ACCS Adult Education

Assessment Policy Guidelines

PY 2026-2027



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ACCS | Adult Education

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Discrimination Policy Guidelines

The Alabama Community College System Adult Education Division does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, color, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, political affiliation, or against otherwise qualified persons with disabilities. The policy permits appropriate employment preferences for veterans and specifically prohibits discrimination against veterans.

Introduction

This document provides the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) Adult Education Division (State) guidelines for developing and implementing a comprehensive state and local assessment policy for Alabama's Adult Education Program which includes:

- Adult Basic Education (ABE)
- English as a Second Language (ESL)
- Adult Secondary Education/GED Programs (ASE/GED)
- Workforce and Family Literacy Programs

The State accountability system works in accordance with the National Reporting System (NRS) for adult education guidelines. The NRS is the accountability system for federally funded adult education programs.

The policy guidelines identify key assessment policies that are aligned with NRS levels for documenting achievement and support:

- Selection and use of appropriate assessment instruments.
- Appropriate test administration, scoring, and reporting of test scores.
- Appropriate use of tests results to inform instruction and improve programs.
- Setting performance standards.
- Reporting valid and reliable assessment results and related information for accountability.
- Staff training and test security requirements for staff that administer the standardized assessments and use the database management system.

A. Need for Assessment Policy

Adherence to State assessment policies and guidelines ensures the selection and use of appropriate learner assessment and procedures for:

- Consistent testing and security protocols to ensure comparability and quality data.
- Accurate learner placement into appropriate programs and instructional levels. Diagnostic information to form instruction.
- Pre- and post-testing to monitor progress toward goals.
- Certification of NRS levels of achievement and program completion.

The ACCS Adult Education Division prescribes that adult education agencies use the following assessments with proven validity and reliability that correlate to the NRS.

- CASAS - Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System
- TABE – Test of Adult Basic Education
- TABE CLAS-E
- BEST (Basic English Skills Test) Literacy 2.0, Plus 3.0
- ACT WorkKeys™

Validity

Validity refers to the appropriateness, meaningfulness, and usefulness of the specific inferences made from test scores. It is a measure of the extent to which test items measure what they are intended to measure. All assessment instruments have undergone rigorous test development and validation procedures.

Reliability

Reliability indicates the degree to which a test yields consistent results. Statistical techniques determine reliability and help ensure that there would not be a radically different score if the student were to attempt the test a second time with no additional learning. The TABE, CASAS, BEST, and ACT WorkKeys™ technical manuals provide data on the reliability of their respective item banks and specific test series.

Uniform Implementation and Comparability Evaluation

Uniform implementation and comparability evaluation are key to continual program improvement. Indicators of performance are outcomes that reflect the impact of instruction on client achievement. Numeric measures are the data used to determine the quantitative level of the impact of instruction on client achievement. Performance standards define the acceptable program performance in terms of a specific measurement of variable. These NRS performance measures and Alabama's adult education goals were negotiated with the U.S. Secretary of Education. Programs shall be evaluated as whole entities so that not only are participant outcomes evaluated, but also the processes through which these outcomes are achieved.

In awarding grants, Alabama will consider the past effectiveness of the eligible provider receiving funds under the subtitle in improving the literacy skills of adults and families, and in meeting or exceeding such performance measures.

State Policy

Agencies/organizations allocated adult education funds shall submit to the ACCS Adult Education regional director a strategic plan that includes the use of the assessment in enrollment, attendance, and retention objectives. The objectives must be quantifiable, measurable, and reflect the need for each individual to attend on a sustained, consistent basis in order to achieve one or more of the core indicators of performance as identified by NRS during each program year, July 1-June 30, or period of participation.

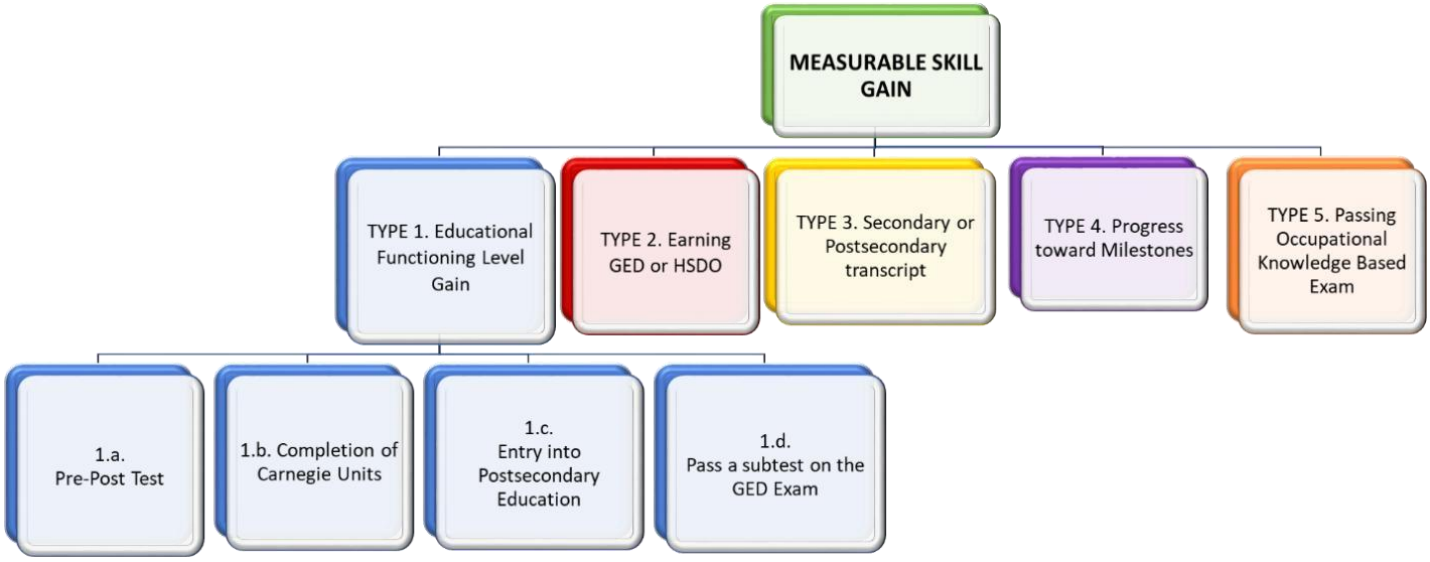
Agencies/organizations allocated adult education funds shall be held accountable for the execution of adult education services. These activities shape the program's mission, guide program efforts and decisions, lend the program integrity, and allow for continual program improvement.

B. Purpose and Use of Assessments

The administration of standardized tests provides results that are the basis for State and Federal accountability reporting. Standardized assessments are used in the Alabama Adult Education Program to ensure accuracy in learner placement, in diagnosis of learner strengths and weaknesses, to inform instruction, in monitoring progress, in certifying learner mastery, and to identify whether or not a measurable skill gain has occurred.

Measurable skill gain (MSG) is a key indicator in the NRS and provides a measure of a participant's interim progress towards a credential or employment. There are five types of MSGs:

1. **MSG Type 1 - Educational Functioning Level (EFL) Gains**
   - *EFL Type 1a.* Pre-/post-testing - Comparing a participant's pretest with the participant's posttest, using an NRS-approved test
   - *EFL Type 1b.* Awarding Carnegie Units or credits in an adult high school program/high school diploma options program (enough to move to 11th- or 12th-grade status according to state rule)
   - *EFL Type 1c.* Enrollment in postsecondary education and training while enrolled in adult education
   - *EFL Type 1d.* Passing a subtest on a state-recognized high school equivalency examination
2. **MSG Type 2 - Attainment of secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent**
3. **MSG Type 3 - Report card or transcript showing satisfactory progress**
4. **MSG Type 4 - Training milestone through a satisfactory or better progress report**
5. **MSG Type 5 - Skills progression through successful passage of an exam**



Note: For adult education (WIOA Title II) participants, secondary or postsecondary transcripts, progress toward milestones, and passing technical/occupational knowledge-based exams can be used to document MSG only for participants in IET or workplace literacy programs.

To demonstrate whether learning has taken place, every effort should be made to progress/post-test participants at least once during the program year. **Alabama's targeted test rate for PY 2026-2027 is one hundred (100%) percent of all participants.**

Instruction-based, non-standardized or in-formal assessments may be used to supplement standardized assessments but will not be used for NRS reporting purposes. These assessments help determine mastery of skills. The use of teacher-made tests, end of unit tests, portfolios, applied performance assessment, and teacher observations are encouraged to monitor learning and to inform instruction on a regular, ongoing basis.

The assessment of students should be in the area(s) in which instruction for completion has been focused. Pre-testing is used for initial placement in an Educational Functioning Level (EFL). Assessment scores are used for measuring gain and advancing students across EFLs.

All who receive services from adult education and literacy programs are considered **reportable individuals.** Individuals who have 12 or more contact hours within a program year (July 1-June 30) and a qualifying pre-test are considered **participants** by the NRS. In Alabama, all individuals enrolled in adult education are considered students.

The ACCS reports on the following exit outcome indicators for all participants:

- **Entered Employment:** This measure is reported for learners who are unemployed and in the labor force when they enter the program and who exit during the program year. Employment performance indicators are tracked in the second and fourth quarters after exit.

- **Median Earnings:** This measure is reported for participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit.

- **Credential Attainment:** This measure is reported for learners who were enrolled in postsecondary education or training while enrolled or within one year of exit. This includes an integrated education and training (IET) program.

- **Attained a secondary credential and enrolled in postsecondary education or training or employed within one year of exit**: This measure is reported for learners who are at the ninth grade or higher level at entry or during enrollment or passed all GED® tests while enrolled or within one year of exit.

The assumed goal of all students served is completion and advancement of one or more functioning levels.

State Policy: Programs have until the 15th day of the month, following the month being reported, to enter data into Alabama's adult education data management system.

State Policy: All pre-test and progress/post-test scores need to be dated on the exact date the test was administered.

C. Duration and Intensity

Implementation of a comprehensive assessment policy enables informed and effective instruction and ensures reliable and comparable performance reporting. Alabama adult education and literacy classes shall be of such duration and intensity so that learners are afforded the opportunity to achieve one or

more of the core indicators of performance as identified in the NRS. At least six hours of classroom instruction must be made available per week, allowing for sufficient instructional times to meet the assessment policy.

General Assessment Requirements

A. Students to be Assessed

All adult education and literacy programs receiving adult education Federal and State funds from the Alabama Community College System Adult Education Division (State) must report data for all students using the Alabama Adult Education data management system.

B. Assessments Permitted

- **ABE/ASE - Pursuing High School Equivalency or Academic Achievement:** TABE*
- **ABE/ASE - Pursuing Career Interest Only:** TABE*, ACT WorkKeys™ Applied Math (Math only, all ABE levels), ACT WorkKeys™ Workplace Documents (Literacy/English Language Arts at ABE levels 2 through 6)
- **ESL:** BEST Literacy 2.0**,** BEST Plus 3.0, CASAS Reading STEPS, CASAS Listening STEPS, TABE CLAS-E

The State's approved assessments meet the NRS requirements for:

- Suitability for measuring literacy and language development of adult students.
- Having standardized administration and scoring procedures.
- Having alternate, equivalent forms for pre- and progress testing.
- Having evidence linking them to NRS Educational Functioning Level.

Assessments should match the appropriate skill areas that are the focus of instruction for the student. Pre-testing shall be completed at intake/orientation or as soon as possible thereafter. The ACCS Adult Education Division discourages random and frequent testing as it will not present valid gain scores and could create a practice effect. Instructional intervention between testing periods is necessary to maximize academic gain.

State Policy: If a test has a locator or other placement instrument, it must be used to inform the pretest to be administered.

An exception may be applied to this State policy with State approval when the program selects a specific level of an assessment instrument to administer for college and work-related purposes, i.e., a specific business, college, or career pathway, Alabama work preparation programs, or through collaboration with the local One-Stop Career Centers.

State Policy: All instructors must follow the test publisher's recommended timeframe for pre- and progress/post- testing as stated in this document.

The initial assessment of the student may be in all three learning areas, or any one of the three focus areas - reading, language, or math. The assessment should be the area(s) most relevant to the students' needs. It is strongly recommended that all three TABE subskill test scores be entered into

Alabama's adult education data management system upon initial enrollment, unless the student's goals and needs create an exception (i.e., student lacks one subject area of the GED® test.) Multiple initial assessments will increase the opportunity for the student to obtain a Measurable Skill Gain (MSG) in the best aligned with their course of study. An MSG may be obtained by advancing in any subject matter area. One MSG is counted per period of participation (POP) per program year.

State Policy: A participant must be assigned to a primary designation of either ABE/ASE, or ESL.

An individual may be assessed with either an ABE or an ESL instrument. If the individual is assessed in multiple subject areas, the lowest functioning level will be the default for the EFL placement. If the individual's goals conflict with the default subject area, instructional intervention and progress testing should meet the needs and goals of the individual. If a student is initially assessed at ESL Advanced, an ABE assessment may be administered to help determine the appropriate designation for the student and guide instruction.

To demonstrate whether learning has taken place, every effort to administer a progress assessment should be made at least once during the program year. Pre and progress/post-tests are tracked for each subject within an ABE/ASE or ESL designation. The Alabama Adult Education data management system has validations to ensure that testing is not occurring prior to the publisher's recommended number of instructional hours. To determine skill gain, the participant must be assessed on a different form of the same subject area initially assessed. No matter the length of time between testing, the Alabama Adult Education data management system will always require an alternate test form for instruments with alternate forms.

State Policy: The validity of a test spans a full program year or 270 calendar days crossing program years. If a student "stopped out" and returns within 270 calendar days in the new program year, the last test recorded may be used. After a 270-day period of non-attendance, a new pre-test should be administered.

Local eligible providers shall use the following entry and progress levels for ABE/ASE, Institutionalized/ Corrections Education, Family Literacy, and Workplace Education:

Educational Functioning Levels
Adult Basic Education (ABE) & Adult Secondary Education (ASE)

Initial EFL (NRS Educational Functioning Level)	TABE (13 & 14)		ACT WorkKeys™ (Applied Math & Workplace Documents)	
Beginning ABE Literacy	Reading Math Language	300-441 300-448 300-457	Reading Math	N/A 71-73
Beginning Basic Education	Reading Math Language	442-500 449-495 458-510	Reading Math	73-74 74-78
Low Intermediate	Reading Math Language	501-535 496-536 511-546	Reading Math	75-77 79-82
High Intermediate	Reading Math Language	536-575 537-595 547-583	Reading Math	78-80 83-85
Adult Secondary (Low)	Reading Math Language	576-616 596-656 584-630	Reading Math	81-82 86-87
Adult Secondary (High)	Reading Math Language	617-800 657-800 631-800	Reading Math	83-90 88-90
Alternative ABE Placement by MSG Type 2,3,4, or 5				

English as a Second Language (ESL)

Initial EFL (NRS Educational Functioning Level)	BEST Plus 3.0 Scale Scores Computer Based or Printed	BEST Literacy 2.0 Scale Scores - Composite	CASAS STEPS Scale Scores	TABE CLAS-E Scale Scores Reading & Writing Listening & Speaking
Beginning ESL Literacy 0-1	Computer 600-677 Printed 600-677	100-182	Reading 0-183 Listening 0-181	Reading 200-354 Listening 200-348 Writing 210-384 Speaking170-338
Low Beginning ESL 2	Computer 678-702 Printed 678-702	183-209	Reading 184-196 Listening 182-191	Reading 355-388 Listening 349-389 Writing 385-414 Speaking 339-402
High Beginning ESL 3	Computer 703-726 Printed 703-726	210-244	Reading 197-206 Listening 192-201	Reading 389-427 Listening 390-427 Writing 415-437 Speaking 403-436
Low Intermediate ESL 4	Computer 727-752 Printed 727-752	245-300	Reading 207-216 Listening 202-211	Reading 428-448 Listening 428-457 Writing 438-461 Speaking 437-475
High Intermediate ESL 5	Computer 753-785 Printed 753+	N/A	Reading 217-227 Listening 212-221	Reading 449-487 Listening 458-488 Writing 462-500 Speaking 476-542
Advanced ESL 6	Computer 786-849 Printed 753+	N/A	Reading 228-238 Listening 222-231	Reading 488-580 Listening 489-620 Writing 501-670 Speaking 543-670
Alternative ESL Placement by MSG Type 2,3,4, or 5				

C. Publisher-Recommended Timeframes for Pre- and Progress-Testing Using Adult Education Assessments

Test Name	Recommended Pre- and Progress testing Timeframes
BEST Literacy 2.0 & BEST Plus 3.0	40 hours minimum
CASAS	40 hours minimum; 70-100 hours recommended
TABE	Recommended 50-60 hours of instruction when testing with an alternate form (i.e., 11 M to 12 M) for students that test into NRS levels 1-4 (ABE) with a minimum of 40 hours. For students testing into NRS Levels 5 and 6 (ASE Low and High), 30-59 hours of instruction is recommended.
TABE CLAS-E	For alternate form testing, DRC recommends a minimum of 40 hours of instruction for students that test into NRS levels 1-6 (ESL).
ACT WorkKeys™	For subsequent administration of a test in the same skill area, it is strongly recommended that an examinee receive intervention/training before retesting. The examinee may take all available forms without a waiting period. After the examinee has taken all available forms, the examinee MUST wait 30 days before testing again. After the 30-day waiting period, the examinee may register and retest.

D. Assessment Contact Details

Exam	Contact Info
BEST Literacy 2.0 & BEST Plus 3.0	Center for Applied Linguistics 4646 40th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20016-1859 (202) 362-0700, www.cal.org
CASAS	CASAS 5151 Murphy Canyon Rd., Suite 220, San Diego, CA 92123-4339 (800) 255-1036, www.casas.org
TABE **and** TABE CLAS-E	Data Recognition Corp. 13490 Bass Lake Rd., Maple Grove, MN 55311, (800) 826-2368, www.tabetest.com Mike Johnson | National Adult Education Director mjohnson@datarecognitioncorp.com, (630) 995-6712
ACT WorkKeys™	ACT WorkKeys™ Customer Support, www.act.org (800) 967-5539, workkeys@act.org

E. Targeted Instructional Progress (TIP) Testing

TIP testing should be used infrequently and is allowable only for adult learners enrolled in classes or courses who would otherwise be unable to progress test before the end of the instructional hour guidelines established by the test publisher. Programs requesting TIP testing must record the date of the request and complete the required documentation on the Tip Testing request form. Documentation may be completed only after the student is enrolled in or has received enrollment confirmation with an official start date for one of the qualifying conditions described below.

A TIP testing request may be submitted when a student is nearing completion of a workplace readiness program, defined as a course designed to build the core academic, soft, and foundational occupational skills needed to secure, retain, and advance in employment. A request may also be submitted when a student is enrolled in a targeted Career Center referral training course, specifically Career Center WIOA Individual Training Account (ITA) training, and has completed or is nearing completion of that course.

TIP testing is also permitted when a student is exiting the adult education program for one of three reasons: exiting the program because of employment, meaning the student is currently employed or has received a job offer with an official start date; exiting because of the attainment of a high school equivalency (HSE), meaning the student has earned an HSE or has earned a high school diploma through the High School Diploma Option (HSDO); exiting to transition into postsecondary education or a workforce training program, meaning the student is enrolled in, or has received acceptance with an official start date for such a program.

Programs are responsible for verifying and maintaining documentation of the qualifying condition in the student's file. TIP testing requests that do not meet one of the conditions outlined in this policy will not be approved.

F. Provisional and Alternative EFL Placement Options

- **Provisional Placement** - If an asynchronous student is not able to be assessed within the first 12 hours of attendance, then the student will be placed provisionally in an Educational Functioning Level (EFL).

  Students will be identified in the Alabama Adult Education data management system in a report labeled “Students Without an Entering Educational Functioning Level (EFL)”. This provisional placement is based on the State’s Provisional Assessment Guidelines. (A provisional EFL is assigned based on last grade completed.) Additional resources are in the Help/Resource section, refer to “WIOA Reports-Part 2”, slide 8. Once programs can test with an approved NRS assessment, the participant will be assigned to an initial EFL.

- **New Alternative Placement Options**: Alternative placement options allow flexibility for programs designed to result in MSG types other than EFL gains based on pre- and posttesting using an NRS approved assessment. The alternative placement option is available for the following participant and MSG types:

  - **See for Free Participants (MSG Type 2)** - New participants participating in the “See for Free” option may be alternatively placed into an adult education program with a **LIKELY TO PASS score** on the GED® Ready Test.

- **IET Participants (MSG Type 3)** – Participants enrolled in a postsecondary institution as part of an IET that earns a *Type 3 MSG*, requiring a postsecondary transcript or report card, may be alternatively placed into an adult education program with ***proof of enrollment into a college level, credit bearing course that is required for the IET***.

- **Workplace Learning Participants (MSG Type 4)** – Participants enrolled in an IET through an employer partnership that will earn an *MSG Type 4* may be alternatively placed into an adult education program by **an assessment method approved and/or provided by the employer partner.** Examples include skills or academic assessments administered through the human resources office of the employer, visual performance reviews of employees, assessments designed by the Adult Education program to address specific needs of the employer, a digital literacy exam, TABE Locator, WorkKeys, etc.

- **IET Participants (MSG Type 5)** – Participants enrolled in an IET and taking a skills or knowledge-based exam for the purpose of earning an *MSG Type 5* may be alternatively placed into an adult education program by providing a:
  - ✦ TABE Locator test score that indicates placement within Level M or higher in Reading or Math, or
  - ✦ WorkKeys practice test score of Level 3 or higher.

Participants with an alternative placement are removed from the post-test denominator when calculating the State's post-test rate.

Local programs may implement virtual test proctoring in accordance with the test publisher's procedures.

G. Dissemination, Training, and Monitoring of Assessment Policy

The Alabama Assessment Policy Guidelines will be disseminated to all funded providers of adult education services. Local staff will be trained annually by ACCS. Each local director will use the posted Assessment Policy information located on the website to provide local staff training. The purpose of the training will be to ensure that all administrators and instructional staff are knowledgeable with the current approved Assessment Policy Guidelines. Accurate and timely data reporting will serve as a catalyst for continuous program improvement.

State Policy: An annual review and dissemination of the current Assessment Policy to all sub-recipients will be completed between July 1 and September 30, the first quarter of the program year. Any new hires within the program year will be trained within 14 days of hire date.

Assessment Policy Training

Assessment Policy training should include:

- Training agenda, attendance log, certificate of completion – maintained unless requested by the State.
- Test security protocols for each assessment administered.
- Accessibility resources.
- Distance education practices associated with the assessment.
- Ways to conduct data validity reviews.

- Ongoing technical assistance to ensure that the assessment policy is being reviewed and leading to program improvement.

State Staff provide Assessment Policy training at the annual Alabama Adult Education Conference and other regional meetings. These meetings will include seminars and workshops on assessment policies and procedures, accommodations for assessing students with disabilities, NRS policy, data collection procedures, definitions of measures, and specific training for conducting assessments used in the program.

BEST Literacy 2.0 and BEST Plus 3.0 Assessment Training

The State provides opportunities throughout the year for instructors to become certified in the administration of the BEST Plus 3.0 assessment. A State BEST Plus trainer, certified by the Center for Applied Linguistics, will conduct the training for the test administration and the refresher course. The training sessions are scheduled annually plus on an as-needed basis for new personnel. Records of trained personnel are maintained by the State, the State trainer and by the Center for Applied Linguistics.

TABE Assessment Training

Test administrators using TABE materials are required to use the training video, "Introduction to TABE" and the accompanying workbook, prior to administering the test. (Watch the Remote Proctoring with TABE Training Webinar on the Brainshark Website.) The training includes information on how to use the system, examples of test items and score reports.

Training records must be maintained by the local program director with copies provided to the State as requested.

CASAS Assessment Training

Test administrators will learn to administer CASAS tests and interpret results from completing online modules, on the CASAS Website. CASAS requires agencies to complete an online training module before ordering and administering all tests. Training records are maintained by the local program director with copies provided to the State as requested.

WorkKeys Training

Each test coordinator should read, understand, and reference the *ACT WorkKeys Administration Manual* online for an overview of the ACT exam. Then, attend an ACT WorkKeys™ training webinar on the ACT WorkKeys website. These are free, on-demand webinars with a user ID and password provided. The webinar will provide foundational procedures for online testing**.**

Local program directors will follow Assessment Policy compliance by:

1. Conducting Assessment Policy training, with each instructor throughout the year as needed.
2. Providing each instructor with a copy of the current Assessment Policy.
3. Maintaining copies of completed training.

Quarterly point-in-time snapshots of individual program data are reviewed for monitoring purposes. This procedure will ensure that the State can maintain compliance with Federal guidelines for assessment

policies. Program coordinators, data specialists, and authorized personnel (instructors, etc.) can run real-time reports in the State system to:

1. Review data accuracy and comprehensiveness.
2. Benchmark attainment by instructor, class, and instructional program to determine where they currently are for enrollment and performance.
3. Compare enrollment and performance to other classes and program providers and compare their own performance to prior time periods.

H. Quality Control Procedures

To ensure the reliability and validity of testing results, sub-recipients must provide test takers with:

- An appropriately sized room to properly accommodate the number of test takers
- A room location with reduced noise and distractions
- Proper room lighting
- Comfortable room temperature
- Visible clock or timing device
- Appropriately sized tables and chairs
- Access to a restroom

When submitting a student update form for data entry of assessment information, the number of contact hours since the last test are required on the form as well as the signature of the instructor that certifies adherence to the Assessment Policy for validity and reliability of standardized assessment data. All records must be maintained in a central location and are subject to audit by the regional coordinator and other monitoring/evaluation team members.

Program officials have until the 15th day of the month following the month being reported to enter data into Alabama's adult education data management system. All sub-recipients must follow the State procurement policies when purchasing assessment materials.

I. Accommodations for Students

Students with diagnosed and documented disabilities from a licensed professional will be granted reasonable accommodations upon request during pre- and progress/post-testing. The publishers' manuals of the NRS-approved assessment tests are consulted to determine proper accommodation procedures for special populations for the administration of individual tests.

It is the responsibility of the local program to accommodate the individual needs of special populations. Accommodations are made to allow the test taker with a disability to demonstrate his or her skills and abilities more accurately than if no modifications were made. In all cases, the accommodation must meet the needs of examinees without changing what the test is intended to measure.

Regional and statewide professional development meetings are held with program staff for the purpose of sharing current information about learning disability issues. This information is disseminated to all local programs to ensure that students are informed about availability of accommodations as part of their enrollment/orientation process. Adult learners with disabilities are responsible for requesting accommodation and for submitting documentation of their disability at the time of registration, program entry, or after professional diagnosis while enrolled.

Documentation of the need for specific testing accommodations must be maintained in the learner's files as confidential information. The documentation must show that the disability interferes with the student's ability to demonstrate performance on the test. The information can come from a doctor's report, a diagnostic assessment from a certified professional, documentation from a vocational rehabilitation agency, or student's secondary school record. Appropriate accommodation must meet the needs of the learner without changing what a test is intended to measure.

CASAS: Local agencies are responsible for providing fully accessible services and reasonable accommodation for learners with documented disabilities. Accommodations may alter the conditions for administering a test such as changes in timing, setting, or responding, or they may change the format of the test, such as the use of a Braille version or text enlarger. Identified students may be allowed to take only one test per day or to test in an alternate quiet room. Learners may also use a variety of strategies when they take a test, such as a plain, straightedge ruler, magnifying strips or glass, colored overlays, ear plugs, or other devices as deemed appropriate. Other accommodations may include extended time, alternate schedule, frequent supervised breaks, scribe/writer, computer with spelling and grammar check disabled, simple calculator, sign language interpreter for test directions only, headphones for those taking a listening test, magnifier/template, text-to-speech software video magnifiers, limited testing per day, and one-on-one administration of the assessment. Any testing accommodation should be consistent with documentation in the student learning plan.

TABE: Paper and pencil tests are available for some students who have difficulty taking computer-based tests. Accommodations such as allowing extra time to complete the test or letting students mark answers in test booklets rather than on separate answer sheets may also be considered for students with special needs. The approved accommodation must minimize any advantage or disadvantage of completing the test. If the accommodation under consideration is not used in instruction, then it should not be used in the testing situation. For TABE testing, large print, Braille, and audio versions are available. For the Braille version, the answers must be transferred to standard CompuScan or Scoreze answer sheets, depending on the preferred scoring method. Accommodations suggestions for TABE are available in the Test Administrator Manual.

BEST Plus 3.0 and BEST Literacy 2.0: In the computer adaptive version, computer software selects test items appropriate to the examiner's ability after the locator items have been administered. In the print-based version, a quick locator determines the appropriate level of the test form for the examiner.

Use of a straight edge or colored overlays, removal from fluorescent lights, use of graph paper, or taking individual tests on different days are interventions that do not require disability accommodations.

ACT WorkKeys™: For examinees requiring accommodation and/or supports, the ACT WorkKeys™ NCRC Assessment Examinee Affidavit of Qualification for Requestable Allowable Accommodations must be completed by the test coordinator and examinee. This form should be kept as part of the local provider's records for one year and then should be securely destroyed. If any of the following are authorized for accommodations, examinees are expected to supply their own, which could include alternative communication device (AAC), headphones (if site

cannot provide) and/or ACT-authorized word-to-word bilingual dictionary. All examinees in the room must have the same authorized timing. Examinees testing with accommodations may not test in a standard time room. If they do, tests from that room will not be scored or scores will be canceled.

J. Distance Education Policy

Distance learners in the Alabama Adult Education Program are students who are separated from the instructor by geography or time (or both) for the majority of the instructional period.

State Policy: A participant is classified as a distance learner if the majority (51% or higher) of the hours earned in a program year are derived by his or her participation in distance learning activities. However, a participant's hours in both distance and classroom activities must be reported in the Alabama Adult Education management system.

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 via mail, telephone, email, online technologies, and/or software.

During a program year, if a student is dually enrolled in a traditional classroom and distance education, for Federal reporting, the student can only be counted once. Students in distance education must have at least 12 hours of contact with the program before they can be counted as enrolled for Federal reporting purposes. These 12 hours can be a combination of actual contact (in-person classroom, oneon-one, small group instruction, etc.) and contact through telephone, video, tele-conference or online communication, as long as these communications have an instructional focus. These 12 hours must be verifiable. Local programs must ensure they have proper documentation of these 12 hours on file and must enter them into Alabama's Adult Education data management system.

State Policy: All individuals who are eligible for adult education services, including distance education participants, must be assessed in accordance with the Alabama Assessment Policy Guidelines.

- All pre-and post-assessments must be administered in a proctored setting, which can be face-toface or remote.
- All eligible individuals should be pre-tested prior to 12 hours of instruction. If a pre-test cannot be administered, a provisional EFL may be assigned based on informal assessment methods until an NRS-approved test can be administered. All test takers impacted will be tracked in a report.
- Distance education participants are subject to the same post-test instructional hour intervals as traditional learners.

The NRS guidelines state that proxy contact hours must be developed using one of three specified models: clock time, instructor verification, or learner mastery. As these models are appropriate for different types of curricula, the State has chosen to use more than one proxy hour model. Local programs are required to follow the proxy hour models.

Proxy Hours are defined as the time distance education participants spend engaged in distance education activities, such as using distance education curricula. The hours for each activity are calculated using one of three models:

1. **Clock-time:** This model assigns contact hours based on the elapsed time that a learner is connected to and engaged in an online or stand-alone software program that tracks time. The software must provide a mechanism to time-out or logout participants after a preset period of inactivity.

2. **Instructor Verification**: This model assigns a fixed number of hours of credit for each assignment based on the instructor's determination of the extent to which a learner engaged in or completed the assignment. Contact hours for the instructor verification model are determined and established through a study conducted by the local program according to the following plan:
   a. Distance learning materials/resources are chosen.
   b. A sample of classes track how long they spend teaching the content, on a unit-by-unit basis.
   c. Average times for each unit are calculated from sample classrooms and that time is assigned for proxy contact hours for that unit.
   d. Local training is conducted for approved educational materials added.

3. **Learner Mastery:** This model assigns a fixed number of hours of credit based on the participant's demonstrated mastery of the content of a lesson. This model requires previous engagement by the participant on curriculum and materials related to the test. A high percentage of correct responses on the mastery test earn the credit hours attached to the material.

APPENDIX | Guidelines for Each Assessment

Administration procedures for each assessment that Alabama Adult Education endorses must be followed to maintain the reliability and validity of each test.

A. Basic English Skills Test (BEST) Literacy 2.0

Applicable Program	ESL	
Subject	Reading and Writing	
Administration Procedure	Individual or group	
Expiration Date	July 2030	
Scoring Procedures	Reviewers rate responses using rubrics on a specific part of the assessment. A raw score is generated and converted to a scale score.	
Scores Linked to NRS levels	**NRS Level** ESL Beginning Literacy ESL Low Beginning ESL High Beginning ESL Intermediate Low ESL Intermediate High ESL Advanced	**Composite** 100-182 183-209 210-244 245-300 N/A N/A
Post-Test Time	40 hours minimum	
Training Requirements	Training will be held under the supervision of a CAL-qualified assessor. Training sessions will be held annually at the Alabama Adult Education Conference and on an as needed basis during the year.	
Forms Available	1,2, and 3	
Locator Required	No	

B. Basic English Skills Test (BEST) Plus 3.0

Applicable Program	ESL		
Subject	Speaking and Listening		
Administration Procedure	Individual		
Expiration Date	July 2030		
Scoring Procedures	Computer assisted and print. Learner responses are identified, rated on a scoring rubric by the reviewer, and entered into the computer.		
Scores Linked to NRS levels	**NRS Level**	**Computer Based**	**Print Based**
	ESL Beginning Literacy	600-677	600-677
	ESL Low Beginning	678-702	678-702
	ESL High Beginning	703-726	703-726
	ESL Intermediate Low	727-752	727-752
	ESL Intermediate High	753-785	753+
	ESL Advanced	786-849*	753+
	*850 and higher would score above ESL advanced.		
Post-test Time	40 hours minimum		
Training Requirements	Training will be held under the supervision of a CAL-qualified assessor. Training sessions will be held annually at the Alabama Adult Education Conference and on an as needed basis during the year.		
Forms Available	Computer Assisted: Adaptive questions respond to the learner's ability. Print: 1 & 2		
Locator Required	Yes, for print only.		

C. Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) Listening and Reading STEPS

Applicable Program	ESL		
Subject	Listening and Reading		
Administration Procedure	Individual or group		
Expiration Date	July 2030		
Scoring Procedures	Printed answer keys and scoring charts are available for administrators. Scoring software is also available. Raw scores of correct responses are converted into scale scores.		
Scores Linked to NRS levels	**NRS Level** ESL Beginning Literacy ESL Low Beginning ESL High Beginning ESL Intermediate Low ESL Intermediate High ESL Advanced	**Listening** 0-181 182-191 192-201 202-211 212-221 222-231	**Reading** 0-183 184-196 197-206 207-216 217-227 228-238
Post-test Time	Minimum 40 hours recommended		
Training Requirements	All qualified assessors for CASAS STEPS series must complete the training workshop provided by CASAS.		
Forms Available	Listening Forms 621L-630L; Reading Forms 621R-630R		
Locator Required	Yes		

D. Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE CLAS-E)

Applicable Program	ESL				
Subject	Listening/Speaking and Reading/Writing				
Administration Procedure	Individual				
Expiration Date	June 2027				
Scoring Procedures	Raw scores are determined by counting the number correct. The number correct is converted into a scale score for reporting.				
Scores Linked to NRS levels	**NRS Level**	Reading	Listening	Writing	Speaking
	ABE Beginning Literacy	200-354	200-348	210-384	170-388
	ABE Beginning Basic	355-388	349-389	385-414	339-402
	ABE Intermediate Low	389-437	390-427	415-437	403-436
	ABE Intermediate High	428-448	428-457	438-461	437-475
	ASE Low	449-487	458-488	462-500	476-542
	ASE High	488-580	489-620	501-670	543-670
Post-test Time	40 hours				
Training Requirements	All test administrators must take “Introduction to TABE” and be familiar with the DRC/CTB training video and accompanying workbook on administering the TABE.				
Forms Available	C & D				
Locator Required	Recommended				

E. Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) Forms 13 & 14 Mathematics, Reading and Language

Applicable Program	ABE; ASE			
Subject	Mathematics, Reading, and Language			
Administration Procedure	Individual			
Expiration Date	June 30, 2027			
Scoring Procedures	Raw scores are determined by counting the number correct. The number correct is converted into a scale score for reporting.			
Scores Linked to NRS levels	**NRS Level** ABE Beginning Literacy ABE Beginning Basic ABE Intermediate Low ABE Intermediate High ASE Low ASE High	**Math** 300-448 449-495 496-536 537-595 596-656 657-800	**Reading** 300-441 442-500 501-535 536-575 576-616 617-800	**Language** 300-457 458-510 511-546 547-583 584-630 631-800
Post-test Time	50-60 hours recommended for learners pre-testing in NRS levels 1-4, with a minimum of 40 hours.; 30-59 hours for learners pre-testing in NRS levels 5 & 6 using the same level, different form.			
Training Requirements	All test administrators must take “Introduction to TABE” and be familiar with the DRC/CTB training video and accompanying workbook on administering the TABE			
Forms Available	13 & 14			
Locator Required	Yes			

F. ACT WorkKeys™ | Applied Math & Workplace Documents

Applicable Program	Students pursuing career interest only		
Subject	Applied Math and Workplace Documents		
Administration Procedure	Individual		
Expiration Date	July 2026		
Scoring Procedures	Raw scores are determined by counting the number correct. The number correct is converted into a scale score for reporting.		
Scores Linked to NRS levels	**NRS Level** ABE Beginning Literacy ABE Beginning Basic ABE Intermediate Low ABE Intermediate High ASE Low ASE High	**Math** 71-73 74-78 79-82 83-85 86-87 88-90	**Workplace Documents** N/A 73-74 75-77 78-80 81-82 83-90
Post-test Time	For subsequent administration of a test in the same skill area, it is strongly recommended that an examinee receive intervention/training before retesting. The examinee may take all available forms without a waiting period. After the examinee has taken all available forms, the examinee MUST wait 30 days before testing again. After the 30-day waiting period, the examinee may register and retest.		
Training Requirements	Each test coordinator should read, understand, and reference the *ACT WorkKeys™ Administration Manual.* Then they should attend a WorkKeys Training webinar on the workkeys@act.org website. These are free, ondemand webinars with a User ID and Password provided. The webinar will provide foundational procedures for online testing**.**		
Forms Available	**Math** 014, 015, 016, 017	**Workplace Documents** 018, 019, 020, 021	

G. Alternative ABE/ESL Placement

Applicable Program	Programs designed to result in MSG types other than EFL gains based on pre- and post-testing using an NRS approved assessment
Subject	
Administration Procedure	Individual
Expiration Date	N/A
Scoring Procedures	None
NRS levels	**MSG Type 2 - GED -** New participants participating in the "See for Free" option may be alternatively placed into an adult education program with a LIKELY TO PASS score on the GED® Ready practice test. **MSG Type 3 - IET -** Participants enrolled in a postsecondary institution as part of an Integrated Education and Training (IET) or a workforce education pathway that earns a Type 3 MSG, requiring a postsecondary transcript or report card, may be alternatively placed into an adult education program with proof of enrollment into a college level, credit bearing course that is required for the IET. **MSG Type 4 – Workplace Learning -** Participants enrolled in an IET through an employer partnership that will earn an MSG Type 4 may be alternative placed into an adult education program by an assessment method approved and/or provided by the employer partner. **MSG Type 5 -** Participants enrolled in an IET and taking a skills or knowledge-based exam by providing a TABE Locator test score that indicates placement within Level M or higher in Reading or Math, or an ACT WorkKeys™ practice test score of Level 3 or higher.
Post-test Time	None – based on completion of program
Training Requirements	Each test coordinator and program director should read, understand, and reference the *MSG Types* listed above. Determination of MSG Type and placement to be determined by the program student is attempting.
Forms Available	The State may use assessments that are content- or performance driven such as locator tests, criterion referenced tests, diagnostic assessments, authentic assessments, or the State may choose to develop and implement innovative crosswalks between program benchmarks and NRS EFL levels.
Locator Required	If available



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