

**NORTH CAROLINA**  
**COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS**  
**ASSESSMENT MANUAL**



*North Carolina Community College System*

*July 2016 - June 2017*

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## I. OVERVIEW OF THE NORTH CAROLINA ASSESSMENT POLICY

### A. Introduction

The North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS) has developed policies and guidelines for the assessment of Basic Skills/literacy students. This document provides North Carolina Basic Skills/literacy programs guidelines for developing and implementing a comprehensive assessment policy.

Due to Title II (Adult Education and Family Literacy Act) of the Workforce Investment Act and the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014 in Title II- Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, all students entering Basic Skills classes must be assessed by a standardized test. Local Basic Skills/literacy providers are required to assess students using standardized pre-post assessments approved by the National Reporting System (NRS) to place students in federal Educational Functioning Levels (EFL's) and report gain measures for the National Reporting System (NRS). Allowable tests include the following: Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS), General Assessment of Instructional Needs (GAIN), Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE), TABE Complete Language Assessment System-English (TABE CLAS-E), Basic English Skills Test (BEST) Literacy, and BEST Plus 2.0. For an exhaustive list of NRS approved test forms please see Appendix C listed at the end of this document. In addition, local programs are encouraged to use a variety of informal assessments to assist instructors/tutors in selecting appropriate teaching methods and materials.

## II. SETTING THE STATE CONTEXT

### A. Need for Assessment Policy

Standardized, ongoing assessment of learners' progress in Basic Skills/literacy is essential to providing instruction that will enable learners to achieve their goals and improve their reading, writing, numeracy, or English Language skills. To ensure accuracy and consistency, the North Carolina Community College System requires that Basic Skills/literacy programs use assessments with proven validity and reliability that correlate to the National Reporting System (NRS). It is essential that all learners in the state are placed in appropriate levels of instruction and that educational gain levels are reported for those learners in a consistent and standardized manner. Uniform testing procedures are also necessary to allow for comparability across programs within the state. Since current state performance funding is tied to program outcomes of educational functioning level gains, it is important that all programs use standardized assessments in the same manner and post-test students at appropriate times.

All NRS approved assessments allowed by the state have undergone tests for validity and reliability. Local programs should examine the test manuals for the assessments they use for information on validity and reliability.

#### 1. Validity

Validity refers to the extent to which the instrument measures what it intended to measure. According to *The Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing*, 1999, validity refers to the appropriateness, meaningfulness, and usefulness of the specific inferences made from test scores.

Construct validity is the issue of proper use and construction of test items. Item content evidence is a measure of the extent to which test items measure what they are intended to measure. Criterion-referenced validity or predictive validity assesses the ability or effectiveness of an instrument in predicting something it should be able to predict, such as a continuum of Basic Skills.)

**2. Reliability**

Reliability refers to the extent to the degree of consistency in performance of an assessment. It is the extent to which an examinee would be expected to perform similarly across multiple administrations of the instrument.

**B. Purposes and Uses of Assessment**

Assessment data may be used to determine eligibility for adult education programs, to place learners at appropriate levels of instruction, to diagnose learner strengths and weaknesses, to monitor progress, and to certify learner mastery at specific levels of instruction.

Programs should use assessments for accountability and instructional purposes. While the tests that may be used for accountability are limited to those that are listed in the National Reporting System (NRS), a variety of tests may be used for instructional purposes. Only tests used for accountability are required to be entered by colleges into LEIS (Literacy Education Information System) or by community-based organizations into LACES (Literacy, Adult and Community Education System).

**1. Use of Standardized Tests for Accountability**

All Basic Skills/literacy students should be pre- and post-tested with a standardized Basic Skills/literacy assessment. Assessment results provide the basis for state and federal accountability reporting. If a student is not given a pre- and post-assessment, the program cannot show student completion of a federal educational functioning level or movement to a higher level. The following assessments are the only ones approved for North Carolina Basic Skills programs:

TEST	ABE	ESL	ASE
CASAS	√	√	√
GAIN, Forms A & B	√		√
TABE, Forms 9 & 10	√		√
TABE CLAS-E		√	
BEST Literacy/BEST Plus 2.0		√	

**2. Use of Informal Assessments**

The North Carolina Community College System Office encourages local Basic Skills/literacy programs to use a variety of informal assessments to assist instructors/tutors in designing appropriate educational programs for adults. The use of instructor/tutor-made tests, unit tests, portfolios, applied performance assessments, and learner observations are encouraged to design and monitor learning opportunities. Additionally, informal assessment serve an important role in determining student readiness for approved NRS assessments. However,

informal assessments **may not be used to determine federal educational functioning levels.**

### ***3. Initial Test/Pre-test***

The initial assessment, or pre-test, is the basis for placing students in federal educational functioning levels. It is the baseline on which programs measure student learning gains. The initial assessment, or pre-test, must be administered within the first twelve hours of class instruction. Students will be placed based on the lowest EFL of the placement tests given. When 2 or more tests have the same EFL then placement is determined by the lowest scale score. In the event that scale scores are identical then default placement is based on subject with the order being (1)Reading, (2)Math, and (3)Language for ABE/ASE and (1)Reading, (2) Listening, and then (3)Speaking for ESL.

### ***4. Progress/Post-test***

NRS approved tests given after the initial placement test, which correspond to the manufacturer and subject area, are considered post-tests. For example, if a student has an initial placement based on a CASAS Reading test then only the administration of a different CASAS Reading test form will count as a post-test. A student may have multiple post-tests; however, identical tests (Form and Level) should not be administered consecutively. For example, if a student takes a TABE M-9 Math pre-test then the next test they take can be TABE Math M10, D9, D10, A9, or A10. North Carolina requires local programs to post-test a minimum of 65% of its students served for twelve hours or more annually. Adult Secondary High students do not need to be post-tested because there are no further gains for them to make.

Educational gain is determined by comparing the student's initial federal educational functioning level with his/her highest EFL achieved in that same subject throughout the program year. For example, gains would be credited for a student who had a pre-test on TABE Math M9, took a M10 Math test, and then later made a gain by retaking the M9 Math test.

## ***C. Summary and Overview***

### ***1. Initial Screening, Appraisal Tests, and Placement into Program***

Students **must be tested a minimum of twice annually** with one of the following Basic Skills/literacy assessments: CASAS, GAIN (Forms A & B), TABE (Forms 9 & 10), TABE CLASE-E, BEST Literacy, and BEST Plus **2.0**. Appraisals and locator tests are short assessments designed to accurately determine the appropriate pre-test level for students. An appraisal or locator test should be used to ensure that appropriate decisions are made regarding the pre-test form to administer, and selection of short- and long-term instructional goals. Students must be placed in an EFL level based on the lowest EFL outcome of the placement tests given.

Students do not need to be assessed in all of the areas described in the level descriptors. The local program must decide, in accordance with state guidelines, the skill areas most relevant to each student's needs or the program's curriculum and assess students in these areas. At a minimum, students must be assessed in reading, writing, listening, **or** math.

Students should be placed in classes with instruction that is aligned with the Content Standards that will facilitate meeting their goals as well as the federal performance outcomes.

If multiple skill areas are assessed and the student has different abilities in different areas, the program should place the student according to the **lowest** educational functioning level based on Educational Functioning Level (EFL), scale score, or subject, in that order. For example, if a student is at the beginning level in reading and the low intermediate level in numeracy, then the student would be placed in the beginning level. The lowest federal EFL should also be used to determine educational gain in subsequent assessments.

The North Carolina Community College System encourages local Basic Skills/literacy programs to select the test series that they use based on a learner's goals and the instructional focus of the program. Pre-tests should be administered prior to enrollment or within the first twelve hours of instruction. Post-tests should be administered according to test manufacturers' recommendations for the amount of instructional hours between pre- and post-tests. Except in the case of low-duration classes (see Chapter III Section K); students may not be post-tested with fewer than the minimum number of hours for each assessment (40 for CASAS; 60 for GAIN; 40 for TABE for NRS Levels 1-4 (ABE), 30 for TABE for NRS levels 5-6 (ASE), 50 for TABE CLAS-E, 60 for BEST Literacy and Best **Plus 2.0**). Different test forms must be used for pre- and post-tests in order to ensure score validity. All programs should post-test a minimum of 65% of their students served for twelve hours or more who are not ASE High.

## **2. Goal-Setting**

Instructional staff should work with students prior to or immediately after entry into the program to set learner goals. **While goals are no longer used to ascertain federal outcome completions, goal setting is a beneficial aspect for the student and instructor to develop a complete instructional plan.**

Programs should have a goal-setting process for students to meet with an instructor or intake specialist to help identify and set goals for instruction. The goal-setting process should help learners set a realistic timeline for attaining goals and a means of determining when goals are met. Since learners often change goals, goals should be re-evaluated on an on-going basis.

Student goals should be specific, measurable, attainable, reasonable, and time-limited. Breaking down a general goal into its component parts helps ensure that it meets the criteria. For example, a general goal of passing a High School Equivalency (HSE) test might not be attainable until a student takes a math class; therefore, passing the HSE would be a long-term goal and improving math would be a short-term goal.

## **D. Resources for Information and Overview**

Individuals requiring information or assistance related to assessment policy or procedures should contact Dr. Kristen Corbell, Director of Performance Accountability-Performance Measures, 919-807-6981, [corbellk@ncccommunitycolleges.edu](mailto:corbellk@ncccommunitycolleges.edu).

Individuals requiring information on training for various assessments or to get a schedule of training for CASAS, BEST-Plus 2.0, GAIN (Forms A & B), TABE (Forms 9 & 10), and TABE CLAS-E should contact Dr. Kristen Corbell, Director of Performance Accountability-Performance Measures, 919-807-6981, [corbellk@ncccommunitycolleges.edu](mailto:corbellk@ncccommunitycolleges.edu).

### **III. GENERAL ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS**

#### **A. Students to be Assessed**

OCTAE and NRS have determined and approved which assessments are appropriate for measuring student skill levels in Basic Skills programs and assessing student progress. All Basic Skills/Literacy students must have valid/in-range score(s) entered into the appropriate data system. All students in programs funded by the North Carolina Community College System must be pre-tested and post-tested on an approved NRS assessment (CASAS, GAIN (Forms A & B), TABE – Forms 9 & 10, TABE CLASE-E, BEST Literacy, or BEST Plus 2.0) based upon test publisher guidelines for sufficient contact hours. Each year North Carolina requires local programs to post-test a minimum of 65% of its adult literacy students that have received instruction for twelve hours or more.

All students reported in the National Reporting System data submission must be tested and have valid/in-range scores entered in the appropriate data system (LEIS, Literacy Education Information System, for community colleges; LACES, Literacy Adult and Community Education System - for community-based organizations). Students with the lowest literacy or English proficiency skills should be assessed with CASAS preliteracy (Forms 27, 28, 310, or 311).

There is one specific instance in which the state of North Carolina allows an in-range score to be assigned to a student. This is when a student takes an NRS approved test and scores out-of-range on the first level given, and is then re-tested with the next appropriate level per test manufacturing policy and again receives an invalid score. For a score to be assigned, the student must correctly answer more questions than the in-range score band includes. In this circumstance, the highest in-range score of the lowest level test taken should be recorded in the data system. This prevents assigning additional points students have not achieved on an NRS approved assessment.

The Table D in the Appendix provides the valid/in-range score bands for each test, component, form, and level.

## B. Assessments Permitted

The following assessments meet the NRS requirements and may be used by local programs for reporting EFL placement and gains. For a list of all assessment forms, please see the appendix at the end of this manual. All of the following are appropriate for measuring literacy and language development of adult learners; have standardized administration and scoring procedures; have alternate, equivalent forms for pre/post-testing, and have evidence linking them to NRS federal educational functioning levels.

TEST	ABE	ESL	ASE
CASAS	√	√	√
GAIN (Forms A & B)	√		√
TABE (Forms 9 & 10)	√		√
TABE CLAS-E		√	
BEST Literacy/BEST Plus 2.0		√	

## C. Subject Areas Assessed

TEST	Reading	Math	Writing	Listening	Other
CASAS	√	√	√	√	Speaking Government & History
GAIN (Forms A & B)	√	√	√		
TABE, Forms 9 & 10	√	√			Language
BEST Literacy/BEST Plus 2.0	√		√	√	Communication Fluency Pronunciation
TABE CLAS-E	√		√	√	Speaking

## E. Pre-Test Requirement

Pre-tests should be administered prior to enrollment or within the first twelve hours of enrollment. In order to accommodate this, once an initial assessment is given, all tests to be counted towards initial assessments must be entered within 3 days of the first assessment's entry date.

Students do not need to be assessed in all of the areas described in the level descriptors. The local program must decide, in accordance with NRS Implementation Guidelines and NC Assessment Policy, the skill areas most relevant to each student's needs or the program's curriculum and assess students accordingly.

## F. Appraisal/Locator

Appraisals and locator tests are short assessments designed to accurately determine the appropriate pre-test level for students. If the NRS approved assessment being used has an appraisal or locator test, then those tests **must** be administered prior to the test battery. Assessment systems, such as TABE and CASAS, have a locator or appraisal component to be used to determine the most appropriate pre-test form for each student. GAIN does not have a locator or appraisal component, as all students at any level can accurately be tested on the same GAIN Form A & B. Locators or appraisals may NOT be used in place of pre-assessments to determine a scale score or grade equivalent for placement on an entry federal functioning level.

A locator or appraisal may be administered on the first day of class because it is not a lengthy assessment. Because the full assessment process may be overwhelming to some students, it is better to avoid giving all components of the test battery on that same day. All test batteries should be completed within the first twelve hours.

## G. Re-Testing for "Stop-Outs"

If a student has "stopped-out" of the program for more than 90 days, then the program must give a new test prior to or within two weeks of re-admittance to the program.

## H. Recommended Post-Testing Requirements

The **recommended** post-testing hours serve as a guide for optimal results according to the test manufacturers. These hours represent the suggested time frame in which level gains are most likely to occur. In order to provide the best chance for success on NRS post-tests, programs should strive to give the approved post-tests after the recommended number of instructional hours suggested by the test manufacturer. Recommended instructional hours for post-testing are listed below.

### Manufacturer's Recommended Post-testing Requirements

Using Different Test Forms		Using the Same Test Form
<b>CASAS</b>	70-100 Hours	
<b>TABE (NRS Lvl. 1-4)</b>	50-60 Hours	120 Hours*
<b>TABE (NRS Lvl. 5-6)</b>	30-59 Hours	120 Hours*
<b>GAIN</b>	60 Hours	
<b>TABE Clas-E</b>	60-95	100-140 Hours*
<b>Best Plus 2.0</b>	80-100 Hours	
<b>Best Literacy</b>	80-100 Hours	

\*Note: Although there are allowances for retesting students with the same test form with more hours in between, programs should use different forms for pre-tests and post-tests for ease of record keeping and tracking.

\*\*It is suggested that programs testing students with intellectual and/or learning disabilities allow 200 hours of instruction between pre- and post-testing.

## I. Minimum Post-Testing Requirements

The **minimum** post-testing requirements serve as the fewest contact hours for which the test manufacturers believe valid post-testing outcomes will occur with their given tests. **Generally, testing should not occur when a student has accrued less**

**than the minimum hours for a given test since the administration of the corresponding pre-test.**

The only exception that allows testing before the minimum number of hours set by the test manufacturers listed in the chart below are for low-duration programs similar to those within community based organizations (See section K).

**Manufacturer’s Minimum Post-testing Requirements**

<b>CASAS</b>	40 Hours
<b>TABE (NRS Lvl. 1-4)</b>	40 Hours
<b>TABE (NRS Lvl. 5-6)</b>	30 Hours
<b>GAIN</b>	60 Hours
<b>TABE Clas-E</b>	50 Hours
<b>Best Plus 2.0</b>	60 Hours
<b>Best Literacy</b>	60 Hours

For TABE, the minimum number of hours for retesting students at the NRS level 5 or 6 (ASE) is 30 hours. For the minimum hours to be set at 30 instead of 40, students must have a **current** placement at the ASE Low or ASE high level.

### **J. General Testing Practices**

The minimum testing requirements (Section I) serve as the manufacturers’ estimated thresholds for when students may start seeing significant competency gains. Programs may post-test students once the minimum post-testing hours have been accumulated since those minimums are part of the manufacturer’s guidelines. However, careful attention should be paid to informal assessment results when evaluating a student’s readiness. Strong educational practices include the utilization of informal assessments to determine the post-test readiness of students. Programs should avoid over testing which may lead to testing fatigue and frustration. Striving to meet the recommended testing guidelines (Section H) while utilizing the minimum testing guidelines (Section I), when applicable, serves to address this concern.

### **K. Testing Exceptions for Low-Duration Classes**

Class intensity refers to the amount of learning and instruction taking place within a class, and is difficult to measure tangibly outside of student progress. Class duration refers to the amount of time that a class meets.

Due to limitations which affect duration such as program resources, tutor schedules, and location restrictions, agencies may classify a class, group, or tutoring pair as low-duration. Low-duration classes are defined as classes which offer hours which limit the ability for students in the class to obtain the manufacturers’ minimum hours during a quarter, semester, term, or other substantial block of instruction. In general, Community Based Organizations (CBO’s) operating with tutoring pairs and small group instruction often meet the definition of low-duration. The instruction provided should still meet the threshold for instructional intensity, but the frequency of tutoring pair sessions or class meeting times may limit the opportunities for post-testing. Rare examples of low-duration classes may take place in Community College programs as well (i.e. Community outreach is taking place in ESL classes at a location that has limited accessibility). Programs should seek to offer classes, groups, and tutoring sessions that

offer the sufficient intensity and duration needed for educational gain, and if those educational gains are not being experienced then care should be taken to enhance the intensity and/or duration of the program offerings.

### **Low-Duration Testing Minimums**

Programs with low-duration classes, groups, or tutoring pairs are provided the option, on a case-by-case basis, to test students with fewer hours than the manufacturer's minimum contact hour requirements for post-testing. This early testing should be done infrequently since it does not follow the manufacturer's suggested guidelines, and is **only allowable** for students in low-duration classes who would otherwise be unable to post-test before the end of the program year; **provided they have shown educational proficiency in the area being tested via some form of informal assessment.**

The testing minimums for low-duration classes are based on a 25% (30% in 2 cases) reduction from the manufacturer's minimum hours, as seen in the chart below. Research into the data show instances of educational level gains (EFL's) being made with fewer hours than those listed, but those outlying circumstances are well outside of the norm. The 25-30% reduction allows for a lower testing minimum for low-duration programs without opening the floodgates for students to test anytime. There are requirements and restrictions for early testing that are covered below.

#### **Low-Duration Minimum Post-testing Requirements**

<b>CASAS</b>	30 Hours
<b>TABE (NRS Lvl. 1-4)</b>	30 Hours
<b>TABE (NRS Lvl. 5-6)</b>	20 Hours
<b>GAIN</b>	45 Hours
<b>TABE Clas-E</b>	35 Hours
<b>Best Plus 2.0</b>	45 Hours
<b>Best Literacy</b>	45 Hours

### **Requirements for Early Testing in Low-Duration Classes**

There are three requirements that must be in place for students in low-duration programs to test early.

- 1. Students must show proficiency on informal assessments before they are allowed to test early. These assessments must be kept in the student's file.**

Testing accountability measures dictate that students can't test anytime they want, and OCTAE is unwilling to accept a student leaving early as a viable reason to posttest them. There needs to be reasonable justification for why they are testing. The best way to have a measurable method for showing student progress comes through informal assessment. Programs wanting to take advantage of the low-duration testing provision must devise a standard process for informally assessing students in the various subjects at the various EFL levels. These informal processes

may be based on the NC ABE content standards, CASAS content standards, post-tests out of the books that the program uses, or any other repeatable process that can be used to accurately and consistently evaluate a student's progress towards the next Educational Functioning Level. Establishing that a student has achieved the competencies required to move into the next EFL is the **only allowable justification** for testing students with fewer hours than the manufacturers' recommendations. Evidence of this attainment must be kept in the student file.

The low-duration provision has been put in place to help show the gains achieved by students; however, it is not in place to test students in the hopes that they may achieve EFL gains for the program when they are not ready to test.

**2. A Justification for Early Testing form, provided by the state office, must be signed by the program director or coordinator and kept in the student's file.**

The use of these forms will be evaluated during monitoring visits.

**3. An annual report will be formulated (by programs and the system office staff) detailing the number of students testing outside of the manufacturer's guidelines.**

It is important to note that this provision has been put in place to assist programs in achieving outcomes when literacy services are offered in restrictive situations. It does not serve an allowable justification to test students who attend infrequently, regardless of the reasons behind the infrequent attendance.

### **Restrictions**

In order to uphold the validity of the local program data, the following restrictions should be followed with regards to early testing.

1. Since almost all Community Based Organization (CBO) agencies are by nature low-duration, the entirety of the low-duration provisions will generally apply to each CBO class, group, or tutoring pair. However, to ensure consistency, and to encourage continual improvement, CBO's should not exceed **30%** of their students testing below the manufacturer's minimum required hours of instruction in a particular program area (ABE, ASE, or ESL). As noted in the Requirements section, an annual report will be generated through LACES to identify the percentage of early testers. These reports will be reviewed annually, and programs will provide with them during monitoring visits.

The 30% threshold will not serve as a hard cap; rather, it will serve as an indicator for the following year that action should be taken. Agencies who exceed **30%** of their program testing early will be need to work with System Office staff to generate a plan of action to increase duration that will consider: intensity of instruction, class size, teacher training and experience, use of appropriate curricula and materials, and online options.

2. Since Community College programs should have a minimal amount of classes that could be considered low-duration, they should not exceed **1%** of their students testing below the manufacturer's minimum required hours of instruction in a particular program area (ABE, ASE, or ESL). Colleges who exceed **1%** will be asked to work with System Office staff to generate a plan of action to increase duration that

will consider the following: intensity of instruction, class size, teacher training and experience, use of appropriate curricula and materials, and online options.

### **L. Lowest Score Determines Placement**

Students should be placed into federal educational functioning levels (EFL) based on the lowest EFL outcome of the placement tests given. If a student takes both the TABE math and reading tests, scoring High Intermediate ABE on math and Low ASE on reading, that student should be placed in High Intermediate ABE based on the math test score.

### **M. Training for Administering Assessments**

Training is essential for a quality assessment system. All staff who either administer or score any standardized assessment used to measure educational gain must be trained before administering the tests. Each local program must have a designated test coordinator/trainer for every standardized test that they use.

A list of all staff trained on any assessment used must be maintained by the local programs including: name of individual trained, date of training, name of person conducting training, and name of assessment(s).

In addition, all staff including instructors involved in gathering, analyzing, compiling, and reporting data for the National Reporting System must be trained. All personnel who administer any NRS approved assessment must complete training by certified trainers. Assessment training sessions will be listed on the College and Career Readiness training calendar (<http://www.nccommunitycolleges.edu/college-and-career-readiness/training-calendar>). At least one person from each program must receive formal training for the assessments used and must train all other staff members who administer assessments. All Basic Skills/literacy staff should have a "refresher" course every two years.

Training will include the following topics: NRS policy, accountability policies, and data collection process; definitions of measures; and conducting assessments. Supplemental training at the local level will be provided annually.

### **N. Accommodating for Students with Disabilities or Other Special Needs Tests and Placement for Special Populations**

Local programs are responsible for providing fully accessible services and for ensuring that these services meet reasonable criteria. Adult learners with disabilities are responsible for requesting accommodations and for submitting documentation of their disability at the time of registration, program entry, or after diagnosis. The need to use an accommodation should be documented in the student's official records, as defined by the local program. The documentation must show that the disability interferes with the learner's ability to demonstrate performance on the test. The information may come from a doctor's report, a diagnostic assessment from a certified professional, and/or other clinical records.

Local test administrators may approve some accommodations in test administration procedures without approval from the testing manufacturer; however, the test manufacturer's guidelines for testing accommodations must still be followed. Examples include accommodations in test time, giving supervised breaks, or providing a sign language interpreter for test administration directions only. It is not an appropriate accommodation in test administration procedures to read a reading test to a learner with low literacy skills or blindness.

Students requesting accommodations for all assessments without diagnostician signed paperwork may be provided reading glasses, magnifying glasses, earplugs, and additional or reduced lighting. Students requesting accommodations other than those listed above should provide paperwork from a diagnostician indicating the requested accommodation.

To assist educators in providing accommodations for programs using TABE and TABE CLAS-E, CTB produces the CTB/McGraw-Hill Assessment Accommodations Guide--a decision-making tool for the consistent documentation and implementation of testing accommodations for student with disabilities. The website for ordering the guide may be found at:

<http://www.ctb.com/ctb.com/control/childNodesViewAction?categoryId=193&adjBrd=Y>

Test administrators using CASAS assessments may provide accommodations in testing conditions for documented disabilities without contacting CASAS. Examples of accommodations in testing conditions are testing in a private room, using a colored overlay, allowing extended time, giving supervised breaks, or providing a sign language interpreter (for test administration directions only). Test administrators do not need to contact CASAS for permission to make these particular accommodations. It is *not* an appropriate accommodation to *read a CASAS reading test* or to allow use of a vocabulary pen.

CASAS provides some tests in a format appropriate for learners with disabilities, such as CASAS eTests, a Braille test, and large-print tests. **However, Braille is not an approved NRS assessment.** All CASAS test booklets are available in large-print format. A version of the Life and Work reading test is available in Braille. CASAS eTests are available in reading, math and listening. Please contact CASAS for information on other test formats. Do not change a test format locally. Alternate test formats must meet standardized test development procedures. **For complete list of CASAS testing accommodations, please see:** <https://www.casas.org/training-and-support/testing-guidelines/accommodations-guidelines>

Students who do not hear, speak, or see, should not be administered the BEST Plus 2.0 Test per the publisher guidelines and should instead be administered the BEST Literacy Test. Students requesting accommodations should provide paperwork from a diagnostician indicating the requested accommodation. Students requesting accommodations without diagnostician signed paperwork may be provided reading glasses, magnifying glasses, and additional or reduced lighting.

Further accommodations for GAIN assessments may be located in the GAIN Administrator's Guide or by contacting Wonderlic directly **847-247-2494**.

## **O. Braille and Spanish Testing Forms**

Alternative formats of the TABE and CASAS tests, such as Braille and Spanish, are available, but these forms are not approved for reporting students to NRS. Listed below are charts detailing acceptable testing forms.

### **1. TABE**

Most versions of the **TABE forms 9 & 10** are approved for NRS reporting. These include the complete battery and survey in paper, online, LAN (PC), Large Print, and Braille versions. TABE audio versions and TABE Adaptive are not approved formats for NRS reporting.

The TABE Spanish tests are based on forms 7 & 8 and are **NOT NRS APPROVED**.

**2. CASAS**

All versions of CASAS listed in the Appendix are approved for NRS reporting.

The **Braille versions of the CASAS test are NOT NRS APPROVED**.

Additionally, the **Spanish versions of the CASAS tests are NOT NRS APPROVED** either.

**IV. GUIDELINES FOR EACH ASSESSMENT**

**A. Test Administration Manuals**

The North Carolina Community College System requires that each local Basic Skills/literacy programs follow the test administration guidelines in each test administration manual. All local programs must maintain copies of the test administration manuals for all assessments used. The test administration manuals provide quality control guidelines to ensure proper test use, administration, scoring, and interpretation of results.

**B. Information Regarding Assessments**

<b>Test</b>	<b>Description of Students for Whom The Assessment is Appropriate</b>
CASAS	ABE, ESL, ASE, AHS
GAIN	ABE, ASE, AHS
TABE, Forms 9 & 10	ABE, ASE, AHS
TABE CLAS-E	ESL
BEST Literacy/BEST Plus 2.0	ESL

**C. Alternate Forms/Use of Appraisal/Subtests**

<b>Test</b>	<b>Alternate Forms/Use of Appraisal/Subtests</b>
CASAS	The majority of CASAS assessments require the use of an appraisal test. Multiple alternate forms are available. Subtests: reading, math, writing, listening, speaking, government and history (for citizenship),
GAIN, Forms A & B	GAIN does not require a locator/appraiser test. All students can be tested on the same GAIN Form (A or B). GAIN consists of two 45 minute sections (English, math). GAIN English measures Reading, Grammar/Usage/Style. GAIN Math measures Arithmetic, Rational Numbers, Operations & Charts/Graphs, Algebra, Geometry & Trigonometry.
TABE, Forms 9 & 10	The TABE has subtests in reading, mathematics, computation, language, and spelling. Only total math, language, and reading may be used for placement and level completion. The locator tests should be given first to determine what appropriate level of the TABE should

	be administered. The survey takes one hour and eleven minutes; the complete battery, three hours and ten minutes.
TABE CLAS-E	
BEST Literacy/BEST Plus 2.0	<p>The BEST Literacy Skills Section provides scores for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading</li> </ul> <p>The Literacy Skills section is 60 minutes. The content focuses on survival skills. The student completes a variety of reading/writing tasks in a consumable book.</p> <p>BEST Plus 2.0 comes in two versions - a computer-adaptive assessment on CD or a semi-adaptive print-based version. Both versions are administered as a face-to-face oral interview.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oral English communication</li> <li>• Language from personal, community, and occupational domains</li> <li>• Real-life communication tasks such as providing personal information, describing situations, and giving and supporting an opinion</li> </ul> <p>BEST Plus 2.0 distinguishes performance over the full range of English proficiency levels represented in adult education programs - from Beginning ESL Literacy to ESL Advanced in the NRS.</p>

#### ***D. Training Requirements***

<b>Test</b>	<b>Training Requirements</b>
CASAS	<p>CASAS requires that minimally one person from each agency using the CASAS system successfully complete CASAS Implementation Training prior to testing, gathering, analyzing, compiling, or reporting data. Once trained, this individual can train others within his or her respective agency but may not train outside that agency. Once initial training is complete, staff should attend refresher sessions every two years.</p> <p>The North Carolina Community College System requires all local agencies to comply with the CASAS training policy presented above.</p>
GAIN, Forms A & B	All Basic Skills/literacy staff who assess students must be Certified by Wonderlic and Trained in GAIN administration and test result interpretation, and how to navigate the Wonderlic Online interface. Wonderlic certification is good for two years.
TABE, Forms 9 & 10 TABE CLAS-E	All Basic Skills/literacy staff who assess students must be trained in administering the TABE test. Once initial training is complete, staff should attend refresher sessions every two years. Staff should review the test examiner's booklet and follow directions.
BEST Literacy/BEST Plus 2.0	All Basic Skills/literacy staff who assess students must be trained in administering the BEST/BEST Plus 2.0 test. Once initial training is complete, staff should attend refresher sessions every two years.

#### ***E. Time When Post-Testing Should Occur***

<b>Test</b>	<b>Time When Post-Testing Should Occur</b>
CASAS	Agencies should administer post-tests, using an alternate form, at the end of a semester, term, quarter, or other substantial block of

	<p>instruction to document learning gains. CASAS recommends assessing after approximately 70-100 hours of instruction, however:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Programs offering <b>high-duration</b> courses (for example, a class meets more than 15 hours per week) may choose to test at the end of a semester, term, quarter, or other substantial block of instruction, even though the instructional intervention is more than 100 hours of instruction.</li> <li>➤ Programs offering <b>low-duration</b> courses with fewer than 70 hours in a semester, quarter, term, or other substantial block of instruction, may choose to administer a post-test at the end of the instructional period (CASAS Administration Policy, 2014, p.11). Programs may assess students who have shown proficiency through informal assessment provided they meet the minimum 40 hours of instruction.</li> <li>➤ The minimum number of hours between pre- and post-testing is 40. Testing for low-duration courses should <b>not</b> regularly occur below the minimum 40 hour threshold, but exceptions are allowable per the exception provision detailed in Chapter III Section K.</li> <li>➤ CASAS states, "The testing of students with fewer than 40 hours of instruction should be reviewed and considered on a case by case basis" (CASAS Administration Policy, 2014, p.11).</li> </ul> <p>Programs may assess individual learners who indicate they are leaving the program before the scheduled post-test time to maximize collection of paired test data. However, testing should not occur before 40 hours of instruction.</p> <p>Factors that affect learning gains include intensity and duration of instruction, motivation of learners, competence of instruction, the link between learner goals and instruction, and other instructional factors. Post-test scores obtained at the end of a semester or other reporting period may serve as a pre-test for the next semester or reporting period, provided that the interim does not exceed three months. Similarly, the most recent assessment results for "stop outs" returning to adult education classes may be used, provided that the last test administered does not exceed the same –three month window. This policy is designed to reduce or eliminate unnecessary testing.</p>
GAIN, Forms A & B	Agencies should administer post-tests, using an alternate form of the pre-test, after 60 hours of educational instruction.
TABE, Forms 9 & 10 TABE CLAS-E	<p>If the pre- and post-test are for the same level but using a different form (e.g., (TABE 9 Level M to TABE 10 level M): 60 hours for students at NRS Levels 1-4, and 30 hours for students at NRS levels 5-6.</p> <p>If the pre- and post-test are for with the same level and use the same form (e.g., TABE 9 level M to TABE 9 level M): 120 hours.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Programs may assess individual learners who indicate they are leaving the program before the scheduled post-test time provided the student has accumulated the minimum required hours of instruction.</li> <li>➤ Programs may assess individual learners who may otherwise be unable to post-test before the end of the program year; provided the student has accumulated the minimum required hours of instruction.</li> </ul>

	<p>➤ Programs may assess individual learners who have shown proficiency via informal assessments provided the student has accumulated the minimum required hours of instruction.</p> <p>CTB/McGraw-Hill suggests the pre- and post-test guidelines as Best Practices recommendations based upon feedback and APA guidelines. The purpose for assessing with TABE will also have an impact on the implementation of these recommendations. CTB discourages random and frequent testing as it will not present valid gain scores and could create a practice effect, thus producing questionable or spurious scores. Instructional intervention between testing periods is strongly recommended to maximize gain. Proper use of the Locator Test as a determinant of appropriate content level testing is also strongly recommended and is an integral part of the testing process.</p> <p>If a test is to be administered as a retest because the initial test session was invalid, there is not a prescribed length of time that needs to occur. However, CTB strongly encourages some instructional time in order to avoid a practice effect.</p>
BEST Literacy/BEST Plus 2.0	<p>60 hours minimum; 80-100 hours recommended</p> <p>If the hours for a course of instruction exceed the recommended number of hours, for post-testing then post-testing may most appropriately take place at the end of the instructional session.</p> <p>Because program-related factors such as intensity of instruction, class size, teacher training and experience, and use of appropriate curricula and materials will affect language learning proficiency gains, programs should consider these factors when determining timing for pre- and post-testing. The minimum number of hours between pre-and post-testing is 60 hours.</p>

***F. Guidelines for Raw Score Conversion to Scale Scores/Using Scale Scores to Place Learners into NRS Levels***

<b>Test</b>	<b>Guidelines for Raw Score Conversion to Scale Scores and Using Scale Scores to Place Learners into NRS Levels</b>														
CASAS	<p>Each CASAS test Administration Manual (TAM) provides charts and guidelines for converting raw scores to scale scores. The North Carolina Community College System requires adult education agencies to use these as reference points. The CASAS scale has been subdivided into ranges that correspond to the NRS levels. NRS guidelines prescribe that learners whose pre-tests place them in different instructional categories (for example, reading and math) be placed in the area with the lower score, if the learner is to receive instruction in the skill related to the lower instructional level. Placement at the lower instructional level should be the basis of determining which pre-test to administer.</p>														
GAIN, Forms A & B	<p>GAIN content was designed as per the Educational Functioning Level (EFL) definitions. GAIN reports an EFL and scale score.</p> <table data-bbox="521 1738 1383 1961"> <tr> <td>GAIN English:</td> <td>GAIN Math:</td> </tr> <tr> <td>EFL-1: 200-406</td> <td>EFL-1: 200-314</td> </tr> <tr> <td>EFL-2: 407-525</td> <td>EFL-2: 315-522</td> </tr> <tr> <td>EFL-3: 526-661</td> <td>EFL-3: 523-669</td> </tr> <tr> <td>EFL-4: 662-746</td> <td>EFL-4: 670-775</td> </tr> <tr> <td>EFL-5: 747-870</td> <td>EFL-5: 776-854</td> </tr> <tr> <td>EFL-6: 871-1000</td> <td>EFL-6: 855-1000</td> </tr> </table>	GAIN English:	GAIN Math:	EFL-1: 200-406	EFL-1: 200-314	EFL-2: 407-525	EFL-2: 315-522	EFL-3: 526-661	EFL-3: 523-669	EFL-4: 662-746	EFL-4: 670-775	EFL-5: 747-870	EFL-5: 776-854	EFL-6: 871-1000	EFL-6: 855-1000
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EFL-5: 747-870	EFL-5: 776-854														
EFL-6: 871-1000	EFL-6: 855-1000														

TABE, Forms 9 & 10 TABE CLAS-E	See TABE manual for information on scale scores.
BEST Literacy/BEST Plus 2.0	See BEST/BEST Plus 2.0 manual for information on scale scores.

**G. Quality Control Procedures**

Testing data should be entered into LEIS (community colleges) and LACES (community-based organizations) on an on-going basis. Data should be entered no less than quarterly. Data quality checks are built into both the LEIS and LACES systems. Local programs must work with the Basic Skills data specialist to correct errors flagged by the system. Once the errors are corrected in LEIS, local data will be stored in the Data Warehouse. Once the errors are corrected in LACES, data will be sent to Literacy Pro as complete. Test results should be shared with appropriate instructors and staff.

Quality control must be maintained for assessment procedures. Local program directors/coordinators may use the following assessment checklist to ensure correct assessment procedures have been followed.

**1. Standardized Assessment Checklist**

<b>Standardized Assessment Checklist</b>	
Assessment Procedures for Test Administrators	yes/no
1. The test administrator has been trained in giving the assessment(s).	
2. The test administrator has read the test manual(s).	
3. The test administrator follows all directions in giving the assessment(s) including strict adherence to time limits, etc.	
4. The testing facility is quiet, has adequate lighting, and adequate space for test-takers.	
5. The test administrator follows all directions, including strict adherence to time limits, etc.	
6. The tests are accurately scored and raw scores are converted to scale scores.	
7. Tests results are kept confidential.	
8. Test results are shared with test takers and appropriate instructors in a timely manner.	
9. Test answers are not shared with test takers, but the type of questions missed may help test takers to understand what they need to learn.	
10. Tests results are available for instructors and program staff.	
11. Test results are reported in LEIS or LACES in a timely manner (no less than quarterly).	

12. Test materials are stored in a secure locked location when not in use.	
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## **2. Information Regarding Purchasing of Assessments**

CASAS	<p>Agencies must receive training from a CASAS certified trainer before purchasing and administering most CASAS assessment. When agencies order CASAS materials, they must complete the training information section of the order form and sign the Training and Test Use Agreement.</p> <p>Contact the Training and Implementation department at 1-800-255-1036 or <a href="mailto:training@casas.org">training@casas.org</a> to schedule training.</p> <p>Complete your order form</p> <p>Order forms are located on the last page of the CASAS Resource Catalog. You may also download the order form from the link below.</p> <p>Most CASAS test booklets are reusable and packaged in sets of 25. Combination sets of one, five, or ten test booklets per test form are available. To prevent delays in orders, it is important to complete the Training and Test Use Agreement portion of the order form — including information about where and when you or someone in your agency received training.</p> <p>Place your order</p> <p>FAX or mail your completed order form to CASAS. Payment (purchase order, check, or credit card) must accompany each order. CASAS does not accept phone orders.</p> <p>FAX: 858-292-2910</p> <p>Mail: CASAS, 5151 Murphy Canyon Road, Suite 220, San Diego, CA 92123</p> <p>For more information on training requirements, contact the Training and Implementation team at <a href="mailto:training@casas.org">training@casas.org</a>. For more information on placing an order, contact Customer Service at 1-800-255-1036.</p>
GAIN, Forms A & B	<p>Contact your Steck-Vaughn representative for more information and/or contact the Steck-Vaughn division of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt to place an order for GAIN. Phone 800.289.4490</p>
TABE, Forms 9 & 10 TABE CLAS-E	<p>McGraw Hill Contemporary website: <a href="http://www.mhcontemporary.com"><b>www.mhcontemporary.com</b></a></p> <p>Contemporary's website allows you to buy most products online, whether you're paying with a major credit card, or using a valid purchase order number from your institution or book store. You must supply a valid tax exempt id, TIN, or bookstore SAN in order to purchase without a credit card.</p> <p><b>Choose any of the following alternative methods to expedite your purchase order:</b></p> <p><b>Email purchase orders to</b> <a href="mailto:MMH_OrderServices@Mcgraw-Hill.com"><b>MMH_OrderServices@Mcgraw-Hill.com</b></a> Send your order to <a href="mailto:MMH_OrderServices@Mcgraw-Hill.com">MMH_OrderServices@Mcgraw-Hill.com</a>, and optionally request an order confirmation.</p> <p><b>Fax orders toll free at (800) 998-3103</b></p> <p>Please check that you've provided all requested information (including purchase order number and authorized signature) plus a phone number so they can call you if there's a problem.</p> <p><b>Phone orders toll free at (800) 621-1918, prompt 1</b></p> <p>Call in your order between 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Central Time to our toll free ordering phone number, (800) 621-1918, prompt 1. Have your account number, purchase order number, and order information (order number and title) ready. If you follow your phone order with a written confirmation, please indicate clearly that it is a confirming purchase order.</p> <p>For information on products or if a Contemporary sales representative is not available in your area, please call our hotline at (800) 621-1918.</p>

	<p><b>Order by mail</b> Send us your purchase order and make sure to include your official purchase order number and an authorized signature. Mail your orders to: Wright Group/McGraw-Hill 220 East Daniieldale Road DeSoto, TX 75115-2490</p> <p><b>Order from your Contemporary representative</b> Put the special knowledge and experience of your local Contemporary sales representative to work for you. Gary Rubin Telephone: 704-614-2126 Voice Mail: 1-800-621-1918, ext. 5622 Email: Email: <a href="mailto:GaryRubin23@gmail.com">GaryRubin23@gmail.com</a></p>
BEST Literacy/BEST Plus 2.0	<p>The <i>CAL Store</i> at <a href="http://calstore.cal.org/default.aspx">http://calstore.cal.org/default.aspx</a> allows you to order by credit card online. They accept Visa, MasterCard, Discover, and American Express. You may also place your order via Postal Mail/Fax. Simply put items into the online shopping cart, print, complete your credit card information, and mail or fax the order form to: <i>(As a note: All potential test administrators must be trained and registered to order the BEST-Plus. Test Administration orders placed by non-trained individuals will not be processed.)</i></p> <p><b>CAL Store</b> Center for Applied Linguistics 4646 40th Street, NW Washington, DC 20016-1859 Fax: 888-700-3629 Purchase Orders (P.O.'s) You may also choose to pay by Purchase Order online, via fax, or postal mail. In all cases, CAL must receive a <b>signed</b> purchase order on your organization's letterhead. They must receive your signed P.O. by fax (888-700-3629) or mail <b>before</b> shipping your order. <b>This applies even if you have ordered online and provided a P.O. number at checkout.</b> Please ensure that your purchase order includes the correct CAL Store shipping charges and sales tax (if applicable). You may consider using the <i>CAL Store's</i> shopping cart to help calculate the total charges <i>prior</i> to filling out your official purchase order. The mailing address is: <b>CAL Store</b> Center for Applied Linguistics 4646 40th Street, NW Washington, DC 20016-1859 Paying Invoices If you are paying an invoice by mail that was sent to you from the <i>CAL Store</i>, please mail your payment along with a copy of the invoice to: <b>Center for Applied Linguistics</b> ATTN: CAL Store P. O. Box 630948 Baltimore, MD 21263-0948</p>

## V. EDUCATIONAL FUNCTIONING LEVELS

The following table should be used to determine the entry and exit federal functioning levels:

	<b>Beginning ABE Literacy</b>	
<b>Test Benchmark:</b>	<b>GAIN scale scores:</b> <i>English: 200-406</i>	<i>CASAS scale scores:</i>

<i>TABE (9–10) scale scores (grade level 0–1.9):</i> Reading: 367 and below Total Math: 313 and below Language: 389 and below	<i>Math: 200-314</i>	Reading: 200 and below Math: 200 and below Writing: 200 and below
<b>Beginning Basic Education</b>		
<b><i>Test Benchmark:</i></b> <i>TABE (9–10) scale scores (grade level 2–3.9):</i> Reading: 368–460 Total Math: 314–441 Language: 390–490	<b><i>GAIN Scale Scores:</i></b> <i>English: 407-525</i> <i>Math: 315-522</i>	<i>CASAS scale scores:</i> Reading: 201–210 Math: 201–210 Writing: 201–225
<b>Low Intermediate Basic Education</b>		
<b><i>Test Benchmark:</i></b> <i>TABE (9–10) scale scores (grade level 4–5.9):</i> Reading: 461–517 Total Math: 442–505 Language: 491–523	<b><i>GAIN Scale Scores:</i></b> <i>English: 526-661</i> <i>Math: 523-669</i>	<i>CASAS scale scores:</i> Reading: 211–220 Math: 211–220 Writing: 226–242
<b>High Intermediate Basic Education</b>		
<b><i>Test Benchmark:</i></b> <i>TABE (9–10) scale scores (grade level 6–8.9):</i> Reading: 518–566 Total Math: 506–565 Language: 524–559	<b><i>GAIN Scale Scores:</i></b> <i>English: 662-746</i> <i>Math: 670-775</i>	<i>CASAS scale scores:</i> Reading: 221–235 Math: 221–235 Writing: 243–260

<b>Low Adult Secondary Education (HSE &amp; Adult High School)</b>		
<b><i>Test Benchmark:</i></b> <i>TABE (9–10) scale scores (grade level 9-10.9):</i> Reading: 567–595 Total Math: 566–594 Language: 560–585 <i>CASAS scale scores:</i> Reading: 236–245 Math: 236–245 Writing: 261–270	<b><i>GAIN Scale Scores:</i></b> <i>English: 747-870</i> <i>Math: 776-854</i>	
<b>High Adult Secondary Education (HSE &amp; Adult High School)</b>		
<b><i>Test Benchmark:</i></b> <i>TABE (9–10) scale scores (grade level 11-12):</i> Reading: 596 and above Total Math: 595 and above Language: 586 and above	<b><i>GAIN Scale Scores:</i></b> <i>English: 871-1000</i> <i>Math: 855-1000</i>	

<p><i>CASAS scale scores:</i>  Reading: 246 and above  Math: 246 and above  Writing: 271 and above</p>		
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<b>Beginning ESL Literacy</b>	
<p><b>Test Benchmark:</b>  <i>CASAS scale scores:</i>  Reading: 180 and below  L&amp;W Listening: 162-180 and below</p>	<p><i>BEST Plus 2.0:</i> 88 - 361 (SPL 0-1)  <i>BEST Literacy:</i> 0-7 (0-20)  TABE CLAS-E scale scores:  Total Reading and Writing: 225-394</p>
<b>Low Beginning ESL</b>	
<p><b>Test Benchmark:</b>  <i>CASAS scale scores:</i>  Reading: 181-190  L&amp;W Listening: 181-189  Writing: 136-145</p>	<p><i>BEST Plus 2.0:</i> 362-427 (SPL 2)  <i>BEST Literacy:</i> 21-52  TABE CLAS-E scale scores:  Total Reading and Writing: 395-441  Total Listening and Speaking: 408-449</p>
<b>High Beginning ESL</b>	
<p><b>Test Benchmark:</b>  <i>CASAS scale scores:</i>  Reading: 191-200  L&amp;W Listening: 190-199  Writing: 146-200</p>	<p><i>BEST Plus 2.0:</i> 428-452 (SPL 3)  <i>BEST Literacy:</i> 53-63  TABE CLAS-E scale scores:  Total Reading and Writing: 442-482  Total Listening and Speaking: 450-485</p>
<b>Low Intermediate ESL</b>	
<p><b>Test Benchmark:</b>  <i>CASAS scale scores:</i>  Reading: 201-210  L&amp;W Listening: 200-209  Writing: 201-225</p>	<p><i>BEST Plus 2.0:</i> 453-484 (SPL 4)  <i>BEST Literacy:</i> 64-67  TABE CLAS-E scale scores:  Total Reading and Writing: 483-514  Total Listening and Speaking: 486-525</p>
<b>High Intermediate ESL</b>	
<p><b>Test Benchmark:</b>  <i>CASAS scale scores:</i>  Reading: 211-220  L&amp;W Listening: 210-218  Writing: 226-242</p>	<p><i>BEST Plus 2.0:</i> 485-524 (SPL 5)  <i>BEST Literacy:</i> 68-75  TABE CLAS-E scale scores:  Total Reading and Writing: 515-549  Total Listening and Speaking: 526-558</p>
<b>Advanced ESL</b>	
<p><b>Test Benchmark:</b>  <i>CASAS scale scores:</i>  Reading: 221-235  L&amp;W Listening: 219-227  Writing: 243-260</p> <p><b>Exit Criteria from Advanced ESL :</b>  <b>CASAS Writing: 261 and above</b>  <b>CASAS Reading and Listening: 236 and above</b>  <b>Oral BEST: 65 and above (SPL 7)</b>  <b>BEST Plus 2.0: 565 and above (SPL 7)</b></p>	<p><i>BEST Plus 2.0:</i> 525-564 (SPL 6)  <i>BEST Literacy:</i> 76-78  TABE CLAS-E scale scores:  Total Reading and Writing: 550-607  Total Listening and Speaking: 559-600</p>

## **VI. ASSESSMENT OF DISTANCE LEARNERS**

### ***A. Definition of Distance Learning Programs***

Distance learning programs are “non-classroom based” learning programs. In distance learning programs, students work alone, but have access to online, video, and/or print materials. Some distance programs are set up so that students work totally on their own, but there is another type of program known as “hybrid,” meaning, “instruction that mixes face-to-face classroom learning with distance education methods.”

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

Distance learners must be assessed under the same guidelines as all adult learners in the state. All components of the above assessment policy apply to distance education students. Students in distance education must have at least 12 hours of contact with the program before they can be reported to the NRS.

### ***B. Pre/Post-Testing Students***

All North Carolina Basic Skills/literacy students must be pre-/post-tested by one of the following NRS approved assessments: BEST, BEST Plus 2.0, CASAS, GAIN (Forms A & B), TABE (Forms 9 & 10), or TABE CLAS-E. For distance learners enrolled in a hybrid course, assessment will be scheduled as part of the classroom hours for the course. This activity will be scheduled so that it corresponds to the appropriate numbers of hours of instruction for post-testing as indicated in the North Carolina’s assessment policy. All assessments must occur in person, in secure, proctored settings, but it is permissible to arrange for remote testing locations that are more convenient for distance learners as long as all state requirements concerning assessment are met.

If a student cannot come to a face-to-face orientation/assessment session because they live at a distance from the program, the local program may decide to contact an educator in a public school, community college, college/university, or community-based organization who lives nearby the student and has experience administering the same Basic Skills/literacy standardized test that the program uses. Program staff should contact the educator to see if he/she would be willing to administer the tests. The tests should then be mailed to the educator with a self-addressed, stamped envelope for return. Once the educator administers the test, the test should be sent back to the program where the student is enrolled.

### ***C. Counting Distance Education Hours***

The NRS guidelines state that proxy contact hours must be developed using one of three specified models: clock time, teacher verification or learner mastery. (Proxy hours are hours where exact time spent on various activities cannot be directly verified but are calculated, based on an approved distance education curriculum and a specific model for estimating time.) North Carolina will use all three models, depending upon which curricula is used. (See attached chart to determine which model is used with each curricula.)

The clock time model may only be used with curricula that track the time the student interacts with the curricula and which also contain a mechanism to log students out of the program after a specified period of inactivity. One hour of clock time will be reported as one hour of instructional time.

- The verification model is based on a state assigning a predetermined number of proxy hours for completing activities (such as viewing a videotape and completing workbook lessons). North Carolina will use this model for most curricula that is not tracked by clock time. The state will use the number of proxy hours determined by Project IDEAL. If a program selects curricula which is not in Project IDEAL or counted by clock time, then the program must first pilot the curricula and conduct research on the hours that it takes students to finish the units, etc., then apply for permission to the System Office thirty days prior to offering the curricula. For example, students could keep logs of how long it takes them to complete assignments in a specific curricula. Once that information is gathered, the program may be able to get an average length of completion time per assignment. The program could then apply to use that curricula, using the average length of time per unit for the contact hours.
- North Carolina has opted to use a mastery model to assign proxy contact hours for Crossroads Café, with students being given ten proxy contact hours per unit as long as they demonstrate mastery of the material on a chapter quiz or test by getting 70% correct.

***D. Curricula for Clock Time Use***

Local programs may use any software/online programs designed to teach Basic Skills to adults if the system tracks time and logs students out after a preset period of inactivity. The following materials fit into the clock time model which means students’ attendance will be computed by the actual minutes spent on the computer.

**(The following are just examples – any software/online program that tracks time and logs students out after a preset period of activity may be used.)**

Examples of Clock Time Programs			
MHC GED Integrated Online	Clock	System must track time and log out students after preset period of inactivity	Recorded time in system.
MHC Pre-GED Integrated Online	Clock	System must track time and log out students after preset period of inactivity	Recorded time in system.
PLATO	Clock	System must track time and log out students after preset period of inactivity	Recorded time in system.
SkillsTutor	Clock	System must track time and log out students after preset period of inactivity	Recorded time in system.

### ***E. Curricula for Mastery & Teacher Verification Hours***

Proxy hours may also be used for selected curricula in North Carolina. The following chart lists the proxy hours for materials to be used in North Carolina. (Note: If your program wants to use materials that are not on this chart or that use clock-time plus workbook/other activities, then you must conduct a pilot for determining proxy hours. See "How to Pilot a Distance Course to Determine Proxy Hours."

Number of Proxy Contact Hours for Selected Curricula in North Carolina			
<b>Curriculum</b>	<b>Model</b>	<b>Criteria for Awarding Proxy Contact Hours</b>	<b>Proxy Contact Hours Credit</b>
Crossroads Café	Mastery	Passed unit test @ $\geq 70\%$	10 hours per unit; total possible PCH = 260
English for All	Mastery	Passed unit test @ $\geq 70\%$	6 hours per unit; total possible PCH = 120
GED Connection	Teacher Verification	Video: student self-report to teacher Workbook: teacher determines % of work completed  Internet Activities: teacher determines work completed Internet Module: teacher validates w/questioning whether student has engaged Practice Tests: online and print based	Video: .5 hrs Workbook: $\geq 75\%$ of activities completed = 4 hrs; 50-74% = 2 hrs  Internet Activities: 1 hr per activity; total possible PCH = 43 Modules: 3 hrs per module; total possible PCH = 15 Tests: 1 hr per; total possible PCH = 22
GEDi (GED Illinois)	Mastery	Passed unit test	50 minutes per unit completed
Workplace Essential Skills**	Teacher Verification	Video: student self-report to teacher Workbook: teacher determines % of work completed Internet Activities: teacher determines % of work completed Preview and Review Tests: print based	Video: .5 hrs Workbook: $\geq 75\%$ of activities completed = 2 hrs; 50-74% = 1 hrs; total possible PCH = 48  Internet Activities: $\geq 75\%$ of activities completed = 2.5 hrs; 50-74% = 1.5 hrs; total possible PCH = 60 Tests: 1 hr per; total PCH possible = 8

### ***F. How to Pilot a Distance Course to Determine Proxy Hours***

Programs that want to use curricula which are not on the above chart or that use clock-time plus workbook/other activities, then you must conduct a pilot for determining proxy

hours. Once the type of distance education curricula is selected, program staff should conduct a pilot project using the curricula to determine how many proxy hours should be counted. One way to determine contact hours is to have students keep a log of the time that students work on each activity, then get an average per all students who worked on the activity. While the study is being conducted, programs will not count contact hours for the students involved in the study. After the study is conducted, programs must submit a "Distance Learning Course Approval Application" to the Associate Vice President of Basic Skills for approval which includes an estimated number of contact hours per unit.

#### Examples Of Methods For Determining Proxy Contact Hours.

*How to Conduct a Study*

A study provides a research basis for assigning proxy contact hours. One approach that has been used includes the following steps. Note that this is a very basic overview.

- Recruit a sample of classroom teachers to track how long they spend teaching the curriculum content in the classroom, on a unit by unit basis.
- Look at the average times for each unit and assign proxy contact hours based on that data. (either a set proxy hours for all units or proxy hours that vary by unit depending upon the amount of work involved).
- Recruit a sample of distance teachers to track how long it takes their students to complete the instructional units.
- Compare this to the proxy contact hour assignments established and adjust proxy contact hours as needed.

#### ***G. Application for Getting Proxy Hours Approved***

<b>Distance Learning Course Approval Application</b>
Name of Proposed Course:
Total Number of Recommended Contact Hours for the Course: _____
Rationale for Number of Contact Hours:
Give a brief overview of the course (include materials/products/curriculum to be used).
Describe the time frame for the project date (date course begins/date course ends).
Briefly describe the following course details: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment</li> </ul>

- Orientation
- Materials delivery & exchange (distribution of print, video, etc.)
- Methods for supporting learners at a distance (teacher-student strategies, learner support groups)

Describe the evaluation process (including course evaluation and student evaluation – type of Basic Skills assessment to be used and how it will be administered.)

**Mail or Email to:**  
**Dr. Kristen Corbell**  
**North Carolina Community College System Office**  
**5016 Mail Service Center**  
**Raleigh, NC 27699-5016**  
**Email: [corbellk@nccommunitycolleges.edu](mailto:corbellk@nccommunitycolleges.edu)**

## **APPENDIX**

## VII. APPENDIX

### A. Recommended Timeframes for Pre- and Post-testing Adult Education Assessments

Test Name	Minimum	Recommended (Different Forms)	Notes	Contact
<b>Best Plus 2.0</b> <b>and</b> <b>Best Literacy</b>	60 Hours	80-100 Hours	<p>If the hours for a course of instruction exceed the recommended number of hours, post-testing may most appropriately take place at the end of the instructional session.</p> <p>Because program-related factors such as intensity of instruction, class size, teacher training and experience, and use of appropriate curricula and materials will affect language learning proficiency gains, programs should consider these factors when determining timing for pre- and post-testing.</p>	<p>Frank Finamore <i>BEST Plus 2.0</i> Project Manager Center for Applied Linguistics <a href="mailto:frank@cal.org">frank@cal.org</a>, 202-362-0700</p>
<b>CASAS</b>	40 Hours	70-100 Hours	<p>Allow exceptions for courses with different schedules and intensity, e.g., allow more time for courses that meet infrequently or not intensively and for very intensive courses wait longer than the recommended number of hours to post-test.</p> <p>Programs offering high intensity courses (e.g., class meets more than 15 hours per week) may choose to test at the end of a semester, term, quarter, or other substantial block of instruction, even though the instructional intervention is more than 100 hours of instruction.</p> <p>Programs offering low intensity courses with less than 70 hours in a semester, quarter, term, or other block of instruction, may choose to post-test at the end of the instructional period.</p> <p>Programs may choose to assess students who indicate they are leaving the program before the scheduled post-test time, to maximize collection of paired test data.</p>	<p>From Linda Taylor, Director of Assessment Development, CASAS, 800-255-1036, ext. 186, <a href="mailto:ltaylor@casas.org">ltaylor@casas.org</a>, <a href="http://www.casas.org">www.casas.org</a></p>

Test Name	Minimum	Recommended (Different Forms)	Notes	Contact
<b>TABE (NRS Lvl. 1-4)</b>	40 Hours	50-60 Hours  120 Hours for matching form and level.	<p>CTB/McGraw-Hill suggests the pre- and post-test guidelines as Best Practices recommendations based upon feedback and APA guidelines. The purpose for assessing with TABE will also have an impact on the implementation of these recommendations. CTB discourages random and frequent testing as it will not present valid gain scores and could create a practice effect, thus producing questionable or spurious scores. Instructional intervention between testing periods is strongly recommended to maximize gain. Proper use of the Locator Test as a determinant of appropriate content level testing is also strongly recommended and is an integral part of the testing process.</p> <p>If a test is to be administered as a retest because the initial test session was invalid, there is not a prescribed length of time that needs to occur. However, CTB strongly encourages some instructional time in order to avoid a practice effect.</p>	<p>Michaeline M. Powell, District Manager CTB/McGraw-Hill <a href="mailto:mpowell@ctb.com">mpowell@ctb.com</a> 703.698.1325</p>
<b>TABE (NRS Lvl. 5-6)</b>	30 Hours	30-59 Hours  120 Hours for matching form and level.		
<b>TABE Clas-E</b>	50 Hours	60-95 Hours  100-140 Hours for matching form and level.		
<b>GAIN</b>	60 Hours	60 Hours	<p>There are two equivalent forms of each GAIN test for English and math: Form A &amp; Form B. Wonderlic recommends post-testing for skills gain after a minimum of 60 hours of training. The post-test must involve an alternative form from the pre-tests to meet NRS requirements.</p> <p>A progress test before the minimum hours should be on the same form as the pre-test.</p> <p>Retesting must follow NRS procedural requirements, and is defined in the GAIN Administrator's Guide.</p>	<p>Bradley Olufs Director Adult Education &amp; Workforce Wonderlic, Inc. <a href="mailto:Bradley.Olufs@Wonderlic.com">Bradley.Olufs@Wonderlic.com</a> 800.370.9317</p>

**B. Additional CASAS Information**

**CASAS Series Approved for Use by WIA Funded Local Agencies**

						
	<i>Citizenship</i>	<i>Life and Work</i>	<i>Life Skills</i>	<i>Secondary Assessment</i>	<i>Workforce Learning Systems (WLS)</i>	
<b>What basic skills are assessed in each series?</b>						
Reading	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<i>Standardized Multiple Choice</i>
Math			✓	✓	✓	
Listening			✓		✓	
Writing		✓	✓	✓	✓	<i>Standardized Performance Based</i>
Speaking	✓	✓	✓		✓	
<b>Which programs use what series?</b>						
ESL	✓	✓	✓			✓
ABE		✓	✓	✓		✓
ASE		✓	✓		✓	✓

**Tests for students with learning and/or intellectual disabilities**

The following tests are most commonly used for students with learning and/or intellectual disabilities. CASAS forms 27, 28, 310, and 311 are the only forms that have been approved by NRS for use in placing students with intellectual disabilities.

<b>Level</b>	<b>Adult Life Skills (R)</b>
Beginning Literacy	27
	28
AA	310
	311
AAA	320*
	321*
AAAA	332*
	331*
AAAAA	342*
	343*

\*These tests are not NRS approved, but can be used to drive instruction.

**C. NRS Approved Assessments 2016-2017 (Updated August 2015)**

Test Name	Forms	Format	Approval Period
<b>CASAS</b>			
Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems (CASAS) Reading Assessments (Life and Work, Life Skills, Reading for Citizenship, Reading for Language Arts—Secondary Level)	27, 28, 81, 82, 81X, 82X, 83, 84, 85, 86, 185, 186, 187, 188, 310, 311, 513, 514, 951, 952, 951X, and 952X	paper and through the computer-based delivery format	seven years beginning on February 2, 2010
Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems (CASAS) Life Skills Math Assessments—Application of Mathematics (Secondary Level)	31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 505, and 506	paper and through the computer-based delivery format	seven years beginning on February 2, 2010
Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems (CASAS) Life and Work Listening Assessments (LW Listening)	981L, 982L, 983L, 984L, 985L and 986L	For use on paper and through the computer-based delivery format	<i>Newly Determined to be suitable until February 2, 2017</i>

Test Name	Forms	Format	Approval Period
<b>TABE</b>			
Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE 9/10)	9 and 10	for use on paper and through the computer-based delivery format	seven years beginning on February 2, 2010
Tests of Adult Basic Education Survey (TABE Survey)	9 and 10	for use on paper and through the computer-based delivery format	seven years beginning on February 2, 2010
Tests of Adult Basic Education Complete Language Assessment System—English (TABE/CLAS-E)	A and B	for use on paper	seven years beginning on February 2, 2010

<b>BEST</b>			
Basic English Skills Test (BEST) Literacy	B, C, and D	for use on paper	seven years beginning on February 2, 2010
Basic English Skills Test (BEST) Plus 2.0	A, B, and C	for use on paper and through the computer-adaptive delivery format	<i>Newly Determined to be suitable until February 2, 2017</i>
<b>GAIN</b>			
General Assessment of Instructional Needs (GAIN)—Test of English Skills	A and B	paper and through the computer-based delivery format	<i>Newly Determined to be suitable until February 2, 2017</i>
General Assessment of Instructional Needs (GAIN)—Test of Math Skills	A and B	for use on paper and through the computer-based delivery format	<i>Newly Determined to be suitable until February 2, 2017</i>

**Source: Federal Register/Vol.79, No.209/Wednesday, August 12, 2015**  
<https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2015-08-12/pdf/2015-19847.pdf>

**D. Valid/In-range Score Bands for NRS Approved Tests**

Test Description	Form/Level	Minimum Score	Maximum Score
BEST Literacy Reading & Writing	B	0	78
	C	0	78
	D	0	78
BEST Plus2	D	88	999
	E	88	999
	F	88	999
	CAV	88	999
CASAS Life Skills Math	31A	172	212
	32A	172	212
	33B	188	232
	34B	188	232
	35C	201	253
	36C	201	253
	37D	212	268
	38D	212	268
CASAS Life and Work Reading	27B EGLIT	153	202
	28B EGLIT	153	202
	81A	170	210
	82A	170	210
	81AX	182	227
	82AX	182	227
	83B	186	234
	84B	186	234
	85C	200	252
	86C	200	252
	185C	197	252
	186C	197	252
	187D	213	265
	188D	213	265
	310AA	163	206
311AA	163	206	
CASAS Reading for Citizenship	951A	175	213
	952A	175	213
	951AX	186	226
	952AX	186	226
	981A	169	208
	982A	169	208
	983B	190	218
	984B	190	218
	985C	210	240
	986C	210	240

Test Description	Form/Level	Minimum Score	Maximum Score
CASAS Life and Work Reading	27BEGLIT	153	202
	28BEGLIT	153	202
	81A	170	210
	82A	170	210
	81AX	182	227
	82AX	182	227
	83B	186	234
	84B	186	234
	85C	200	252
	86C	200	252
	185C	197	252
	186C	197	252
	187D	213	265
	188D	213	265
CASAS Secondary Level Assessment Math	505	208	253
	506	208	254
CASAS Secondary Level Assessment Reading for Language Arts	513D	207	256
	514D	207	256
TABE Battery Language	9E	239	524
	9M	398	550
	9D	492	585
	9A	540	826
	10E	235	523
	10M	396	550
	10D	490	585
	10A	536	826
TABE Battery Reading	9L	160	457
	9E	247	515
	9M	364	550
	9D	463	595
	9A	538	812
	10L	160	457
	10E	246	516
	10M	374	550
	10D	460	595
	10A	535	812
TABE Battery Total Math	9L	180	439
	9E	217	504
	9M	307	549
	9D	442	594
	9A	528	775

Test Description	Form/Level	Minimum Score	Maximum Score
TABE Battery Total Math	10L	180	438
	10E	217	504
	10M	314	549
	10D	444	593
	10A	528	775
TABE CLAS-E Listening	1A	230	471
	2A	290	517
	3A	368	554
	4A	468	710
	1B	230	471
	2B	290	515
	3B	369	561
TABE CLAS-E Reading	4B	463	710
	1A	250	482
	2A	300	512
	3A	391	563
	4A	468	680
	1B	250	497
	2B	300	513
TABE CLAS-E Speaking	3B	387	577
	4B	473	680
	1A	291	502
	2A	291	537
	3A	425	568
	4A	501	659
	1B	291	502
TABE CLAS-E Listening/Speaking	2B	291	537
	3B	425	568
	4B	501	659
	1A	260	487
	2A	290	527
	3A	396	561
	4A	484	685
TABE CLAS-E Reading Writing	1B	260	487
	2B	290	526
	3B	397	565
	4B	482	685
	1A	225	488
	2A	260	517
	3A	390	565
TABE CLAS-E Reading Writing	4A	476	705
	1B	225	498
	2B	260	523
	3B	388	569
TABE CLAS-E Reading Writing	4B	480	705

Test Description	Form/Level	Minimum Score	Maximum Score
TABE CLAS-E Writing	1A	200	493
	2A	220	522
	3A	390	566
	4A	485	730
	1B	200	499
	2B	220	532
	3B	390	561
	4B	488	730
TABE Survey Language	9E	235	523
	9M	399	550
	9D	490	590
	9A	540	826
	10E	235	522
	10M	400	548
	10D	490	585
	10A	540	826
TABE Survey Reading	9E	294	520
	9M	394	550
	9D	464	600
	9A	540	812
	10E	290	518
	10M	367	552
	10D	463	595
	10A	540	812
TABE Survey Total Math	9E	200	504
	9M	314	549
	9D	442	593
	9A	530	775
	10E	200	499
	10M	310	549
	10D	442	593
	10A	529	775
GAIN Test of English Skills	A	200	1000
	B	200	1000
GAIN Test of Math Skills	A	200	1000
	B	200	1000