COLORADO
Department of Education

2023-24 State Assessment Policy

Submitted to:

OCTAE

By:

Office of Adult Education Initiatives

Effective July 1st, 2023

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Setting the Context

Introduction

The Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA), Title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), requires the Colorado Department of Education to establish and monitor accountability within its local adult education programs. Accountability procedures must be in accordance with the National Reporting System (NRS), which serves as the accountability system for AEFLA. To fulfill its monitoring requirements, AEFLA requires each state to have a written assessment policy that its local eligible providers must follow in measuring educational gain and reporting data in the National Reporting System (NRS). The assessment policy must be approved by the Secretary of Education (34 CFR §§ 462.4 (a)).

Use and Purpose

This assessment policy applies to all grantees receiving AEFLA and/or Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) funds. Learners who are active participants, as defined by §462.40, and are receiving adult education, family literacy, workplace literacy, and/or English language instruction using these funds must be administered assessments according to this policy.

Note: *The Colorado Assessment Policy also applies to grantees receiving state Adult Education and Literacy Act (AELA) funds that have selected Educational Functioning Level gains as an Outcome and are therefore required to implement NRS-assessments.*

The state assessment policy is enacted to ensure assessments administered at the local program level are valid (measuring what is intended to be measured), and reliable (yielding consistent results). The policy ensures assessments are administered in a standardized and consistent way to all learners in the state of Colorado. When test procedures are not followed correctly or consistently, the validity is lost, and comparability is compromised.

To ensure the assessment policy is being implemented fully, the Office of Adult Education Initiatives (AEI) will:

- Provide the state assessment policy to all grantees reporting to the AEI office;
- Provide training on the state assessment policy to local Assessment Coordinators
- Offer technical assistance that provides an overview of the assessment policy and showcases changes at the beginning of the program year;
- Deliver training on the administration of assessments;
- Monitor grantees' implementation and administration of the assessment policy through calls, site visits, and data quality checks. Based on results, appropriate additions may be made to individual grantees' technical assistance plans; and
- Maintain records of local program staff trained to administer test in each of the approved assessments.

The grantees administering NRS-approved assessments will:

- Adhere to state policy and guidance[1];

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[1] Additional guidance in implementing the assessment policy can be found in the Assessment Assurances.

- Create and implement local assessment procedures based on the state assessment policy, test publishers' guidelines, and assessment training;

- Ensure all staff administering assessments have completed required test administrator training;

- Monitor program staff in accordance with state policy and assessment publisher guidelines;

- Maintain records in the state data system of staff trained to administer assessments; and

- Provide equitable assessment opportunities for all learners.

This policy details the following:
- how educational gain is measured;

- which assessments are approved in Colorado;

- pre- and post-test requirements;

- remote testing implementation;

- state performance targets;

- certified trainer and administrator training requirements;

- guidance on materials inventory and destruction;

- requirements for assessing learners with accommodations;

- data entry requirements; and

- additional tools and resources for assessment informed instruction.

The purpose of the Assessment Policy is to outline for Adult Education providers in Colorado the processes for effectively implementing NRS-approved assessments, based on the type of assessment used at the local level. Additionally, the policy serves to describe assessment reporting requirements of AEFLA. It is not intended to be an exhaustive description of all reporting requirements of the grant.

This policy **encourages informed and effective instruction**, **ensures educational progress is consistently tracked,** and assures testing and security protocols are consistent for comparability and quality and that state level outcome data are accurate. Grantees referencing this policy should consider complementing documents in their decision making, such as the assurances, other policies, and the NRS Technical Assistance Guide.

Demonstrating Measurable Skill Gains through Assessment

Measurable Skill Gains (MSG) demonstrated by assessments are defined by the NRS through achievement of an Educational Functioning Level (EFL) gain between a pre- and post-test during a program year. To help ensure the comparability of measures across states and the integrity of the data submitted to the U.S. Department of Education and Congress, regulations on measuring educational gain through pre- and post-testing are issued by the Secretary of Education (34 CFR §§462.42 and §§462.43 Subpart D). The regulations codify the requirements states and local providers must meet when measuring educational gain and are incorporated in this assessment policy.

In order to demonstrate MSG through pre- and post-tests, learners must be administered a test which meets the following requirements:

- that the Secretary deems suitable for use in the NRS;

- that AEI has identified in this assessment policy;
- that is administered in accordance to the instructional hours requirements; and
- that is administered with accommodations set forth in publisher guidelines and in this policy (see the Accommodating Learners with Disabilities section).

Achievement of an EFL gain is measured by comparing the learner's initial EFL(s) in each of the pre-tests the learner takes with the learner's EFL(s) from the corresponding, subsequent post-test(s). The results provide evidence of learner skills acquisition from instruction. A learner makes an educational gain when their post-test in any subject area results in one or more EFLs above the level at which they were pre-tested in the same subject area.

Educational Functioning Levels (EFLs)

EFLs have been determined by the National Reporting System. The EFLs are broken down in Tables 1A and 1B below. Although the Grade Level Equivalent (GLE) of each ABE/ASE EFL is available and listed, these are for skills reference only and should not be used to assign learners a grade level. The NRS does not publish GLEs for ESL learners. (See the Approved Assessments section for a breakdown of EFLs as they relate to approved assessments and placing learners within an EFL.)

TABLE 1A: Adult Basic Education (ABE) and Adult Secondary Education (ASE)

EFL	Grade Level Equivalent (GLE)
Beginning ABE Literacy Level 1	0-1
Beginning Basic Education Level 2	2-3
Low Intermediate Basic Education Level 3	4-5
Intermediate Basic Education Level 4	6-8
Low Adult Secondary Education Level 5	9-10
High Adult Secondary Education Level 6	11-12

TABLE 1B: English as a Second Language (ESL)

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

Approved Assessments

The assessments listed below have been approved for use in Colorado to measure MSG by pre- and post-testing. These tests have been deemed suitable for use in NRS by the Secretary of Education in the [Federal Register](#). These assessments are appropriate for measuring literacy, language, and numeracy development of adult learners; provide standardized administration and scoring procedures; provide alternate equivalent forms for post-testing; and can be linked to EFLs.

Note: No high school equivalency practice tests or high school equivalency tests are approved NRS assessments. Therefore, they cannot be used to place learners into EFLs or to show pre- and post-test gains. Table 2 lists the approved assessments by content area and expiration date.

TABLE 2: Approved Assessments

Assessment	Approved Forms	Educational Level	Approved Through (Federal Register)	Sunset Date
BEST Plus 2.0	**Paper-Adaptive** (3 equivalent forms: D, E, F) **and Computer-Adaptive**	ESL	2/2/2024	06/30/2024
CASAS Reading GOALS (900 Series)	**Paper Forms:** 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908 **Computer Based**	ABE, ASE	2/5/2025	N/A
CASAS Math GOALS (900 Series)	**Paper Forms:** 900, 913, 914, 917, 918 **Computer Based**	ABE, ASE	3/7/2024	06/30/24
CASAS Life and Work Reading (80 Series)	**Paper Forms:** 27 28 81 82 81x 82x 83 84 85 86 185 186 187 188 **Computer Based**	ESL	2/2/2024	06/30/24
CASAS Life and Work Listening (980 Series)	**Paper Forms:** 981L, 982L, 983L, 984L, 985L, 986L **Computer Based**	ESL	2/2/2024	06/30/24
TABE 11&12 (Reading, Language and Math)	**Paper and computer-based pair forms:** 11/12L, 11/12E, 11/12M, 11/12D, 11/12A	ABE, ASE	9/7/2024	N/A
CASAS Math GOALS 2	**Paper and computer-based pair forms:** 921/922M(A), 923/924M(B),	ABE, ASE	7/13/2030	N/A

Assessment	Approved Forms	Educational Level	Approved Through (Federal Register)	Sunset Date
	925/926M(C), 927/928M(D), 929/930M(E)			
CASAS Reading STEPS	**Paper and computer-based pair forms:** 621/622R(A), 623/624R(B), 625/626R(C), 627/628R(D), 629/630R(E)	ESL	7/13/2030	N/A
CASAS Listening STEPS	**Paper and computer-based pair forms:** 621/622L(A), 623/624L(B), 625/626L(C), 627/628L(D), 629/360L(E)	ESL	7/13/2030	N/A
BEST Plus 3.0	**Paper:** Forms 1 and 2. **Computer-based pair forms:** 1 with adaptive part A and 2 with fixed form part B.	ESL	7/13/2030	N/A

BEST Plus 2.0

In the computer-adaptive version of the BEST Plus 2.0 assessment, the test administrator asks the learner items selected by the computer based on an algorithm that follows the ability of the learner as they answer and the test administrator scores each item. In the print-based version, the test administrator asks the learner questions from one of three fixed-form levels (D, E, F) as determined by an initial short locator test. Scores correspond to NRS ESL EFLs 1-6. Any BEST Plus 2.0 pre-test which results in the EFL "Completed ESL L6" <u>cannot be used</u> for EFL placement, and these learners must be re-tested on an ABE assessment.

CASAS

Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems (CASAS) offers four levels of assessments (A, B, C, D) that align to the NRS ABE/ASE (GOALS) and ESL (Life and Work) EFLs. To determine which level is most appropriate to use for pre-testing the learner, the grantee must first administer the CASAS Appraisal associated with the test series the program is using (i.e., Life and Work or GOALS). Tables provided by CASAS for paper-based tests are then used to identify which level of pre-test to administer to a learner based on the score of the appraisal. If using CASAS eTests, the online Appraisal will automatically select the correct pre-test level for the learner. Any CASAS Life and Work pre-test which results in the EFL "Completed ESL L6" <u>cannot be used </u>for EFL placement, and these learners must be re-tested on an ABE assessment.

TABE

Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE) are published in five levels (L, E, M, D, A) that correspond to NRS EFLs for ABE and ASE. To determine which assessment is most appropriate for pre-testing the learner, the grantee must first administer the TABE Locator. Using the TABE paper-based Locator Test Cut-Scores table, the grantee will be able to determine which level of the pre-test the learner will take. If using TABE Online, the online locator will automatically select the correct pre-test for the learner.

Only AEI-approved assessments and forms outlined in this policy may be used for pre- and post-testing to place learners into EFLs for instructional and reporting purposes. When new NRS tests and form(s) become available and/or assessment instruments are retired from the approved list, AEI will update the assessment policy, announce the change to grantees, and update the content of professional development training accordingly. Please see the [Upcoming Assessment Transitions](#) section below for transitions occurring in the 23-24 program year.

Grantees must always follow test administration practices and assessment publisher guidelines when administering these tests. Assessments being utilized for NRS reporting purposes cannot be used more frequently than within instructional hour windows prescribed by test publishers (see [Pre- and Post-Test Requirements section)](#). Grantees are also encouraged to utilize formative, instructional-based assessments between pre- and post-testing to evaluate learner progress in addition to these NRS approved assessments.

Assessment Transitions

On July 13, 2023 the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE) published in the [Federal Register](#) an update on assessments previously submitted for NRS approval. The following publisher series were approved for NRS reporting: CASAS Math GOALS 2, CASAS STEPS Reading, CASAS STEPS Listening, and BEST Plus 3.0. Each approved series is intended to replace expiring versions of the subject assessments: CASAS Math GOALS, CASAS Life and Work Reading, CASAS Life and Work Listening, and BEST Plus 2.0. Although the new series are replacing existing test series, pre- and post-tests must always be issued in the same series. For example, a learner pre-tested on July 1, 2023 in CASAS Life and Work Reading must be post-tested in CASAS Life and Work Reading, once eligible and ready. If the learner will transition to CASAS STEPS Reading, the grantee may consider issuing the pre-test in CASAS STEPS Reading on the same date (or close to the date) that the learner is taking the post-test in CASAS Life and Work Reading, then the learner would continue a normal testing-instruction-testing schedule in CASAS STEPS Reading.

When considering the practical implications of transitioning learners to the new NRS approved assessments, grantees should consider their local term lengths, the number of current learners who only have a pre-test in an expiring series, the number of current learners who already have paired testing in an expiring series with recent instructional hours (these learners may need to be issued a new locator/appraisal) and other factors. For example, continuing learners from 22-23 can complete their pre- and post-test sessions on the series pushed forward between program years. Then at the time of their post-test can take both the post-test on the expiring form and the pre-test on the new form. Required and recommended transition processes for each assessment are addressed below.

CASAS Math GOALS to CASAS Math GOALS 2

CASAS Math GOALS has been given a sunset date of June 30, 2024, after this date grantees may no longer pre or post test using any form of this series. Additionally, CASAS Math GOALS assessments from program year 23-24 may not be pushed forward into 24-25, regardless of the date learners were assessed. For learners to be enrolled in classes during the 24-25 program year, they will need to have a valid pre-test in CASAS Math GOALS 2 (or other assessments covering that content area i.e. TABE 11/12 Math). CASAS Math GOALS 2 cannot be issued to a learner as a post-test, to a CASAS Math GOALS pre-test.

CASAS Life and Work Reading to CASAS STEPS Reading

CASAS Life and Work Reading has been given a sunset date of June 30, 2024, after this date grantees may no longer pre or post-test using any form of this series. Additionally, CASAS Life and Work Reading assessments from program year 23-24 may not be pushed forward into 24-25, regardless of the date learners were assessed. For learners to be enrolled in classes during the 24-25 program year, they will need to have a valid pre-test in CASAS STEPS Reading (or other assessments covering that content area e.g., CASAS STEPS Listening or BEST Plus 3.0). CASAS STEPS Reading cannot be issued to a learner as a post-test, to a CASAS Life and Work Reading pre-test.

CASAS Life and Work Listening to CASAS STEPS Listening

CASAS Life and Work Listening has been given a sunset date of June 30, 2024, after this date grantees may no longer pre or post-test using any form of this series. Additionally, CASAS Life and Work Reading assessments from program year 23-24 may not be pushed forward into 24-25, regardless of the date learners were assessed. For learners to be enrolled in classes during the 24-25 program year, they will need to have a valid pre-test in CASAS STEPS Listening (or other assessments covering that content area e.g., CASAS STEPS Reading or BEST Plus 3.0). CASAS STEPS Listening cannot be used to a learner as a post-test, to a CASAS Life and Work Listening pre-test.

BEST Plus 2.0 to BEST Plus 3.0

BEST Plus 2.0 has been given a sunset date of June 30, 2024, after this date grantees may no longer pre or post-test using any form of this series. Additionally, BEST Plus 2.0 assessments from program year 23-24 may not be pushed forward into 24-25, regardless of the date learners were assessed. For learners to be enrolled in classes during the 24-25 program year, they will need to have a valid pre-test in BEST Plus 3.0 (or other assessments covering that content area e.g., CASAS STEPS Reading or Listening). BEST Plus 3.0 cannot be issued to a learner as a post-test to a BEST Plus 2.0 pre-test.

Placement Requirements

All learners must be pre-tested at initial intake and each new Period of Participation (PoP). Pre-tests must occur, or be pushed forward, prior to instruction taking place. Grantees must pre-test learners in all subject areas in which they are receiving instruction. The pre-test scale score will determine the learner's initial EFL. Pre-tests may be administered face-to-face or remotely between the test administrator and the learner following test publisher guidelines. Learners are not required to be assessed in all subject areas, but at minimum, must be assessed in each subject area covered in their class enrollment(s). This may be speaking/listening, reading, language, or math. Grantees must report all NRS assessments a learner takes in the statewide data reporting system, LACES.

If multiple subject areas are assessed through pre-testing and the learner has different EFLs in different subject areas, LACES will automatically select the earliest test with the lowest EFL for placement on the NRS tables. Grantees may manually select which of those subject areas will be used for EFL placement after 12 hours of instruction are recorded for the learner in the data system. The subject area selected will determine the learner's initial EFL for recording purposes on NRS Tables but does not impact gains measured by post-test level increase in other subject areas. Post-test gains made by a participant in any subject area will count once per PoP. Once the learner's initial EFL for the program year is established, it cannot be changed.

Tests Administered by Another Entity

AEI allows local grantees to accept assessment scores administered by other entities, especially WIOA partners such as corrections, workforce centers, division of vocational rehabilitation, and other Adult Education service providers, to support collaborative efforts and avoid over-testing. Tests administered by other entities may only be accepted by a local grantee if:

- The test is an approved assessment listed in the state assessment policy;

- The administrator meets test administrator requirements outlined in this policy when the assessment was delivered;

- The learner was given a locator/appraisal prior to pre-testing; and

- All test procedures, e.g., time limits, accommodations, etc., have been followed.

AEI encourages local adult education grantees to meet with WIOA and community partners to determine how to most effectively offer assessment services to avoid unnecessary duplication of services and over-testing.

Using Scale Scores to Place Learners into EFLs

Grantees must use test administration materials to convert raw test scores (the score based on the total number of questions answered correctly) to scale scores (the adjusted score based on number of questions answered correctly and the difficulty of the test level). Only the scale scores are reported in LACES to assign the respective EFL. Please see the Data Entry and Quality Control section for more information on automated test ingests. Tables 3A and 3B are used by LACES to assign learners' an EFL in their assessed subject areas and to determine future EFL gains.

Learners must be placed into classes and receive instruction that aligns with their scale score and EFL for each subject area, which could be at different levels. Grantees may use additional evidence for class placement, to complement official NRS test scores, and must indicate so in their local Assessment Assurances.

Initial pre-test scores are only valid for NRS reporting in a program year or PoP if administered within 90 days prior to class enrollment. The scores remain valid for class placement as long as a learner is continuously enrolled in and attending classes until the start of the new program year. In the new program, if learners have been absent for less than 90 days but there is evidence their previous eligible test scores have changed by one

or more EFLs, grantees can determine whether to re-pre-test the learners for class placement. Documentation of the evidence for re-pre-testing at less than 90 days of absence must be maintained locally.

Conversely, if the grantee has evidence, such as through appraisals/locators, intake information, or other data points, that a learner's initial scores and EFL placement remain the same after an absence of 90 or more days or when a test is not eligible for a push forward into the new program year, they may request a test push forward override between program years.

ESL learners' pre-test scores resulting in "Completed ESL Level 6" must be pre-tested again on an NRS approved ABE/ASE assessment before being placed into classes and receiving instruction. Learners who pre-test at ABE Level 6 do not need to be post-tested and will need to set goals to demonstrate measurable skill gains through one of the other types of MSG approved by the NRS and the AEI Office.

TABLE 3A: Adult Basic Education/Adult Secondary Education

CASAS Scale Score	Educational Functioning Level
Reading GOALS: 0-203 Math GOALS: 0-193 Math GOALS 2: 0-192	ABE Level 1
Reading GOALS: 204-216 Math GOALS: 194-203 Math GOALS 2: 193-203	ABE Level 2
Reading GOALS: 217-227 Math GOALS: 204-214 Math GOALS 2: 204-2013	ABE Level 3
Reading GOALS: 228-238 Math GOALS: 215-225 Math GOALS 2: 214-224	ABE Level 4
Reading GOALS: 239-248 Math GOALS: 226-235 Math GOALS 2: 225-235	ASE Level 5
Reading: 249+ Math: 236+ Math GOALS 2: 236+	ASE Level 6
TABE 11/12 Scale Score	**Educational Functioning Level**
Reading: 300-441 Math: 300-448 Language: 300-457	ABE Level 1
Reading: 442-500 Math: 449-495 Language: 458-510	ABE Level 2
Reading: 501-535 Math: 496-536 Language: 511-546	ABE Level 3

Reading: 536-575 Math: 537-595 Language: 547-583	ABE Level 4
Reading: 576-616 Math: 596-656 Language: 584-630	ASE Level 5
Reading: 617-800 Math: 657-800 Language: 631-800	ASE Level 6

TABLE 3B: English Language Acquisition

CASAS Life and Work Scale Scores (Expiring June 30, 2023)	Educational Functioning Level
Reading: 0-180 Listening: 162-180	ESL Level 1
Reading: 181-190 Listening: 181-189	ESL Level 2
Reading: 191-200 Listening: 190-199	ESL Level 3
Reading: 201-210 Listening: 200-209	ESL Level 4
Reading: 211-220 Listening: 210-218	ESL Level 5
Reading: 221-235 Listening: 219-227	ESL Level 6
BEST Plus 2.0 Scale Scores **(Expiring June 30, 2023)**	**Educational Functioning Level**
83-361	ESL Level 1
362-427	ESL Level 2
428-452	ESL Level 3
453-484	ESL Level 4
485-524	ESL Level 5
525-564	ESL Level 6
CASAS STEPS Scale Scores	**Educational Functioning Level**
Reading: 0-183 Listening: 0-181	ESL Level 1
Reading: 184-196 Listening: 182-191	ESL Level 2

Reading: 197-206 Listening: 192-201	ESL Level 3
Reading: 207-216 Listening: 202-211	ESL Level 4
Reading: 217-227 Listening: 212-221	ESL Level 5
Reading: 228-238 Listening: 222-231	ESL Level 6
BEST Plus 3.0	**Educational Functioning Level**
600 – 677	ESL Level 1
678-702	ESL Level 2
703-726	ESL Level 3
727-752	ESL Level 4
753-785	ESL Level 5 [2]
786-849	ESL Level 6 [2]

Post-Testing

Post-tests are administered to track progress and determine when an educational gain is achieved. Post-tests may be administered face-to-face or remotely between the test administrator and the learner per test publisher guidelines. Post-testing should follow publisher series sequence, unless otherwise indicated by Next Suggested Test charts or Next Assigned Test reports. Exclusions include when a learner's post-test scores result outside of the accurate range, in these instances, the learner may be re-tested on an appropriate level form or grantees can request a score override.

Programs intending to assess learners with more than one NRS assessment will need to make sure that learners have a valid pre-test/post-test combination on the same assessment type and in any subject area in which they meet instructional hour requirements. Only instructional hours in a subject area corresponding to the subject area of the assessment count toward post-test eligibility in that assessment. Class schedules must be developed so it is feasible for the majority of learners attending regularly to reach the required instructional hours and be able to post-test. Grantees must post-test at least 60% of all WIOA Title II participants annually.

Grantees must post-test learners in all subject areas in which they are receiving instruction when they become post-test eligible. Grantees must continue post-testing learners after their first post-test, as long as the program continues providing the learner instruction in that subject area, including after a learner makes an initial EFL gain in that subject area.

ESL learners who post-test into "Completed ESL Level 6" do not require further post-testing with an NRS approved ESL assessment, and instead should be re-tested using an NRS approved ABE/ASE assessment to continue instruction in that subject area. Learners who post-test into ABE Level 6 in one subject area do not

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[2] BEST Plus 3.0 paper-based testing has valid scores only through ESL Level 4. BEST Plus 3.0 computer adaptive testing has valid scores through all NRS ESL levels.

need to be post-tested in that subject area. The 60% target for post-testing learners does not include learners who have tested into ABE Level 6 unless they have tested at a lower EFL in a different subject area. These learners will demonstrate measurable skill gains through one of the other types of MSG approved by the NRS and the AEI Office. Learners who have earned a High School Equivalency during the same program year in which they enrolled, may, but are not required to post-test, regardless of their initial EFL, as this demonstrates a different type of Measurable Skill Gain. For AEFLA learners, only one type of MSG (HSE or EFL increase) is reported per program year, per federal guidelines. AELA learners, who are measured on different types of outcomes, may report both an HSE and a post-test gain during the same program year.

When post-testing, grantees should follow guidance from the latest Test Administration Manual and/or Next Assigned Test charts. For TABE and CASAS tests, to avoid over exposure to test items, learners should post-test on alternate forms at the same level of the same assessment unless otherwise indicated in test publisher manuals (e.g.: TABE 11M with 12M, CASAS GOALS 901R with 902R, etc.).

Instructional Hour Requirements

Learners are eligible to post-test when they complete the test publisher's minimum number of instructional hours. Table 4 below provides a breakdown of required instructional hours before post-testing on each assessment. Research conducted by the publishers of the approved assessments indicates that learners need at least the identified recommended hours of instructional time to show a gain.

Grantees may choose to employ instructional hour requirements greater than the vendor required minimums for some or all of their learners if the grantee has evidence that those learners would benefit from more instructional hours to show level gain. When determining whether to set a greater number of hours than the minimum required for post-testing, consider the following: initial EFL placements, test publisher's recommended number of instructional hours, internal learner persistence rates, and available class hours. Grantees may not set instructional hour requirements greater than the maximum recommended by the vendor. These instructional hour requirements must be documented in the grantee's local Assessment Assurances.

TABLE 4: Instructional Hour Requirements

Assessment	Recommended Instructional Hours (Per Content Area)	Required Instructional Hours (Per Content Area
TABE 11/12 ABE EFL 1-4	50-60 Hours	40 Hours
TABE 11/12 ABE EFL 5-6	50-60 Hours	30 Hours
CASAS GOALS, Life and Work, and STEPS Series	70-100 Hours	40 Hours
BEST Plus 2.0[3]	80-100 Hours	60 Hours

While instruction in multiple subject areas can be integrated into one class, grantees must track instructional hours between pre- and post-testing per subject area. To ensure consistent data reporting statewide, grantees must follow guidelines for recording instructional hours in LACES as outlined in the LACES Data Dictionary. Time

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[3] BEST Plus 3.0 minimum instructional hours unavailable at the time of this publication, please consult BEST Plus 3.0 Administrator Guide

spent taking assessments may be counted as instructional hours and is reported as "Instruction - Assessment" in the state data system.

Instructional Hour Exception Policy

Grantees may only post-test learners who have not reached the required number of instructional hours under limited and special circumstances. The learner must meet one of the following categories to be post-tested prior to completing the required number of hours:

- The learner is exiting the program permanently; or
- Evidence indicates readiness to demonstrate educational gain.

Grantees must document each post-testing exception using the Early Post-Test Form. Appropriate supporting documentation must be provided and kept by the grantee in the learner file if evidence is selected as the reason for early post-testing. Evidence for each exception must be reviewed and the exception form must be completed and signed by the program director, or their designee, before learners may be early post-tested. The program director must list their designees in the local Assessment Assurances. Completed and signed exception forms must be saved by the grantee in the learner file and must be uploaded in the statewide data system under the learner's record so that they are available to AEI staff for compliance review and monitoring purposes. Excessive exceptions will be considered an area of program improvement or non-compliance.

Note: Learners whose pre-test in TABE 11/12 and score in ABE EFL 5 or 6 may post-test at 30 instructional hours without an Early Post-test Form as per TABE guidelines.

Same Form Post-Testing

When a learner is ready to be post-tested and has already been post-tested on an alternate form at the same level, grantees must follow test publisher guidelines for administering same form assessments and are encouraged to discuss with AEI other alternatives. Most publishers suggest a minimum of 60 and up to 80 hours of instruction if same-form post-testing must occur. Please see the Data Entry and Quality Control Procedures section for more details on ingests of same form testing.

Test Validity and Out-of-Range Scores

If a learner scores out-of-range on a test, that is when a learner scores below or above the normal range of intended scores, grantees must follow publisher guidelines in determining re-testing for a valid score. Please refer to each publisher's Test Administration Manual for out-of-range scores and steps for required or recommended re-testing. If re-testing is required for out-of-range scores, it must be done as quickly as possible, prior to the learner being placed into, or being allowed to continue attending classes.

If a test is marked invalid because the learner did not complete the test or cheated on a test, the learner must be re-tested as quickly as possible using an alternate form prior to being placed into, or being allowed to continue attending classes. Learners should not be tested in NRS-approved assessment random and frequently to maintain the integrity of the test and avoid practice effects.

Remote Testing

Remote testing advances accessibility for learners, contributes to the practice of digital literacy, and all NRS-approved assessment vendors have formal processes for remote testing; therefore, grantees may pre- and post-test eligible learners through remote testing. All grantees administering remote testing, must indicate so in their signed local Assessment Assurances. Both the local Assessment Coordinator and Primary Contact must sign the assurances. Should the grantee choose to implement remote assessments, the grantee must follow all test publisher remote testing guidelines and complete required test vendor documentation and trainings. If a

grantee's decision to allow or not allow remote testing changes at any point during the grant, they will need to re-submit their revised local Assessment Assurances to AEI.

Instructional Hours through Distance Learning

In programs where distance learning has been approved by AEI, learners receiving instruction via distance learning must have at least 12 hours of contact before being reported as NRS participants[4]. Additionally, distance learners must adhere to the same assessment and instructional hour requirements described above for learners receiving face-to-face instruction. Pre- and post-tests may be administered face-to-face or remotely for distance learners. Both contact and proxy hours as defined in the AEI Distance Learning Policy count towards the post-testing instructional hour requirements. Please refer to the AEI Distance Learning Policy for further guidance on classifying and reporting distance education activities.

Performance Targets

AEI negotiates with the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE) annually to establish performance targets for participant[2] educational gain, as well as the targets for the core follow-up measures. The targets are determined by past performance and continuous improvement requirements. Colorado's negotiated targets for 2023-24 can be found on the AEI Website.

Training Requirements

Program staff administering tests must be trained in test administration and scoring to ensure that scores are valid and reliable. Training ensures accurate use of the tests, effective interpretation of learner results and maintains the integrity and quality of the assessment process. All staff involved in academic planning at the individual or class level are encouraged to participate in assessment-related training to support connections between class instruction and assessment even if they are not administering tests.

AEI will ensure training opportunities are made available in each of the approved assessments annually through online, asynchronous assessment training. This training is required for any local adult education program staff who have responsibility for the local grantees' assessment procedures including administering, proctoring, and scoring assessment. Every two years, recertification/refresher training will be required for the same local adult education program staff.

At least one staff member at each local program must be up to date with training requirements for the NRS assessments the program uses or is considering implementing to ensure that learners have access to assessment. Only local program staff members with active test administrator certification may administer those NRS assessments in which they are certified. When NRS assessments are updated, AEI will inform grantees if additional training is needed to administer new versions.

Additionally, AEI will annually offer training on this Assessment Policy. Assessment Policy training is required for the Local Assessment Coordinator identified in the grantee's local Assessment Assurances but is open to all staff administering and proctoring assessments.

Training is also open to WIOA and corrections partners, as well as other community partners who administer approved NRS assessments and partner with an AEFLA funded program. Contact AEI with questions.

Maintaining Training Records

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[4] A learner must be age-eligible, complete an intake form, have a valid pre-test, and complete at least twelve (12) instructional hours in order to be considered a WIOA Title II participant for reporting purposes.

Local program staff members are responsible for tracking test administrator certification/recertification paperwork and Assessment Policy training completion in LACES. Local Assessment Coordinators are expected to continuously review certificates uploaded in LACES, to track recertification deadlines, and that non-acetely certified staff do not administer assessments. Additionally, local Assessment Coordinators must support test administrators with the test administration and collaborate with the Accessible Design Coordinator in implementing testing accommodations.

Using Proctors During Testing

Proctors may be utilized during test administration if a certified test administrator is present in the room. A proctor is a staff person or program volunteer who has been partially or not formally trained in assessment administration. Proctors may hand out and collect materials, inventory materials, arrange the room, check learners in and get them seated, answer general procedural questions, and monitor learners as they are testing to ensure a positive, equitable testing environment. Proctors may not provide instructions at the beginning of a testing session, score tests, or advise learners on class placement based on their test scores.

Materials, Inventory and Destruction

Grantees must maintain a local inventory of assessment materials as outlined by each publisher. All assessment materials, including test administration manuals and completed answer sheets (which contain marks or responses) must be stored in a locked, preferably fireproof, file cabinet accessible to the program director or the director's designee(s).

All assessment materials are protected under copyright. No duplication of any published materials or any portion of any published test materials is permitted for any reason. Grantees may not use displays, questions, or answers that appear on any test to create materials designed to teach or prepare learners to answer test items. Instead grantees may use test blueprints, student reports, and/or designated sample items to inform instruction and learner preparation.

Staff members who administer assessments must return all materials immediately after use to the program director or the director's designee(s). All answer sheets and scratch paper must be treated as confidential until appropriately destroyed, as outlined below.

Destruction of unusable, defaced, or outdated (longer than three years) testing materials in the local assessment inventory must follow assessment publisher guidelines.

For TABE, materials must be shredded or burned. For CASAS, materials may be shredded. When agencies shred test booklets, they must notify CASAS at casas@casas.org and provide the following information: test series, form number, and the number of copies of each test form shredded, e.g., Life and Work Reading 187R: 14 copies. If the program prefers, they may return the materials to CASAS for destruction. In this case, mail the documents to 5151 Murphy Canyon Rd., Suite 220 San Diego, CA 92123-4339.

Upon destruction, the assessment materials inventory must be updated with the following information:
- Materials destroyed (e.g., five 36-M test booklets)
- Name of the staff person that destroyed the materials
- Date of destruction of the materials
- How the materials were destroyed (e.g., shredded)

If you have any questions about the destruction of assessment materials, please Contact AEI.

Accommodating Learners with Disabilities

AEI requires grantees to provide testing accommodations for eligible learners with disabilities. Some accommodations modify the conditions of administering a test or change the physical presentation of the assessment instrument in order to provide more equitable access to testing. Other accommodations do not alter the testing format in any way (e.g., sitting at the front of the room). These accommodations are made to allow the test taker with a disability to demonstrate an accurate representation of their skills and abilities. In all cases, accommodations must meet the needs of the eligible learner without compromising the validity of the test.

Per the Accessible Design Policy, grantees must ensure learners are informed of the availability of accommodations for testing during initial enrollment, orientation, and throughout the duration of the program. Signage indicating the rights of learners to request accommodations and the contact information of the grantee's Accessible Design Coordinator must be on display anytime testing is taking place. It is strongly recommended that this information is also verbally shared prior to every testing session. Local grantees are

responsible for providing fully accessible services and ensuring services meet reasonable criteria. Adult learners with disabilities are responsible for requesting accommodations and for submitting appropriate documentation of their disability at the time of registration, program entry, or after a professional evaluation takes place.

Documentation is required for accommodations that modify the conditions of the test, this must delineate the specific testing accommodations needs and must be maintained as confidential information; separately from other learner records. The documentation must show that the disability interferes with the learner's ability to demonstrate performance on the test. The information must come from a doctor's report, a diagnostic assessment from a certified professional, documentation from a vocational rehabilitation agency, and/or the learner's secondary school. The recommended accommodations listed in the documentation provided must be followed and must support the required accommodation needed.

Test administrators must report that an individual received testing accommodations in LACES. See the Data Entry and Quality Control Procedures section for specifics on how to report testing accommodation information in LACES.

For assessment purposes, grantees will use only those accommodations approved by the publisher. Refer to test publisher guidelines, as TABE, CASAS, and BEST Plus all have publicly available suggestions. Contact AEI if your program needs accommodations materials for a learner with disabilities. In the majority of cases, AEI is able to loan accommodation materials to grantees so the grantee does not incur the cost of those materials. See AEI's Accessible Design Policy for more information.

Data Entry and Quality Control Procedures

AEI requires that assessment and attendance data be entered into the state data system, LACES, in a timely manner to track learner progress in real time and facilitate data monitoring for accurate reporting.

Assessment Data

Pre and post-test scores must be recorded in the state data system within one week of when the test occurred. Pre-tests in each program year or new PoP must be entered into LACES before class enrollment and attendance data is entered. This includes tests pushed forward from a prior program year. All tests administered to learners, including those that are incomplete, invalidated, with out of range scores, early or same form post-test, etc. must be entered into LACES.

CASAS and TABE computer-based or scored tests are automatically ingested into LACES daily from each of the test publishers' online testing and scoring systems. These automated ingests occur each morning around 7:00 a.m. (Mountain Time) and include the prior 30-90 days tests, depending on the system. Grantees testing learners on these assessments may choose to either manually report assessments and the resulting scale scores in LACES on the same day the test is administered or they may choose to wait for the test to ingest the following morning.

All BEST Plus 2.0 and any CASAS or TABE paper-based test not scored or entered into the test publisher's online testing scoring or reporting systems cannot be automatically ingested into LACES and must be manually reported into the data system by grantees. Additionally, tests flagging an early or same form post-test error cannot be ingested into LACES and must be entered manually. It is the responsibility of grantees to check that tests expected to be ingested into LACES are ingested into the system.

Only the AEI Data Coordinator may delete assessments in LACES. If the program needs to delete an assessment, the local LACES System Administrator must email the AEI Data Coordinator with the following information:
- Student ID

- Assessment form (including subject area)
- Date of assessment
- Rationale for why the assessment needs to be deleted; this information will be kept on file.

Tests resulting in out-of-range scores will initially display an EFL of "Level Not Defined" in LACES. In instances where re-testing is recommended but not required by the test publisher, grantees may choose to allow an out-of-range score to populate an EFL in LACES. The request must be emailed to the AEI Data Coordinator. If choosing to re-test the learner after an out-of-range score occurs, the out-of-range test will remain in LACES for record keeping displayed as "Level Not Defined". The EFL for NRS reporting purposes will be the new assessment with a valid score.

Any tests administered with accommodations approved through documentation must be noted in LACES. This may be done by either uploading the testing accommodations documentation into the learner's documents in LACES, using the document type called "Accommodations Request Documentation". Grantees can also choose to add a comment in the learner record describing the accommodations that were approved and provided using the comment type called "Testing Accommodations Comment."

Attendance Data

Only attendance hours aligned with the State Standards (see Tools and Resources for Assessment Informed Instruction section for more) may be counted towards post-test eligibility. These are reported as "Instruction" hours under a class record in LACES, at a minimum, on a weekly basis at the daily level for each class a learner is enrolled in. Classes approved for learner mastery model are excluded of this requirement (see the Distance Learning Policy for more). All hours not aligned to state standards do not contribute to post-test eligibility but may be reported in LACES as "Workshop" hours.

The AEI Data Coordinator monitors data entry and quality on a monthly basis. AEI also ensures grantees are in compliance with the assessment policy through Assessment Assurances reviews and onsite monitoring.

Tools and Resources for Assessment Informed Instruction

Grantees are encouraged to make use of available tools and resources by test publishers and Colorado state standards to align instruction to the skills learners need to succeed in and out of their Adult Education programs. Colorado has adopted state standards for ABE/ASE and ESL learners across the state; for ABE/ASE learners the College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) and for ESL learners the English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS). Both the CCRS and ELPS provide an overview of the knowledge, skills, and abilities expected of learners through each stage of adult education.

The NRS Educational Functioning Levels descriptors available on the NRS Technical Assistance Guide (Appendix B) were created using CCR Standards as a foundation. These level descriptors outline critical concepts and skills, intended to guide both teaching and assessment for adult learners. Although the level descriptors are not comprehensive, they can be used to inform informal formative assessment in the classroom.

TABE and CASAS publishers provide publicly available Blueprints for each level assessment highlighting content areas, frequency, and alignment of test structures with Adult Education standards. These Blueprints provide a scope of the CCRS and ELPS skills needed to advance skills and EFLs. Additionally, all assessment publishers provide individualized learner profiles on assessment performance, via reports through their respective data systems (i.e., DRC Insight, TopsPro Enterprise, and BEST Plus Score Management Software). In conjunction with CCRS and ELPS, the Blueprints and performance reports can be used to develop targeted individualized instruction leading to a personalized learning experience and efficient skills acquisition.

Note: BEST Plus 2.0 does not publish a public Blueprint, however the Scoring Rubric and Test Administrator Guide provide an overview of content areas of the assessment and related skills (similar to a Blueprint).

Contact Us

Please contact AEI staff with questions at AEI@cde.state.co.us.