reporting Results of Approved Assessments

3.1. Using Test Results to Determine Educational Functioning Levels (EFLs)

Programs use assessment scores to place their students into Educational Functioning Levels (EFLs).

The NRS divides educational functioning into four levels for ABE (1-4), two levels for ASE (5-6), and six levels for ESL (1-6). Each ABE and ASE level has a description of basic reading, writing, numeracy, and functional and workplace skills that can be expected from a person functioning at that level.

ABE Level 1	Beginning Literacy
ABE Level 2	Beginning Basic Education
ABE Level 3	Low Intermediate Basic Education
ABE Level 4	High Intermediate Basic Education
ASE Level 5	Low Adult Secondary Education
ASE Level 6	High Adult Secondary Education

The ESL levels describe speaking and listening skills and basic reading, writing, and functional workplace skills that can be expected from a person functioning at that level.

ESL Level 1	Beginning Literacy
ESL Level 2	Low Beginning ESL
ESL Level 3	High Beginning ESL
ESL Level 4	Low Intermediate ESL
ESL Level 5	High Intermediate ESL
ESL Level 6	High ESL

The skill descriptors for both ABE/ASE and ESL illustrate the types of skills students functioning at that level are likely to have and. The descriptors do not provide a complete or comprehensive delineation of all of the skills at that level. They are meant to provide examples that guide assessment and instruction. [Exhibit 2.2 of the NRS Technical Assistance Guide](#) has detailed descriptions of EFLs and corresponding standardized test score benchmarks.

- A Measurable Skill Gain (MSG) is an indicator used under WIOA to measure a participant's interim progress through pathways that offer different services based on program purposes and participant needs. The five types of MSG are described in [OCTAE Program Memo 17-2](#) (p. 17). **Documented achievement of at least one EFL gain by a participant who is receiving instruction below the postsecondary level through pre- and post-testing is MSG Type 1a. The goal is for each participant to demonstrate an MSG during each period of participation.**
- Students do not need to be assessed in all of the areas described in the level descriptors. The local program must decide the skill areas most relevant to each student's needs or the program's curriculum and assess students in these areas. At a minimum, students must be assessed in basic reading, writing or math, or speaking and listening for English language learners.
- NRS guidance allows that any functional level (not just the lowest) may be used to determine initial placement as well as educational gain in subsequent assessments. If multiple skill areas are assessed and the student has different abilities in different content areas, the program can place the student according to the student's needs and goals or the program's curriculum focus. For example, if a student's math score is lower than their reading score, they do not have to be placed in the math level. If more than one score is entered into the MIS, the student will automatically be placed in the lowest level. However, the lowest content area score does not have to be the only score to improve in order to show an EFL gain.

3.2. Pre-Assessment Requirements for All Approved Assessments

Local programs must adhere to these pre-testing requirements:

- All participants shall be pre-tested with an NRS- and RIDE-approved assessment prior to completing 12 hours of instruction.
- To determine the appropriate assessment to administer, adult educators should talk with participants during the intake process about educational and career goals, expectations, and instructional practices (including curricula).
- Pre-testing shall be done before instruction begins, but after intake.
- Local programs should try to ensure that the pre-test date is as close to the participation start date as possible.

Important notes about pre-testing:

- While the NRS requires students receive 12 hours of instruction before they may be reported as "enrolled," it is important to capture and enter data for all students, including those students who have received fewer than 12 hours. A "Reportable Individual" is an individual who has taken action that demonstrates an intent to use program services and who meets eligibility requirements" (Table 2A). The individual who meets the eligibility requirements is officially a reportable individual upon the completion of intake and orientation, where at a minimum, the

individual's age, gender, and ethnicity are collected and inputted into LACES to report on Table 2A.

- Post-test scores obtained at the end of a semester or other reporting period may serve as a pre-test for the next semester or reporting period, provided that the interim does not exceed more than four months. Similarly, the most recent assessment results for “stop outs” returning to adult education classes may be used, provided that the last test administered does not exceed the same four month window. This policy is designed to reduce or eliminate unnecessary testing. Program personnel may wish to retest “stop outs” or students returning the following semester or reporting period if they have reason to believe that during the learner’s absence or summer recess a significant learning intervention occurred that may invalidate the learner’s previous assessment results. In such circumstances, retesting is always an option.
- Advanced level ESL students who score 236 or above on a CASAS Life and Work pre-test (“Exit Advanced ESL”) must be retested using an assessment in another skill area or with the CASAS GOALS series in order to establish an NRS-reportable entering EFL. If they are not retested, the student will not appear on federal reports. Retesting a student will establish a reportable entering EFL. These students can still enroll in ESL classes, they will just be categorized as ABE/ASE for reporting purposes.

3.3. Post-Test Requirements for All Approved Assessments

At least 65% of participants who have completed at least 12 hours of instruction in a single program year must have a pre- and post-test. It is not necessary to post-test 65% of participants in each level, as long as 65% of the total number of participants is post-tested.

In calculating this percentage, student subpopulations who do not need to be post-tested in order to demonstrate a Measurable Skill Gain should be excluded from both the numerator and denominator of the calculation. Specifically, the following students should be excluded from the post-test rate calculation:

- High School Equivalency completers, or
- Participants in Integrated Education and Training, or
- Workplace Adult Education and Literacy programs, and
- Participants who pre-test in ASE Level 6.

Local programs must adhere to these post-testing requirements:

- Participants shall be pre- and post-tested with an NRS- and RIDE-approved assessment.
- Programs shall test participants at least once after the pre-test within a given fiscal year. Progress (interim) and post-tests should be routine components of a program’s instructional process.
- The same assessment instrument should be used for pre-testing and post-testing, using alternate forms for each, or as specified by the assessment publisher.
- Depending on the provider’s instructional delivery system, the intensity and duration of instruction (i.e., 15 hours per week for 20 weeks or 4 hours per week for 50 weeks), and the student population served, programs are encouraged to test participants more often and according to publisher’s guidelines.

Publisher	Recommended and Required Instructional Hours between Pre- and Post-Tests
BEST Plus and Literacy	Recommended: 80-100 hours of instruction Minimum: 60 hours of instruction
CASAS	<p>Recommended: 70-100 hours of instruction Minimum: 40 hours of instruction</p> <p>Exceptions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Programs offering high intensity courses (for example, a class that meets more than 15 hours per week) may choose to test at the end of a semester, term, quarter, or other substantial block of instruction, even though the instructional intervention is more than 100 hours of instruction. ● Programs offering low intensity courses with fewer than 70 hours in a semester, quarter, term, or other substantial block of instruction, may choose to administer a post-test at the end of the instructional period. The minimum number of hours between pre and post-test is 40 hours.
TABE	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Alternate Form Testing:</i></p> <p>Recommended for ABE levels 1-4: 50-60 hours of instruction Minimum for ABE levels 1-4: 40 hours of instruction</p> <p>Recommended for ASE levels 5 and 6: 30-49 hours of instruction</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Same Form Testing:</i></p> <p>Recommended: 60-80 hours of instruction</p> <p>(Note: In some instances, programs may also select the next level higher TABE test while following the same recommended hours above for alternate form testing.)</p>

Important notes about post-testing:

- If a post-test is administered before the publisher's recommended minimum time frame, programs must have documentation of approval from the program administrator that documents why an early post-test was warranted.
- An EFL gain is recorded if, according to a post-assessment, the participant has skills corresponding to one or more levels higher than the incoming level in the areas initially used for placement. If an assessment is given in multiple subject areas (such as reading and math), the lowest content area score does not necessarily have to be the only score to improve in order to show an EFL gain.

3.4. Test Administration Requirements

It is critical that local programs adhere to these test administration requirements to ensure that test data are meaningful:

- Programs shall follow appropriate test administration policies, procedures, and practices, as published by developers of the approved tests.
- Assessment instruments shall be administered in a proctored environment by trained staff, in accordance with publishers' and RIDE's assessment guidelines.
- Programs must make accommodations for adults with disabilities who request them and must do so following test developer guidelines. Programs shall keep records on requests for testing accommodations.
- Programs must put in place strict information security and confidentiality guidelines to ensure test security and protect student information. Test scores may be shared in the aggregate, but no personal identifying information can be revealed, nor may results be publicly reported in cells smaller than six (6) observations to protect an individual's privacy.
 - Assessment results (e.g., scores, but not individual test question answers) shall be shared with learners as soon as possible after the assessment is completed.
- Programs may share test results with instructors to inform curricula and instruction, but must maintain confidentiality in other instances.

3.4.1. Process and Procedures for Verification and Procedural Check

In addition to the program having a written assessment policy that provides information and documentation that follows the state assessment policy guidelines (appropriate assessment, time periods, pre-test and post-test, score ranges, forms and versions, etc.), program staff must have a copy of the policy and have been trained in the administration of the approved assessments in use, according to publisher guidelines. Documentation of training must be available at the program site with training materials, the agenda, sign-in sheet, evaluations, etc. During a site review or phone/desk review, staff must be able to identify the sections of the document related to these policies.

4. Guidance for Programs Serving Distance Learning Students

Distance Education is any formal learning activity where students and instructors are separated by geography, time, or both for the majority of the instructional period. Distance learning materials are delivered through a variety of media, including but not limited to, print, audio recording, videotape, broadcasts, computer software, web-based programs, and other online technology. Teachers support distance learners through communication by mail, telephone, e-mail, or online technologies and software.

Distance learners must be assessed under the same guidelines as all adult learners in Rhode Island. Students must be pre-tested using any of the RIDE-approved and NRS-compliant tests (i.e., CASAS, Best Plus, and BEST Literacy). All students must be post-tested after the appropriate number of hours of instruction specified by the test developer, at the end of the semester, or upon completion of defined curricula. In other words, **the RIDE Adult Education Assessment Policy applies fully to distance learning students** and no distance learning students will be included in state and federal reporting that do not have assessment results arrived at by following the state's assessment policy.

This means that all assessment of distance learning students must occur in secure, proctored settings, but it is permissible to arrange for remote testing locations that are more convenient for distance learners as long as all other state requirements concerning assessment are met.

Distance students must follow all existing assessment policies for administration, scoring and interpretation of test results. The NRS Guidelines state that distance students “should be post-tested after the same amount of instructional time as other students, according to the state’s approved NRS assessment policy.”

Rhode Island has adopted a proxy hour model, which means that this model must be used to determine when to post-test. Programs will determine when distance learning students have reached the minimum hours of instruction required for post-testing and will make arrangements for distance learners to be post-tested in a proctored environment.

4.1 Guidance for Programs Serving Distance Learning Students During Widespread Disruption of Services

4.1.1. Testing Exemptions

Local programs unable to administer an NRS-approved test to a distance learning participant due to the widespread disruption of services, such as those experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic, may exempt that student from testing. In this instance, local programs may use informal assessments to provisionally determine a student’s educational functioning level for instructional and NRS-reporting purposes.

Local programs that exempt participants from NRS tests should put procedures in place to identify students who were not tested due to an inability to conduct testing, so that the impact of any disruption to services can be appropriately tracked. Programs should also maintain documentation of provisional educational functioning level determinations for NRS reporting purposes. Local programs should administer NRS-approved pre-tests as soon as feasible and adjust any provisional educational functioning level placements according to the NRS-approved pre-test score.

A participant cannot achieve an Educational Functioning Level gain without an NRS-approved pre- and post-test.

4.1.2 Administering Virtual Testing

Local programs may implement virtual test proctoring using the assessments identified in this policy, in accordance with the test publisher’s procedures for virtual testing.

In situations where in-person testing is not possible and there is an option to administer virtual test proctoring, testing exemptions may still be allowed if students lack the necessary digital literacy skills, equipment, and/or bandwidth for remote testing to be implemented. In this case, local programs may determine and document provisional levels as described in section 4.1.1. above.

5. Guidance Regarding Assessment of Eligible Adults with Disabilities

RIDE’s local adult education programs are responsible for providing fully accessible services, within reason, as defined by the [Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#). Adults with physical, mental, or emotional disabilities may not be able to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in a standardized test

administration or with a standard test format. Accommodations may modify the conditions of administering a test or change the physical presentation of the assessment instrument in order to compensate for the disability. These accommodations are available to allow the test taker with a disability to demonstrate their skills and abilities more accurately. In all cases, accommodations must meet the needs of the examinee without changing what the test is intended to measure.

Eligible individuals are responsible for requesting accommodations and for submitting documentation of their disability at the time of registration, program entry, or after diagnosis. If an individual chooses to self-report a disability, they become eligible to receive testing accommodations. However, individuals are *not required* to disclose their disability and may elect to participate in a program without any special accommodations.

The documentation must show that the disability interferes with the eligible individual's ability to demonstrate performance on the assessment. This information can come from:

- a doctor's report;
- a diagnostic assessment from a certified professional; and
- other clinical records.

If a learner self-discloses a disability and provides valid, corroborating documentation, it is the responsibility of the local program to provide reasonable accommodations. Local programs may not deny or prevent access to services based on a learner's disability. The local program's LD Designee is responsible for sharing current information about learning disabilities, ensuring that staff are informed about the availability of accommodations as part of the enrollment process or orientation, and attending state sponsored LD trainings.

The accommodations provided in assessment should be similar to the accommodations used during instruction. A request for accommodations and documentation of an individual's eligibility for specific testing accommodations must be maintained in the individual's student file and must not be revealed without proper authorization as outlined in the [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#). Adult Education program staff should ensure that records are handled appropriately.

The local program should consult the test publisher guidelines before administering testing to ensure that approved accommodations for the learner are permitted:

- [BEST Literacy Test Usage Policy](#)
- [BEST Plus Test Usage Policy](#)
- [CASAS Assessment Accommodations and Guidelines](#)
- [TABE Guidelines to Inclusive Testing Accommodations](#)

Additionally, learners should have an opportunity to use test-taking aides that do not affect the administration of the test. Aides may be allowed for learners without a documented disability and might include: colored transparent overlays, clear transparent overlays and highlighters, temporary adhesives with spatial directions, earplugs, large print tests (if available), magnifying devices, priority seating, hats, caps, or visors to minimize fluorescent lighting, or an unmarked straightedge. If in question, a program should contact the RIDE in determining the appropriateness of an adaptation.

6. Data Quality Control Procedures

6.1 Entering Data into LACES

After the participant is enrolled in the local program, all demographic, attendance, and testing data must be entered into LACES on a monthly basis for NRS and state data decision-making purposes. All data for the previous month must be entered and finalized in LACES by the end of the first week of the following month.

6.2 Adult Education Data Review Process

Once data (demographic, attendance, and testing) have been entered into LACES by the data entry personnel and fiscal year summaries have been run, the local program administrator should review the LACES data validation area, which will flag records with missing or incorrect data for any of the common WIOA data elements. Data validation will be reviewed at the local and state level to ensure accurate performance outcomes and consistency across programs.

7. Additional Resources for Local Programs

7.1 RIDE Email

If you have questions, or for more information, email Sophie Tan at sophie.tan@ride.ri.gov.

APPENDIX A: Test Publisher Administration Guidelines and Resources

A.1. Procedures for Administering and Reporting Results of the Approved BEST Assessments

A.1.1. BEST Literacy

[BEST Literacy](#) is a print-based, combined test of reading and writing skills. The test uses authentic situations specifically geared for adult English language learners in the United States as the basis for test questions. BEST Literacy is aligned with the ESL descriptors of the National Reporting System and the Student Performance levels.

- **Reading tasks** include reading dates on a calendar, labels on food and clothing, bulletin announcements, and newspaper want ads.
- **Writing tasks** include addressing an envelope, writing a rent check, filling out a personal background form, and writing personal notes.

BEST Literacy may be administered to groups or individuals in one hour or less. Each examinee is given one test booklet which contains instructions and the test questions. The test administrator verbally provides test directions and examinees then write their answers in the test booklet.

All scoring is done after the testing is complete, either by the test administrator or by a designated test scorer. Scoring instructions are provided in the BEST Literacy Test Manual. Using the separate scoring sheet that corresponds to the appropriate examinee test booklet (Form B, C, or D), the examinees' responses are scored based on comprehensibility. The specific answers for the reading and writing sections (including the multiple choice, fill in the blank, completion, extended response, and cloze exercises) are provided for the scorer on the scoring sheet.

The BEST Literacy Test Manual contains a writing rubric and benchmarks to score the writing tasks. A raw score is calculated based on the combined scores of the reading and writing tasks. A scale score is determined using the conversion tables located in the BEST Literacy Test Manual.

Performances on BEST Literacy can be interpreted in terms of the National Reporting System (NRS) ESL educational functioning level descriptors or the Student Performance Level (SPL) descriptors, designed specifically for adult learners of English.

No formal training is required, except to follow the guidance in the [Best Literacy Test Manual](#).

A.1.2. BEST Plus 2.0

[BEST Plus 2.0](#) is a revision of the oral interview section of the Basic English Skills Test (BEST), which discriminates among the levels of English language proficiency described in the Student Performance Levels (SPLs). The intended population is adult English language learners who may or may not have received an education in their native language or in English, but who need to function in day-to-day life in the U.S. Conversation language skills, including speaking and listening are measured/tested. A six-hour training workshop in administering and scoring the test is required for all test administrators.

For information about accommodations, see the [BEST Plus Test Usage Policy](#).

The BEST Plus 2.0 comes in two (2) versions:

- A computer-adaptive assessment on USB or
- A semi-adaptive print-based version

In the computer-adaptive version, the test items are provided by software on USB. The tester asks the examinee questions provided by the computer program, listens to the responses, and uses rubrics to score each item. After inputting the item score, the computer selects the next test item and continues to adapt the difficulty level of the questions according to the scores entered for each question. Each time the interview is administered to the same examinee (e.g., for pre- and post-testing), the computer generates a different set of test questions. In the print-based version, a brief locator test determines the level of test items. Parallel forms A, B, or C may be used for pre-, interim-, and post-assessment.

For both versions of the BEST Plus, you must purchase a fixed number of administrations (20, 50, 100, 300, 500). Thus, each time someone is tested (either in print or via computer), an administration is consumed.

A.1.3. When to use Different Levels and Forms of the BEST Plus 2.0

With the BEST Plus computer-adaptive assessment on USB, the computer generates a different set of test questions each time the interview is administered to an examinee. In the print-based version, a brief locator test determines the level of test items (level 1, 2, or 3). There are three (3) parallel forms (D, E, F) that may be used for pre-, interim-, and post-assessment.

A.1.4. Using BEST Plus 2.0 to Determine EFL

With the BEST Plus 2.0 computer-adaptive assessment on USB, the computer tallies the score and provides the correct SPL and NRS level. In the print-based version, the raw score must be input into a computer management system to determine the scale score and EFL.

A.1.5. Time Required for BEST Assessments

BEST Literacy	1 hour
BEST Plus computer	5 – 20 minutes to administer, depending on the English ability of the examinee
BEST Plus print	10 – 20 minutes per examinee

A.2. Procedures for Administering and Reporting Results of the Approved CASAS Assessments

[CASAS](#) is a competency, outcome-based system for assessing adult basic reading, writing, math and listening skills (for ESL). The intended population is adults functioning at or below a high school level in attaining the basic literacy skills to function effectively on the job, in the community, and in the family. Consultation and training are required for implementation of the system.

The CASAS includes a variety of curricula and training resources, as well as assessment instruments. CASAS assesses student attainment of a range of specific competencies presented in functional contexts. Assessments can be used to measure proficiency in skill areas and to check for learning progress.

Different CASAS standardized assessments are used at various points in the educational cycle. Appraisal tests provide an initial screening of a learner's basic skill abilities. Pre-tests inform instruction by conducting a learning needs assessment and identifying strengths and weaknesses. Pre-tests also establish the baseline ability level for a learner in a skill area. Post- tests are administered after an instructional intervention to monitor progress from the baseline and to plan the next steps.

Pre- and post-tests are available in three different series that vary primarily in contextual focus (for example, employability versus general life skills and work skills).

A.2.1. CASAS Administration Requirements

The majority of CASAS assessments have appraisal tests, and CASAS prescribes that learners should take an appropriate appraisal test prior to taking a pre-test. Appraisal tests indicate the appropriate level for instruction, as well as which pre-test form to administer. An appraisal cannot be used as the pre-or post-assessment.

A.2.2. Which CASAS series do I use?

Programs are required to select the approved test series that responds to the federal NRS but may also select other series based on learner goals and the instructional focus of the program.

- Life and Work Reading (ESL Only)
- Life and Work Listening 980 Series (ESL Only)
- Reading for Citizenship - Forms 951, 951X–952, 952X (ESL only)
- Reading GOALS (ABE/ASE only)
- Math GOALS (ABE/ASE only)

ABE/ASE students take the CASAS GOALS Appraisal and the corresponding reading and/or math CASAS GOALS assessments.

ESL students take the CASAS Life and Work Appraisal and the corresponding CASAS Life and Work reading and/or listening pre-and post-assessments.

Advanced level ESL students who score 236 or above on a CASAS Life and Work pre-test (“Exit Advanced ESL”) must be retested using CASAS GOALS in order to establish an NRS-reportable entering EFL. If they are not retested, the student will not appear on federal reports. Retesting a student will establish a reportable entering EFL. These students can still enroll in ESL classes, they will just be categorized as ABE/ASE for reporting purposes.

A.2.3. How do I use the CASAS appraisal to determine the pre-and post-assessment level to administer?

Adult learners often function at widely varying levels of basic skill ability. Therefore, each learner who is new to adult education is required to take an appraisal (placement) test at program entry. CASAS appraisal tests gauge a learner's reading, math, and/or listening skills. They are broad tests that span a wide spectrum of the CASAS scale. Available Appraisal Instruments are noted below.

- Reading – Beginning Literacy Forms 27-28 (ESL Only)
- Reading - Life and Work Form 80 (ESL only)
- Listening - Life and Work 980 Series (ESL only)
- Reading – Reading GOALS 900 Series (ABE/ASE only)
- Math- Math GOALS 900 Series (ABE/ASE Only)

The CASAS Appraisal test, or the CASAS Locator for eTests, must be administered to students to determine which CASAS form to use as a pre-test. Appraisals or Locators cannot be used as a pre-test.

For programs using CASAS e-Tests, the computer adaptive test (CAT) locator that is included within e-Tests can serve as the “appraisal” for the purposes of pre-test selection.

A.2.4. How much time is required to administer CASAS GOALS instruments?

Reading Goals Form 900R Appraisal (paper)
Appraisal 28 Items/30 minutes

Reading GOALS Form 104R Locator (e-Tests)
Locator 12 Items/15 - 30 minutes

Math Goals Form 900 Appraisal (paper)
Appraisal 20 items/30 minutes

Math GOALS Form 104M Locator (e-Tests)
Locator 10 Items/15 - 30 minutes

Reading GOALS (Pre- and Post-Tests, paper, and e-Tests)

Level A – 39 items/60 minutes

Level B – 40 Items/75 minutes

Level C – 40 items/75 minutes

Level D- 40 items/75 minutes

Math GOALS (Pre- and Post-Tests, paper and e-Tests)

Level A/B- 40 items/60 minutes

Level C/D – 40 items/75 minutes

A.2.5. EFL Designations and Corresponding CASAS Scores

ABE/ASE - Reading	
Entering Educational Functioning Level	Reading GOALS 900 Series Scale Score Ranges
1. Beginning ABE Literacy	203 and below

2. Beginning Basic Education	204-216
3. Low Intermediate	217-227
4. High Intermediate	228-238
5. Low Adult Secondary Education	239-248
6. High Adult Secondary Education	249 and above

ABE/ASE - Math	
Entering Educational Functioning Level	Math GOALS 900 Series Scale Score Ranges
1. Beginning ABE Literacy	193 and below
2. Beginning Basic Education	194-203
3. Low Intermediate	204-214
4. Middle Intermediate	215-225
5. High Intermediate	226-235
6. Adult Secondary Education	236 and above

ESL		
Entering Educational Functioning Level	Life and Work Reading 80 Series Scale Score Ranges	Life and Work Listening 980 Series Scale Score Ranges
1. Beginning ESL Literacy	180 and below	162-180
2. Low Beginning ESL	181-190	181-189
3. High Beginning ESL	191-200	190-199
4. Low Intermediate ESL	201-210	200-209
5. High Intermediate ESL	211-220	210-218
6. Advanced ESL	221-235	219-227
Exit Advanced ESL ¹	236 and above	228 and above

A.2.6. Accommodations for CASAS

¹ Please note that advanced level ESL students who score 236 or above on a CASAS Life and Work pre-test (“Exit Advanced ESL”) must be retested using an alternate test series such as Listening and Speaking or CASAS GOALS in order to establish an NRS-reportable entering EFL. If they are not retested, the student will not appear on federal reports. Retesting a student will establish a reportable entering EFL. These students can still enroll in ESL classes, they will just be categorized as ABE/ASE for reporting purposes.

Programs should follow the guidelines described in [Guidelines for Providing Accommodations Using CASAS Assessment Systems](#) when using the CASAS assessments with students who have disabilities.

A.2.7. How do I know when to use different levels and forms of the CASAS?

Next Assigned Test Charts provided by CASAS or the TOPSpro Next Assigned Test Report by Learner and Class should be consulted to guide pre- and post-test selection. If programs use CASAS eTests, the pre- and post-test selection happens automatically. Post-testing will be at either the same level or a higher level, depending on the pre-test score. An alternate test form within the same test series is recommended for post-testing. Never give the same form of the assessment at the same level to a student twice in a row. Additionally, the post-test must be in the same skills area as the pre-test; that is, programs cannot use a reading pre-test and a math post-test to determine learner gains.

Please note that advanced level ESL students who score 236 or above on a CASAS Life and Work pre-test (“Exit Advanced ESL”) must be retested using CASAS GOALS in order to establish an NRS-reportable entering EFL. If they are not retested, the student will not appear on federal reports. Retesting a student will establish a reportable entering EFL. These students can still enroll in ESL classes, they will just be categorized as ABE/ASE for reporting purposes.

A.1.8. CASAS State Training Requirements

All providers who administer CASAS tests must complete the training modules corresponding to their role. Recertification needs to be completed every two years and all documentation must be kept on file.

CASAS training can be completed through:

- self-study asynchronous training modules available on the [CASAS Training website](#)
- or live facilitated training (offered by the RIDE PD provider or CASAS)

Below is a breakdown of the required training modules based on the role of the user:

User Role	Module 1	Module 2	Module 3	Module 4
Tester - Administer eTests only	x	x		Optional
Tester - Administer Paper Only	x		x	Optional
Tester - Administer eTests & Paper	x	x	x	Optional
Teachers	x			x
Order paper materials	x		x	
Order web units	x	x		
Train others at own agency	x	x	x	x

A.1.9. CASAS Test Security Policy and Agreement

Agency directors and other staff certified to administer the CASAS need to maintain a specific test security policy that discusses the proper handling and use of test materials. All testing personnel must sign the CASAS Test Security Policy Agreement below agreeing to uphold this security policy and the RIDE Adult Education Assessment policy at the agency or program.

Documentation of all assessment training and refreshers, including the copies of the CASAS Test Security Policy and Agreement, must be kept on file in the program’s professional development records.

Should CASAS determine that any agency or program has violated any provision of this test security policy or that testing materials have been compromised in any manner, purposely or otherwise, CASAS reserves the right to take appropriate action to rectify the violation of its test security policy. For more information, please refer to the [CASAS Test Security Policy](#).

Test Security Policy Guidelines

To protect the quality and standardization of CASAS assessments, I agree to:

1. Follow all test procedures as required in this Test Security Policy document.
2. Secure all CASAS test materials, whether paper-based or computer delivered, under lock and key except during testing sessions.
3. Ensure that before or after any test administration all test materials are secure and inaccessible to any non-testing personnel, examinees, or others not responsible for test administration.
4. Remain in the testing room at all times during the testing event and monitor all examinee activity as appropriate and in compliance with test security procedures.
5. Ensure that examinees sit at least three to five feet apart and do not talk or seek help from others during the testing event in any way, including use of electronic devices.
6. Refrain from assisting examinees with test answers on any test before or during the testing event.
7. Refrain from reviewing test questions with examinees after the testing event.
8. Ensure that agency staff members follow all specific testing procedures as stated in CASAS Test Administration Manuals.
9. Disallow use of any CASAS assessments as practice tests or as instructional tools.
10. Advise any agency or program to contact CASAS, and not my agency, with any inquiry about sharing or duplicating CASAS testing materials.
11. Refrain from duplicating or in any way reproducing any CASAS testing materials, including but not limited to test booklets, answer keys, answer sheets, CDs, and CASAS e-Tests.
12. Report any violation of this test security policy.

Program Director Signature: _____

CASAS Administrator Signature: _____

Program Name: _____ Date: _____

A.3. Procedures for Administering and Reporting Results of the Approved TABE Forms

[TABE 11/12](#) results are used to place each person in the appropriate instructional or training program and track progress toward success. Tests are focused on key factors required for vocational training programs and most often demanded by employers. Relevant test questions focus on items encountered in daily life, such as paychecks, bills, and advertisements. TABE comes in a variety of lengths, levels, forms, and formats to fit students' assessment needs and goals. TABE can be hand-scored or scored locally with TestMate TABE software. In addition to its paper-and-pencil format, TABE can be administered on a Windows-based computer using TABE-PC, or over the Internet using TABE Online.

A wide range of accommodation materials is also available to help evaluate the skills of adults with special needs. See the [TABE Guidelines to Inclusive Testing](#) for more information about accommodations.

APPENDIX B: Frequently Asked Questions

In what skill areas should students be assessed?

Students should be assessed in the academic area(s) most relevant to their needs. For example, if a student is enrolled for the sole purpose of upgrading math skills, only the math sub-test should be administered. While the entire battery of tests is not required, programs may decide to give all the sub-tests to better plan instruction.

For ESL students, you may need to select more than one standardized instrument to appropriately assess the necessary skill areas. For example, the BEST Literacy assessment can be used to measure reading, but not oral skills. Therefore, you may need to administer BEST Plus 2.0 for speaking/listening.

The RI adult education MIS, LACES, will allow multiple assessment instruments to be selected. If different ESL assessments are used to measure different skills (i.e., BEST for listening/speaking and CASAS for reading/writing), the lowest score will determine the Entry EFL in the MIS. Although LACES defaults to display the subject area and EFL with the lowest EFL, gains will be tracked for any subject area in which there is a valid pre- and post-test. LACES will only populate EFLs based on scaled score; it does not allow input of the number of correct answers on a test (e.g. the raw score).

Do I need to use locators and appraisals?

Locators and Appraisal Tests are used to determine the most appropriate pre-test level for each student. CASAS has an Appraisal Form for paper tests, and a Locator for eTests. TABE has a Locator Test. These instruments should always be used prior to administering the actual pre-tests. These instruments may NOT be used in place of a pre-test to determine a scale score or grade equivalent for placement on entry EFL. Proctors must follow publishers' test administration protocols when administering all NRS approved tests.

When do I administer the pre-tests?

Pre-tests should be administered prior to actual instruction. Pre-tests must be administered within the first 12 hours of attendance.

How do I document student completion of an EFL or advancement from one level to the next?

The only way to verify that a student has completed an EFL or advanced from one level to the next is by comparing documented standardized pre- and post-assessment scores.

Are standardized assessments the only kind of assessment to be used in the classroom?

In addition to the required standardized pre- and post-assessment instruments, a program should continue to use a variety of formal and informal instruments and procedures to collect valid on-going information regarding student instructional needs and progress. Some examples include, end of unit tests from textbooks; instructor-made assessments; standards-based assessments/rubrics; portfolios; projects/products with clearly defined criteria or performance standards; student self-evaluations, etc.

Where should assessment take place?

Whether the student is taking a pre-, interim-, or post-assessment, they must have a quiet, comfortable environment in which to take the assessment. The environment should be well lit with comfortable

seating and heating/cooling. Whenever possible, the assessment area should be in a separate, designated area, free of distractions and noise.

Are standardized assessments interchangeable?

The assessment scores of one standardized instrument are not comparable to those of another. In assessing student educational gains within a program year, switching from one instrument for pre-assessment, to another for interim- or post-assessment is NOT allowed.

For ESL assessment, different instruments may be chosen to measure different skill areas. However, the interim- and post-assessment MUST always match the pre-assessment.

What assessment form should be used for post-assessment?

The parallel form of the assessment instrument used to determine the entry EFL must be used to determine the exit EFL and the educational gain. Programs should refer to the publisher's test administration manual to determine the correct next assigned test.

How frequently should standardized assessment be administered?

During each program year, a parallel form of the standardized assessment used for pre-assessment must be administered as a post-assessment to students. The publisher's guideline for the CASAS instrument indicates a minimum of 40 hours and a maximum of 70-100 hours of instruction between pre and post-test. The guideline for BEST Plus 2.0 is a minimum of 60 hours and a maximum of 80 – 100 hours.

“There is no recommended minimum number of hours of instruction that must occur if a different form or different level of the TABE pre-test is administered as a post-test” (TABE FAQs).

Post-test scores obtained at the end of a semester or other reporting period may serve as a pre-test for the next semester or reporting period, provided that the interim does not exceed more than four months. Similarly, the most recent assessment results for “stop outs” returning to adult education classes may be used, provided that the last test administered does not exceed the same four month window. This policy is designed to reduce or eliminate unnecessary testing. Program personnel may wish to retest “stop outs” or students returning the following semester or reporting period if they have reason to believe that during the learner's absence or summer recess a significant learning intervention occurred that may invalidate the learner's previous assessment results. In such circumstances, retesting is always an option.

Can the post-assessment score from one year be used as the pre-assessment for the next year?

Post-test scores obtained at the end of a semester or other reporting period may serve as a pre-test for the next semester or reporting period, provided that the interim does not exceed more than four months.

However, if a program is changing from using one assessment instrument to another (i.e., in the past it used the TABE and now it will be using the CASAS), you must begin the program year by pre-assessing with the newly adopted instrument so that you will have parallel entry, interim-, and final post-assessment results for the program year.

How do I handle assessment of students who have a specific short-term goal?

Some students enter a program with a specific short-term goal. For example, an ASE student may simply want to take the GED Ready practice test for the GED to determine if they possess the necessary skills for earning a GED. If that student does well, they will probably receive less than 12 hours of instruction and achieve their goal.

Students with such specific short-term goals are NOT given a standardized pre-assessment and are NOT assigned an EFL. Students who later decide to study more than 12 hours, MUST then complete a standardized pre-assessment and be assigned an EFL.