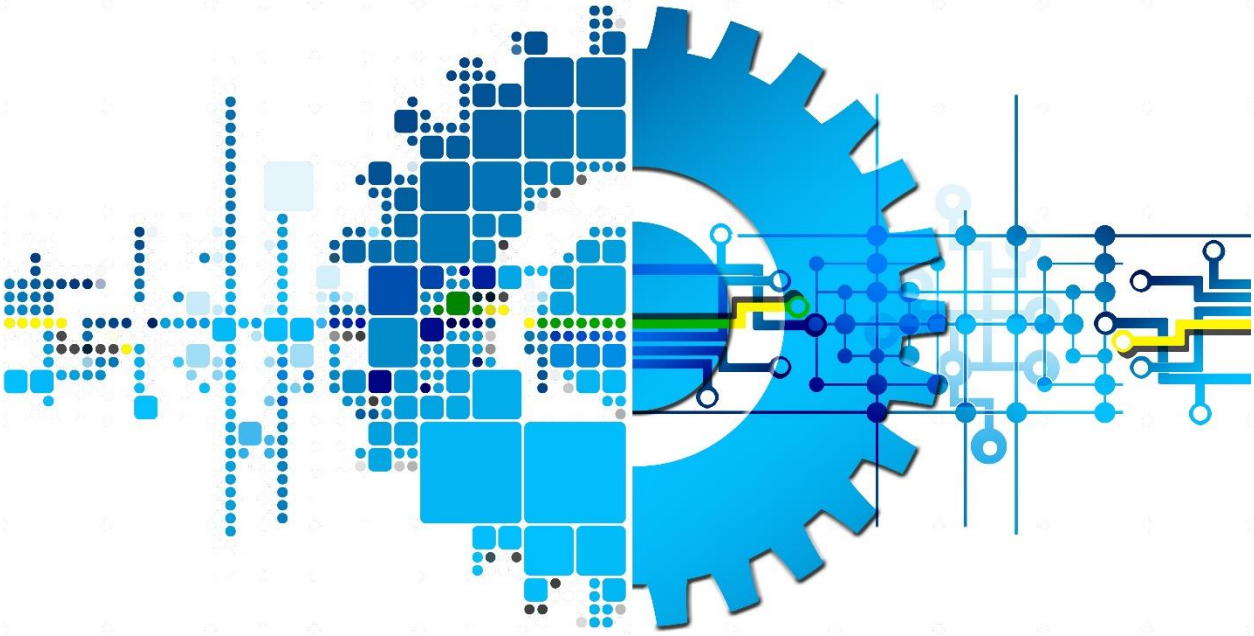
NORTH CAROLINA COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS ASSESSMENT MANUAL

2020 – 2021



REVISIONS HAVE BEEN HIGHLIGHTED IN YELLOW

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SECTION 1: OVERVIEW OF THE NORTH CAROLINA ASSESSMENT POLICY

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.

Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) of The Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014, requires that 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 and 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 NRS. Allowable tests through June 30, 2021 for ABE/ASE include the following: Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) Reading and Math GOALS and Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) 11&12. Allowable tests through June 30, 2021 for ESL include the following: Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) Reading and Listening, TABE Complete Language Assessment System-English (TABE CLAS-E), Basic English Skills Test (BEST) Literacy, and BEST Plus 2.0. Refer to the **Federal Register** for a complete list of approved forms and levels for all approved tests. For an exhaustive list of NRS approved test forms please see Appendix 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.

SECTION 2: SETTING THE STATE CONTEXT

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 NRS approved assessments with proven validity and reliability. It is essential that all learners in the state are placed in appropriate levels of instruction and that EFL gains are reported for those learners in a consistent and standardized manner. Uniform testing procedures are also necessary to allow for comparability across providers within the state. Since current state performance funding is tied to program outcomes of educational functioning level gains, it is important that all providers 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 providers 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.

Data Collection and Reporting

Providers are responsible for ensuring all state and federal data are collected on the Literacy Education Information System (LEIS) form and entered weekly into the appropriate data system. Providers are required to ensure data are being continually checked for data quality throughout the program year to ensure accurate reporting of all data in federal and state outcomes. Each Program Year begins on July 1 and ends on June 30 of the following year. Regular monitoring and evaluation of progress on federal measures is required to ensure continual program improvement.

Providers are required to submit data electronically using LEIS in Colleague for Community Colleges and Literacy, Adult and Community Education System (LACES) for Community Based Organizations. All data, including demographics, attendance, and assessments, must be entered on a weekly basis.

Data must be collected for all eligible students receiving services impacted by Title II AEFLA funds. This includes individuals in either the Reportable or Participant classification. Students with 12 or more hours of attendance in a Period of Participation (POP) are considered Participants and will be included in federal performance measures.

A POP begins each time a participant enrolls in adult education—even when multiple enrollments occur during the same program year. Subsequent enrollments during a program year result in a new period of participation. Therefore, a participant may have more than one period of participation in a program year.

Exit date is the last day of service for participants, but this date cannot be determined until 90 days have elapsed since the person last received services and there are no future services planned. Services do not include self-service, information-only services, activities, or follow-up services

For example, a student who enters an adult education program in September, exits in December, and re-enrolls in May has two periods of participation for the purpose of reporting MSG, and only one POP for the purpose of reporting exit-based indicators because only one exit is reported. A participant who enters an adult education program only once within a program year has one period of

participation for the purpose of reporting both MSG and exit-based indicators (upon their exit). For all performance indicators, each POP is counted separately, resulting in duplicate reporting of individual participants with more than one period.

Providers are responsible for collecting all applicable elements for each POP and reporting on the LEIS form and into the appropriate data system (Colleague or LACES). Some data are self-report, and thus should be provided by the student.

Reportable is defined as an individual who has taken action that demonstrates an intent to use program services and who meets specific reporting criteria of the program, including:

- Individuals who provide identifying information.
- Individuals who only receive information, information services, assessment, or activities.

Data must be submitted to the NCCCS based upon the Annual Reporting Plan for the LEIS Report found at: Monthly Literacy Education Information System Report.

Purposes and Uses of Assessment

Assessment data is 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, to access transitions programs, and to certify learner mastery at specific levels of instruction.

Providers 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 NRS, a variety of tests may be used for instructional purposes. Only NC NRS approved assessments used for accountability are required to be entered by colleges into Colleague or by community-based organizations into LACES.

1. Use of Standardized Tests for Accountability

The following assessments are approved for North Carolina Basic Skills programs for the 2020-2021 program year:

TEST	PROGRAM		
	ABE	ESL	ASE
CASAS Life and Work Reading		√	
CASAS Life and Work Listening		√	
CASAS GOALS Reading/Math	√		√
TABE, Forms 11 & 12	√		√
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 providers 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 serves an important role in determining student readiness for approved NRS assessments.

3. Pre-test and Initial NRS Level Placement/Assignment

All participants enrolled in federally and state funded adult education programs must be given a pre-test. The pre-test is the basis for participant NRS level assignment and determination for entering an EFL. The pre-test for the program year or the first POP must be administered within the first twelve hours of class instruction. If multiple assessments are taken, all tests with valid scores, as defined by the test manufacturer's guidelines, can count as pretests for the POP.

See appendix for Memo Guidance. **Options in these memoranda will be valid through the 2020-2021 academic year.**

Initial Level Placement/Assignment

Each student receives one initial level placement for the entire Program Year based on their lowest valid score from any approved NRS pretest. If more than one assessment is given, all assessments taken within three calendar days of the first assessment will be evaluated to determine the student's initial placement. For more information on the requirements of initial placement in regards to a Basic Skills

Plus program, please reference the Basic Skills Plus Policies and Procedures Implementation Guide - 2020.

New and Returning Students

Students are classified as **New Students** if they have not previously attended the program. Students are classified as **Returning Students** if they were served in a previous POP but have been separated for at least 90 consecutive calendar days and choose to return to the program. A new or returning student's initial placement, within a POP, is determined by the lowest valid score, as defined by the test manufacturer's guidelines, from all NRS approved assessments taken within the first three days.

Continuing Students

Students are classified as **Continuing Students** if they have not separated for at least 90 consecutive calendar days, but continue from one program year to the next. Continuing students who have valid scores, as defined by the test manufacturer's guidelines, during the 90 day look back period may have those scores count for initial placement. These tests taken during the look back period of April 2 – June 30 of the prior program year will be evaluated to determine initial placement in the current program year for continuing students.

4. Progress/Post-test

NRS approved tests given after the pretests that correspond to the manufacturer and subject area of any of the pretests are considered post-tests. Progression can be shown in any subject area. For example, if a student has a pretest of CASAS Reading GOALS test then only the administration of a CASAS Reading GOALS test with an alternate form will count as a post-test. A student may have multiple post-tests; however, identical tests (Form and Level) are not to be administered consecutively.

For example, if a student takes a TABE M11 Math pre-test, the next allowable tests are TABE Math M12, D11, D12, A11, or A12. Annually, providers are required to post-test a minimum of 65% of participants who are in levels or programs eligible for posttest gains.

5. Measurable Skill Gain

During a Period of Participation, all participants can show progression through attainment of a Measurable Skill Gain (MSG). Participants attain an MSG through an EFL gain or receipt of a secondary credential in a program year. MSG is only counted once per POP and is based on the last one achieved.

The following are four ways that a participant may earn an MSG depending on their program of study:

- Achieving a level gain from a participant's NRS approved pretest and posttest score on an assessment appropriate for the student's program area of study.
- Earning an HSE credential or Adult High School Diploma by the end of the program year.
- Awarding of credits in an adult high school program per the guidelines in the Adult High School Implementation Guide.
- Enrolling in postsecondary education and training after program exit and before the end of the program year (June 30).

Retroactive MSG

For a participant with multiple POPs in a single program year, a retroactive MSG may be achieved within a Program Year in two ways:

1. Pre and Posttest of a participant with one or more valid assessments in the first POP.
   - Upon return in a new POP within the same program year, a participant should not be given an assessment in the same test component until they have sufficient hours for a posttest.
   - If the participant did not have an MSG in the prior POP, the test given will be used as the pretest for POP2 and as the posttest for POP1, if a gain is achieved.
   - If the MSG was applied retroactively, the current POP will need an additional posttest, after meeting test manufacturer's guidelines.
2. HSE or AHS Diploma
   - Students with multiple POPs may earn an MSG for attaining their HSE or AHS diploma in all current and retroactive POPs

within the same program year.

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 NRS approved assessments: CASAS Reading & Math GOALS, TABE (Forms 11 & 12), 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. Students must be placed in an EFL level based on the lowest EFL outcome of all initial placement tests given. AHS students' placement is automatic at the ASE level. Please see the AHS Implementation Guide for more information.

Students do not need to be assessed in all 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. Students must be assessed in at least one or more of the following subjects appropriate for their program area of study: reading, writing, listening, or math.

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

The pre-test for the program year or the first POP must be administered within the first twelve hours of class instruction. If multiple assessments are taken, all tests with valid scores, as defined by the test manufacturer's guidelines, can count as pretests for the POP. Post-tests should be administered according to test manufacturers' recommendations for the number of instructional hours between

pre- and post- tests. Different test forms must be used for pre- and post- tests according to test manufacturers' recommendations to ensure score validity. All providers must post-test a minimum of 65% of their participants who are in levels or programs eligible for post-test gains. Participants who are placed in ASE High are excluded from this 65% goal.

2. Goal Setting

Providers 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 (SMART). 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.

Resources for Information and Overview

Individuals requiring information, clarification, or technical assistance related to assessment policy or procedures should contact
Michael Tilley, tilleym@nccommunitycolleges.edu.

Individuals requiring information on training for various assessments or to get a schedule of training, should also contact
Michael Tilley, tilleym@nccommunitycolleges.edu.

SECTION 3: GENERAL ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS

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), as defined by the test manufacturer's guidelines, entered into the appropriate data system. All Basic Skills students must be pre-tested and post-tested on an approved NRS assessment (CASAS Reading and Math GOALS, TABE – Forms 11 & 12, TABE CLAS-E, BEST Literacy, or BEST Plus 2.0) based upon test publisher guidelines for sufficient contact hours. Providers are required to post-test a minimum of 65% of participants who are eligible to be post tested. Participants who are placed in ASE High are excluded from this 65% goal.

All students reported in the National Reporting System data submission must be tested and have valid/in-range scores, as defined by the test manufacturer's guidelines, entered in the appropriate data system (LEIS in Colleague for community colleges; LACES for community-based organizations).

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.

Assessment Administrators

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. All Basic Skills/literacy staff who administer tests must have a refresher course every two years. Local providers are required to keep and maintain a database of all trained NRS test administrators which includes the date of their initial training as well as the dates of all subsequent refresher trainings.

Instructors are NOT permitted to administer any paper-based or online NRS assessments to their own students. Instructors ARE permitted to administer NRS assessments to students other than their own students.

Assessments Permitted

The following assessments meet the NRS requirements and may be used by local providers for reporting EFL placement and gains during the 2020-2021 program year. 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	PROGRAM		
	ABE	ESL	ASE
CASAS Life and Work Reading		√	
CASAS Life and Work Listening		√	
CASAS Reading & Math GOALS	√		√
TABE, Forms 11 & 12	√		√
TABE CLAS-E		√	
BEST Literacy/BEST Plus 2.0		√	

Subject Areas Assessed

TEST	Reading	Math	Writing	Listening	Other
CASAS GOALS	√	√			
TABE, Forms 11 & 12	√	√			Language
BEST Literacy & BEST Plus 2.0	√		√	√	Communication Fluency Pronunciation
CASAS Life & Work Reading and Listening for ESL	√			√	
TABE CLAS-E	√		√	√	Speaking

Pre-Test Requirement

Pre-tests should be administered and entered into the data system. Students do not need to be assessed in all the areas described in the level descriptors. Providers should consider that EFL gains can occur in any area the student was tested in and not just the subject area used for initial placement. 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.

Appraisal / Locator

Appraisals and locator tests are short assessments designed to determine the appropriate pretest to administer 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. Locators or appraisals may NOT be used in place of pre-assessments to determine a scale score or grade equivalent for placement on an educational 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.

Recommended Post Testing Requirements

The recommended post-testing hours are provided by the test manufacturers. These hours represent the time frame in which level gains are most likely to occur. In order to provide the best chance for success on NRS post-tests, providers should give the approved post-tests after the recommended number of instructional hours. Recommended instructional hours for post-testing are listed below.

Manufacturer's Recommended Post-Testing Requirements		
Using Different Test Forms		**Using the Same Test Form**
CASAS	70-100 Hours	
TABE 11 & 12 (NRS Lvl. 1-4)	50-60 Hours	120 Hours*
TABE 11 & 12 (NRS Lvl. 5-6)	30-60 Hours	120 Hours*
TABE CLAS-E	60-95 Hours	100-140 Hours*
Best Plus 2.0	80-100 Hours	
Best Literacy	80-100 Hours	

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

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. 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.

Manufacturer's Minimum Post-Testing Requirements	
CASAS	40 Hours
TABE 11 & 12 (NRS Lvl. 3-4)	40 Hours
TABE 11 & 12 (NRS Lvl. 5-6)	30 Hours
TABE Clas-E	50 Hours
Best Plus 2.0	60 Hours
Best Literacy	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.

General Testing Requirements

The minimum testing requirements (above section) serve as the manufacturers' estimated thresholds for when students may start seeing significant competency gains. Providers 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. Providers should avoid over testing which may lead to testing fatigue and frustration. Striving to meet the recommended testing guidelines while utilizing the minimum testing guidelines, when applicable, serves to address this concern.

Lowest Score Determines Initial Placement

Each student receives one initial placement for the entire Program Year based on their lowest valid score from any approved NRS pretest. If more than one

assessment is given, all assessments taken within three calendar days of the first assessment will be evaluated to determine the student's initial placement. For example, 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. Although the lowest score determines initial placement, any of the assessments can be used to determine EFL gain in subsequent matching assessments.

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 provider must have a designated assessment contact for the standardized test that they use.

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

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. All Basic Skills/literacy staff who are administer tests must have a refresher course every two years.

Accommodating for Students with Disabilities or Other Special Needs Tests and Placement for Special Populations

Local providers 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 providers using TABE and TABE CLAS-E, DRC/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: TABE Guidelines to Inclusive Testing Accommodations.

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.

For complete list of CASAS testing accommodations, please see: CASAS Assessment Accommodations.

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.

SECTION 4: GUIDELINES FOR EACH ASSESSMENT

Test Administration Manuals

The North Carolina Community College System requires that each local Basic Skills/literacy provider follow the test administration guidelines in each test administration manual. All local providers 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.

Information Regarding Assessments

Test	Students for Whom Assessment is Appropriate
CASAS GOALS	ABE, ASE, AHS
CASAS Life & Work	ESL
TABE, Forms 11 & 12	ABE, ASE, AHS
TABE CLAS-E	ESL
BEST Literacy & BEST Plus 2.0	ESL

Alternate Forms/Use of Appraisal/Subtests

Test	Alternate Forms/Use of Appraisal/Subtests
CASAS	The majority of CASAS assessments require the use of an appraisal test. Multiple alternate forms are available. Subtests: reading, math, listening
TABE Forms 11 & 12	The TABE has subtests in reading, mathematics, and language. The locator tests should be given first to determine what appropriate level of the TABE should be administered. The complete battery takes a maximum of seven hours.
TABE CLAS-E	The TABE CLAS-E has subtests in Reading, Listening, Writing, and Speaking. The complete battery would take one hour and forty-seven minutes.
BEST Literacy	The BEST Literacy Skills Section provides scores for • Reading 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.

BEST Plus 2.0	BEST Plus 2.0 comes in two versions - a computer-adaptive assessment or a semi-adaptive print-based version. Both versions are administered as a face-to-face oral interview. • Oral English communication • Language from personal, community, and occupational domains • Real-life communication tasks such as providing personal information, describing situations, and giving and supporting an opinion 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.

Training Requirements

Test	Training Requirements
CASAS	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. The North Carolina Community College System requires all local agencies to comply with the CASAS training policy presented above.

TABE, Forms 11 & 12 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. The North Carolina Community College System requires all local agencies to comply with the TABE training policy presented above.
BEST Literacy	The Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) does not provide any formal training for the BEST Literacy test but does provide a manual. Any staff member who has read the BEST Literacy manual is permitted to administer the BEST Lit. The North Carolina Community College System requires all local agencies to comply with the CAL training policy presented above.
BEST Plus 2.0	CAL requires that 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. The North Carolina Community College System requires all local agencies to comply with the CAL training policy presented above.

Time When Post-Testing Should Occur

Test	Time When Post-Testing Should Occur
CASAS	Agencies should administer post-tests, using an alternate form, at the end of a semester, term, quarter, or other substantial block of instruction to document learning gains. CASAS recommends assessing after

	approximately 70-100 hours of instruction; however, the minimum number of hours between pre- and post-testing is 40. 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 cannot occur before 40 hours of instruction. 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 ninety days. 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.
TABE Forms 11 & 12 TABE CLAS-E	If the pre- and post-test are for the same level but using a different form (e.g., (TABE 11 Level M to TABE 12 level M): 60 hours for students at NRS Levels 1-4, and 30 hours for students at NRS levels 5- 6. If the pre- and post-test are for with the same level and use the same form (e.g., TABE 11 level M to TABE 11 level M): 120 hours. ➢ 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. ➢ 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. ➢ Programs may assess individual learners who have shown proficiency via informal assessments provided the student has

	accumulated the minimum required hours of instruction. Data Recognition Corp (DRC) 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. DRC 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. 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, DRC strongly encourages some instructional time in order to avoid a practice effect.
BEST Literacy BEST Plus 2.0	60 hours minimum; 80-100 hours recommended 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. 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.

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

Test	Guidelines for Raw Score Conversion to Scale Scores and Using Scale Scores to Place Learners into NRS Levels
CASAS	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.
TABE Forms 11 & 12 TABE CLAS-E	See TABE 11/12 Scoring Guide for information on scale scores.
BEST Literacy BEST Plus 2.0	See BEST/BEST Plus 2.0 manual for information on scale scores.

Quality Control Procedures

Testing data must be entered into Colleague (community colleges) and LACES (community- based organizations) no less than weekly. Data quality checks are built into both student information data management systems used by providers in NC. Local providers 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

Standardized Assessment Checklist	
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.	

2. Information Regarding Purchasing of Assessments

CASAS	Agencies must receive training from a CASAS certified trainer before purchasing and administering most CASAS assessments. When agencies order CASAS materials, they must complete the training information section of the order form and sign the Training and Test Use Agreement. **Website Orders: CASAS ORDERS** CASAS allows most products to be purchased online. **Phone Orders:** CASAS does not allow orders by phone. **Email Orders: orders@casas.org** For more information on training requirements, email: **training@casas.org**. For more information on placing an order, contact Customer Service at 1-800-255-1036.
TABE Forms 11 & 12 CLAS-E	**Website Orders: Data Recognition Corp** DRC allows most products to be purchased online. **Phone Orders:** 800-538-9547 **Email Orders:** **shelfcustomerservice@datarecognitioncorp.com**
BEST Literacy BEST Plus 2.0	**Website Orders: CAL STORE** The Center for Applied Linguistics allows most products to be purchased online.

	Phone Orders: 855-543-9461 **Email Orders:** calstore@brightkey.net (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.)

SECTION 5: NRS LEVELS AND SCORE RANGES FOR ASSESSMENTS USED IN NORTH CAROLINA

There are twelve NRS levels, six levels for Adult Education and six levels for ESOL. A student's NRS level is determined by the pre-test score on one of the assessments approved in North Carolina.

Programs may design classes with students functioning at a range of NRS levels (for example, a level 1 ESOL class may have students functioning at both the beginning ESL literacy level and low beginning ESL level), however, programs should be cautious to not have classes of students functioning at a wide range of NRS levels.
To read the complete NRS level descriptors please see Appendix B of the Technical Assistance Guide for Performance Accountability under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act published by NRS.

NRS Levels and Score Ranges for ABE Assessments

CASAS GOALS (Scaled Scores)

NRS EFL	GLE Range	CASAS **Reading** GOALS
Beginning ABE Literacy (Level 1)	0-1	203 or <
Beginning Basic Education (Level 2)	2-3	204-216
Low Intermediate Basic Education (Level 3)	4-5	217-227
High Intermediate Basic Education (Level 4)	6-8	228-238
Low Adult Secondary Education (Level 5)	9-10	239-248
High Adult Secondary Education (Level 6)	11-12	249-262

NRS EFL	GLE Range	CASAS **Math** GOALS
Beginning ABE Literacy (Level 1)	0-1	193 or <
Beginning Basic Education (Level 2)	2-3	194-203
Low Intermediate Basic Education (Level 3)	4-5	204-214
Middle Intermediate Basic Education (Level 4)	6-7	215-225
High Intermediate Basic Education (Level 5)	7-8	226-235
Adult Secondary Education (Level 6)	9-12	236-249

TABE 11/12 (Scaled Scores)

NRS EFL	GLE Range	TABE 11/12 Reading	TABE 11/12 Math	TABE 11/12 Language
Beginning ABE Literacy (Level 1)	0-1	300-441	300-448	300-457
Beginning Basic Education (Level 2)	2-3	442-500	449-495	458-510
Low Intermediate Basic Education (Level 3)	4-5	501-535	496-536	511-546
High Intermediate Basic Education (Level 4)	6-8	536-575	537-595	547-583
Low Adult Secondary Education (Level 5)	9-10	576-616	596-656	584-630
High Adult Secondary Education (Level 6)	11-12	617-800	657-800	631-800

NRS Levels and Score Ranges for ESL Assessments

BEST Literacy & BEST Plus 2.0

NRS EFL	BEST Literacy	BEST Plus 2.0
Beginning ESL Literacy (Level 1)	0-20	88-361
Low Beginning ESL (Level 2)	21-52	362-427
High Beginning ESL (Level 3)	53-63	428-452
Low Intermediate ESL (Level 4)	64-67	453-484
High Intermediate ESL (Level 5)	68-75	485-524
Advanced ESL (Level 6)	76-78	525-564

CASAS Reading & Life & Work Listening (Scaled Scores)

NRS EFL	CASAS Reading	CASAS Listening
Beginning ESL Literacy (Level 1)	180 or <	162-180
Low Beginning ESL (Level 2)	181-190	181-189
High Beginning ESL (Level 3)	191-200	190-199
Low Intermediate ESL (Level 4)	201-210	200-209
High Intermediate ESL (Level 5)	211-220	210-218
Advanced ESL (Level 6)	221-235	219-227

TABE CLAS-E (Scaled Scores)

NRS EFL	Reading & Writing Total	Listening & Speaking Total
Beginning ESL Literacy (Level 1)	225-394	230-407
Low Beginning ESL (Level 2)	395-441	408-449
High Beginning ESL (Level 3)	442-482	450-485
Low Intermediate ESL (Level 4)	483-514	486-525
High Intermediate ESL (Level 5)	515-556	526-558
Advanced ESL (Level 6)	557-600	559-600

TABE CLAS-E When Reporting Reading or Writing Separately (Scaled Scores)

NRS EFL	Reading	Writing
Beginning ESL Literacy (Level 1)	230-392	200-396
Low Beginning ESL (Level 2)	393-436	397-445
High Beginning ESL (Level 3)	437-476	446-488
Low Intermediate ESL (Level 4)	477-508	489-520
High Intermediate ESL (Level 5)	509-557	521-555
Advanced ESL (Level 6)	558-588	556-612

TABE CLAS-E When Reporting Listening or Speaking Separately (Scaled Scores)

NRS EFL	Listening	Speaking
Beginning ESL Literacy (Level 1)	230-389	231-425
Low Beginning ESL (Level 2)	390-437	426-460
High Beginning ESL (Level 3)	438-468	461-501
Low Intermediate ESL (Level 4)	469-514	502-536
High Intermediate ESL (Level 5)	515-549	537-567
Advanced ESL (Level 6)	550-607	568-594

Exit Criteria from Advanced ESL

CASAS Reading - 236 and above

CASAS Life and Work Listening - 228 and above

TABE CLAS-E Reading - 589 and above

TABE CLAS-E Writing - 613 and above

TABE CLAS-E Total Reading and Writing - 601 and above

TABE CLAS-E Listening - 608 and above

TABE CLAS-E Speaking - 595 and above

TABE CLAS-E Total Listening and Speaking - 601 and above

(TABE CLAS-E serves only as an exit criteria. Students must retest to determine ABE or ASE placement.)

BEST Plus 2.0 - 565 and above
BEST Literacy does not have an exit criteria.

Note that the BEST Plus 2.0 NRS score ranges no longer correlate with the BEST Plus 2.0 SPL ranges. Programs must always use the NRS score ranges, not the SPL ranges to determine a student's EFL gain on the BEST Plus 2.0.

SECTION 6: ASSESSMENT OF DISTANCE LEARNERS

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.

Pre and Post Testing of Students

All North Carolina Basic Skills/literacy Distance Education students must be pre-/post-tested by one of the following NRS approved assessments: BEST, BEST Plus 2.0, CASAS GOALS Reading & Math, TABE (Forms 11 & 12) 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.

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 curriculum.)

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 teacher 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. If a program selects curricula which is not 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 curriculum. 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.

Curricula for Clock Time Use

The following software programs have been approved by the System Office for use as Clock Time Distance Ed programs by all basic skills/adult ed programs in NC:

1. **Achieve – Spark 3000**
2. **ACT WorkKeys**
3. **Apex**
4. **Aztec**
5. **Burlington English**
6. **Common Core Achieve Online**
7. **Connect Ed**
8. **Conover Online**
9. **EdReady/NROC (National Repository of Online Courses)**
10. **Edgenuity**
11. **ESL Library**
12. **Essential Ed**
13. **Get This Write**
14. **Gradpoint**
15. **I-pathways**
16. **IXL**
17. **Kahn Academy**

18. **Learning Upgrade**
19. **New Reader's Press Online**
20. **NorthStar Digital Literacy**
21. **Odysseyware**
22. **Paxen Focus**
23. **Plato/Edmentum**
24. **Reading Horizons**
25. **USA Learns**

Providers may use software programs not listed here for distance education with prior approval of the System Office. In order to receive approval, the software must have the ability to track time, to produce a detailed time-stamped login/logout report for each student, and to log students out after a maximum of 15 minutes of inactivity.

Please complete and submit The **Clock Time Program Approval Application.** This form can also be found as a Word document on the NCCC CCR NRS Training Website.

Distance Learning Clock-Time Course Approval Application
Name of Software:
Name of Provider:
Date Submitted:
Applicant Name:
Applicant's Email Address:
Applicant's phone number:
Give a brief overview/description of the software:

Does the software have a feature allowing instructors to run time-stamped Student Login Logout Reports? Submit an example of the time-stamped Student Login Logout Report with the application.
After how many minutes of inactivity will the software log off the inactive student? Please also submit documentation of this from the publisher.
Describe the methods you will use for supporting learners at a distance:
Which NRS assessments will be used and how will they be administered?

Briefly describe how you will orient students:
Briefly describe your plan for recruiting students:
Describe the evaluation process (both the course evaluation and student evaluation):
Mail or Email Report to: **Daniel Loges,** **Director of Professional Development and Distance Education** **North Carolina Community College System Office** **5016 Mail Service Center** **Raleigh, NC 27699-5016** **Email: logesd@nccommunitycolleges.edu**

Alternative Learning Packets via Teacher Verification Model

In order to reach those students who have limited access to online instruction, the Alternative Learning Packet method has been developed via the Teacher Verification Model. Based on the teacher's recommendation, Alternative Learning Packets can have a value of two, three, four, or five hours per week. Please see the FAQ in the addendum for more information on implementation of Alternative Learning Packets.

All Alternative Learning Packets must include the following:

1) NRS LEVEL(s)
2) College and Career Readiness Content Standards alignment
3) Instructional Objectives
4) Sufficient activities to meet the learning objectives
5) Informal assessment of mastery of learning objectives

In order to have an Alternative Learning Packet approved, directors should submit the packets along with the Alternative Learning Packet form to Daniel Loges, Director of Professional Development and Distance Education at logesd@nccommunitycolleges.edu This form can also be found as a Word document on the NCCC CCR NRS Training Website.

Alternative Assignments Learning Packets Request

Learning Packets are an approved distance learning method for students who have limited access to online instruction.

Packets can have a value of two, three, four, or five hours per week.

Learning packets must be submitted by the program director and must include the following:
NRS LEVEL(s)
College and Career Readiness Content Standards alignment
Instructional Objectives
Sufficient activities to meet the learning objectives
Informal assessment of mastery of learning objectives

Director: Date Submitted:

Program:

Learning Packet NRS Level(s):

Requested number of Proxy Contact Hours per packet:

Answer YES or NO to the following:

1. Are the learning packets aligned to CCR content standards?
2. Are the learning objectives aligned to the CCR content standards?
3. Is the material appropriate for the stated NRS levels?
4. Does the packet contain sufficient instructional activities to meet the proxy contact hour award?
5. Will the student have access to faculty if they need instructional assistance?

Briefly describe the method used for exchanging packets between student and faculty:
Briefly describe how the faculty will be in contact with students to offer instructional assistance:
Briefly describe the process for maintaining documentation of student packets:
Describe how you will track the proxy contact hours to report hours for post-tests:
Complete this form and send it along with the content of the proposed learning packets to Daniel Loges, Director of Professional Development & Distance Ed at logesd@nccommunitycolleges.edu **Alternative Learning Packet approval will require 30 calendar days from date of submission.**

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 Approved Curricula in North Carolina			
Curriculum	**Model**	**Criteria for Awarding Proxy Contact Hours**	**Proxy Contact Hours Credit**
Crossroads Café	Mastery	Passed unit test @ ≥70%	10 hours per unit; total possible PCH = 260
HSE in the Community	Teacher Verification	Successful Completion of Unit @ ≥ 70%	8 hours per unit. Total possible PCH =
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: ≥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: ≥75% of activities completed = 2 hrs; 50-74% = 1 hrs; total possible PCH = 48 Internet Activities: ≥75% of activities completed = 2.5 hrs; 50-74% = 1.5 hrs; total possible PCH = 60 Tests: 1 hr per; total PCH possible = 8

How to Pilot a Distance Course to Determine Proxy Hours

Providers that would like to use curricula which are not on the above chart or that use clock-time plus workbook/other activities, must conduct a **Proxy Hour Study**. 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, providers will not count contact hours for the students involved in the study. After the study is conducted, providers must submit a **"Distance Learning Proxy Hour Study Report"** to Dan Loges for approval. Final approval will include the number of contact hours to be awarded per unit.

Upon receipt of the proxy hour study at the NCCC System Office, the Proxy Hour Committee will review the study and respond to the initiating provider within 90 days from the date of the submission.

Essential Elements of a Proxy Hour Study

A study provides a research basis for assigning proxy contact hours. Here are the basic steps required to conduct a proxy hour study.

1. Contact Dan Loges before beginning a proxy hour study.
2. The study must involve two groups of students. Each group must have a minimum of ten student participants who complete the study.
3. The first group will be doing the proposed distance education curriculum from home by themselves.
4. The second group will be doing the proposed curriculum in a seated class. The classroom teacher will track how long they spend teaching the curriculum content in the classroom, on a unit by unit basis. The classroom teacher will need to keep and submit time records for each lesson/unit.
5. Students in the group working from home are required to keep a record of the times that they spend working on each lesson/unit.
6. Here is an example of a time record that could be used for a proxy hour study:

Student ID:_____
Student Group:_____

LESSON	DATE	BEG TIME	END TIME	TOTAL TIME WORKED
EX: LESSON 1	07/21/19	6:23 pm	8:23 pm	2 Hours

Programs have the flexibility to create time records that best meet their needs for the proxy hour study that is being conducted. However, time records **must** be used. All student and teacher time records must be submitted as part of the proxy hour study.

7. Each activity and/or lesson must be aligned to the NC Adult Education Content Standards. The content standards must be cited for each activity/lesson.
8. After the first group has completed each lesson, average the time reported for each lesson.

9. Compare the average time reported for each lesson done at home with the time reported by the classroom teacher.
10. Submit for approval the number of proxy hours you recommend for each lesson based on your findings from the comparison of the work done at home and the work done in the seated classroom.

Items to be Submitted in a Report for Approval of a Distance Ed Course Based on a Proxy Hour Study

Submit a Proxy Hour Study Report which includes the following:

1) Name of provider that conducted the proxy hour study.
2) Date of submission.
3) Names of all staff members involved in the proxy hour study.
4) Dates that the proxy hour study was conducted.
5) Name of the proposed course.
6) Brief overview of the course including materials, products, and curriculum to be used.
7) Describe the process that will be implemented for the delivery and exchange of the distance ed course.
8) Requested number of proxy hours for each lesson/unit.
9) Rationale for requested number of proxy hours.
10) All time records on which the number of proxy hours requested is based.
11) All of the actual lessons students will be studying along with the NC Adult Ed Content Standards citations.
12) Describe the methods that will be used for supporting learners at a distance.
13) Describe how students will be recruited for this distance ed course.
14) Explain the orientation process for students recruited for this course.
15) Describe which NRS assessments will be used, and how will they be administered.
16) Describe the course and student evaluation process.

Mail or email the final report to:
Dan Loges, Director of Professional Development and Distance Education
North Carolina Community College System Office
5016 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-5016
Email: logesd@nccommunitycolleges.edu

Learning Management Systems & Web Conferencing Apps

Basic Skills courses can be taught via any LMS that offers a built-in student activity time feature and/or can produce time-stamped student login-logout reports. Learning Management Systems and Web Conferencing Apps do not need to be submitted for approval.

Below is a list of some of the LMS and Web Conferencing Apps that may be used to teach Synchronous Distance Ed Classes. This list is not all inclusive.

1. Adobe Connect
2. Blackboard
3. Blackboard Collaborate
4. Canvas
5. Collaborate Ultra
6. Google Hangouts
7. Google Meets
8. Moodle
9. MS Teams
10. WebEx
11. Zoom

SECTION 7: ADDENDA FOR SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES COVID-19

Expanding Testing Exemptions

Local programs unable to administer an NRS approved test to a distance learning participant due to the widespread effect of the COVID-19 pandemic may use a non NRS approved assessment to place students in an Educational Functional Level and to determine eligibility. Local programs must administer NRS approved pre-tests as soon as feasible. A participant cannot achieve an educational functioning level gain without an NRS pre and post-test.

See appendix for Memo Guidance. Options in these memoranda will be valid through the 2020-2021 academic year.

See "Memo Guidance for CCR Assessments During COVID-19 Crisis, April 1, 2020" and "Memo Guidance on Paper-Based Assessment Options during COVID19, May 13, 2020".

Paper Based Alternative EFL Placement Options

The intent of the Alternative EFL Placement Option is to provide a mechanism to allow student data tracking to ensure appropriate EFL instructional level, to provide flexible options for program implementation, to ensure all students can be served regardless of internet or device capacity, and to document the impact of COVID-19 on student participation.

This option allows programs to develop or select a placement assessment tool that meets the following criteria:

a. The placement tool is suitable for new student enrollment process.
b. The placement tool can determine appropriate instructional level for instruction.
c. The placement tool can provide an NRS level.

Note: It is the responsibility of the local provider to follow copyright laws regarding the use of commercially available assessments.

This Alternative EFL Placement Option tool does not determine Measurable Skill Gains. This placement tool allows programs to determine instructional NRS level and provides an NRS EFL level to be entered into the data management system. No posttest score can be administered and entered into the data management system.

BSP 4002, 4003 Placement Option

To provide more alternative placement options due to the impact of COVID-19, the EdReady Alternative Assessment is approved to provide guidance on student placement.

The EdReady Diagnostic Placement Assessment tool provides the following:

1. Appropriate instructional level for distance learning students

2. An NRS EFL level that can be used as a "placeholder" in Colleague or LACES

3. Flexibility to programs who need to temporarily assign an NRS EFL level until an approved pretest can be administered

4. A proctor free, placement assessment that can be administered virtually

This online placement assessment tool does not allow for a pre/post test to determine a Measurable Skills Gain (MSG). An NRS approved pretest will need to be administered for a student to earn an MSG from pre/post testing.

See memo regarding "New EdReady Diagnostic Tool for Assigning and EFL Career Ready/RISE Participating Colleges, May 13, 2020". Options in this memorandum will be valid through the 2020-2021 academic year.
See the appendix for the "Process for Implementation of EdReady Alternative Assessment". Options in this workflow will be valid through the 2020-2021 academic year.

In the case of pre- and post-testing, a participant cannot achieve an MSG if the participant's EFL placement was provisionally assigned using an informal assessment method. MSG can only be achieved if the provisionally assigned EFL is later adjusted based on an NRS-approved pre-test score. The participant may,

however, achieve an MSG with a provisionally assigned EFL under the other three methods.

Administering Test Vendors' Virtual Testing

Local programs may implement virtual test proctoring using the assessments identified in this policy, in accordance with the test publisher's procedures for virtual testing. Program administrators must follow publishers' official guidance.

See "Memo Guidance for CCR Assessments During COVID-19 Crisis, April 1, 2020". Options in this memorandum will be valid through the 2020-2021 academic year.

Modification of the LEIS Form During the COVID-19 Crisis

Providers will have the option to black out any information on the LEIS form that would compromise their local institutions personal identifiable information (PII) policy and procedures. Any other changes to the LEIS form will not be allowed and will follow normal System Office LEIS policy.

See "Memo Guidance for Modification of the LEIS Form During the COVID-19 Crisis, May 12, 2020." Options in this memorandum will be valid through the 2020-2021 academic year.

APPENDIX:

NRS Approved Assessments for NC for Program Year 2020-2021

NRS Approved Assessments for ABE

Assessment	Forms	Format	Approval Period
CASAS GOALS			
Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems (CASAS)	Reading: 901A, 902A, 903B, 904B, 905C, 906C, 907D, 908D Math: 913A, 913B, 914A, 914B, 917C, 917D, 918C, 918D	paper and computer-based delivery format	Reading GOALS approved through Feb 5, 2025. Math GOALS approved through March 6, 2022.
TABE			
Tests of Adult Basic Ed (TABE)	Forms 11 & 12	paper and computer-based delivery format	Approved through Sep 7, 2024.

NRS Approved Assessments for ESL

Assessment	Forms	Format	Approval Period
CASAS			
Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems (CASAS) Reading Assessments (Life and Work Reading for ESL, Reading for Citizenship)	27, 28, 81A, 82A, 81AX, 82AX, 83B, 84B, 85C, 86C,185C, 186C, 187D, and188D 951A, 952A, 951AX, and 952AX	paper and computer-based delivery format	Approved through February 2, 2021.
Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems (CASAS) Life and Work Listening Assessments (LW Listening)	981L, 982L, 983L, 984L, 985L and 986L	paper and computer-based delivery format	Approved through February 2, 2021.
TABE			
Tests of Adult Basic Education Complete Language Assessment System—English (TABE/CLAS–E)	Forms A & B	Paper and computer-based delivery format	Approved through February 2, 2021.
BEST			
Basic English Skills Test (BEST) Literacy	B, C, & D	paper	Approved through February 2, 2021.
Basic English Skills Test (BEST) Plus 2.0	A, B, & C	paper and computer-adaptive delivery format	Approved through February 2, 2021.

Source: Federal Register September 7, 2017
Source: Federal Register February 5, 2018
Source: Federal Register September 21, 2018
Source: Federal Register March 7, 2019

NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM
Peter Hans, President

MEMORANDUM

TO: Basic Skills Directors, LEIS Coordinators

FROM: Dr. Marlena S. Everett, Director of Performance and Partners, CCR

DATE: April 1, 2020

SUBJECT: Guidance for CCR Assessments During the COVID-19 Crisis

Guidance on assessments during the COVID-19 crisis have now been developed and disseminated to State level adult education administrators by OCTAE. The following assessment guidelines were developed based on the guidelines shared by OCTAE. The College and Career Readiness Office (CCR) recognizes that local programs may not be able to conduct in-person testing of students enrolled in distance learning programs during program closures due to the COVID-19 crisis. If local programs are unable to conduct in-person testing, programs may be able to report measurable skill gains (MSG) using other measures available to AEFLA programs under the MSG indicator, such as credit completion or high school completion.

Providers may choose to develop procedures to implement virtual test proctoring. Providers that choose to use this flexibility must have procedures to ensure that (1) the student who is testing can be properly identified, (2) any approved test (i.e., any test determined suitable for use in the National Reporting System(NRS) that is used is properly secured, and (3) the virtual proctor can properly administer the test. Test security measures would require that only secure electronic versions of a test are administered by a virtual proctor and are deemed secure by the test publisher**.** Please note, that the CCR office is currently awaiting guidance from the test publishers on how this will occur.

Additionally, providers that are experiencing declines in testing rates should put procedures in place to identify students who were not tested due to an inability to conduct in-person testing, so that the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak can be appropriately tracked. Providers may use secure spreadsheets that do not include student Personally Identifiable Information (PII) to track students who did not receive an initial placement and/or pre-test.

Also, please remember that all participants enrolled in federally and state funded adult education programs must be given a pre-test. The pre-test is the basis for participant NRS level assignment and determination for entering an Educational Functioning Level (EFL). The pre-test for the program year or the first POP must be administered within the first twelve hours of class instruction.

Thank you all for your patience as we move forward through these unprecedented times.

CC:
Dr. Kimberly Gold, Senior Vice President, Chief Academic Officer
Gilda Rubio-Festa, Associate Vice President of College and Career Readiness
Nancye Gaj, Assistant State Director of College and Career Readiness

NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM
Peter Hans, President

MEMORANDUM

TO: Basic Skills Directors, LEIS Coordinators

FROM: Dr. Marlena S. Everett, Director of Performance and Partners, CCR

DATE: May 12, 2020

SUBJECT: Modification of the LEIS Form During the COVID-19 Crisis

Due to the COVID-19 crisis, providers will have the option to black out any information on the LEIS form that would compromise their local institutions personal identifiable information (PII) policy and procedures. Any other changes to the LEIS form will not be allowed and will follow normal System Office policy.

The information detailed in this memo is a temporary modification developed to be used only during the COVID-19 crisis.

Please keep in mind, programs have the autonomy to make local decisions regarding the collection of PII. Please always check your local policy and procedures of PII.

This modification is only approved during the COVID-19 crisis and may not be used once providers are able to return to meeting with students face-to-face. Please note, providers must collect this information, as it is important for data matching by the end of the program year which is June 30, 2021.

Thank you all for your cooperation these unprecedented times.

CC:
Dr. Kimberly Gold, Senior Vice President, Chief Academic Officer
Gilda Rubio-Festa, Associate Vice President of College and Career Readiness
Nancye Gaj, Assistant State Director of College and Career Readiness

NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM
Peter Hans, President

MEMORANDUM
Date: May 13, 2020

To: College and Career Readiness Directors

From: Gilda Rubio-Festa, AVP of College and Career Readiness

Subject: Guidance on Paper-Based Assessment Option during COVID 19

Recognizing that local providers need flexibility to continue to provide adult education and literacy activities to all students, CCR has convened two committees to advise about serving students from a distance. The first committee helped create the Alternative Learning Packet instructional option. The second committee, the COVID Assessment Response committee, has helped guide the new assessment option described below.

Since agencies are closed or have limited access to students during the COVD-19 health crisis, assessment has presented a significant challenge. Many students do not have access to the internet or to the type of devices required to do remote testing.

Beginning immediately and continuing through June 30, 2020, all local providers are granted the authority to determine the appropriate placement level for entering students through use of a local instructor recommended assessment tool. This tool may be a locally developed or recommended assessment instrument, or in the case of ELA students, an oral assessment administered via telephone. This score is to be used as a placeholder only until an official NRS approved assessment can be administered. The particular tool used does NOT have to have approval from the system office.

The goal of this guidance is to encourage local providers to enroll as many students as possible and begin instructing them at the appropriate level.

Many thanks to your colleagues, Terry Valentino and Ed King of McDowell Technical Community College, Michele Hall of Coastal Carolina Community College, Diane Matlock of Carteret Community College, Annie Barron of Central Piedmont Community College, and Julia Tennant of Wake Technical Community College for their thoughtful input and feedback in developing this guidance.

We hope this additional option helps programs continue to serve all students equitably.

CC: Nancye Gaj, Assistant State Director of Adult Education
Margaret Roberton, Director of Continuing Education and Student Services
Dr. Kimberly Gold, Senior Vice President, Chief Academic Officer

NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM

Peter Hans, President

MEMORANDUM

TO: Basic Skills Directors, LEIS Coordinators

FROM: Dr. Marlena S. Everett, Director of Performance and Partners, CCR

DATE: May 13, 2020

SUBJECT: New EdReady Diagnostic Tool for Assigning an EFL Career READY/RISE Participating Colleges

Due to the COVID-19 crisis, the CCR Career READY Core Committee has developed a new EdReady diagnostic tool to assist programs in placing new students in an appropriate Educational Functioning Level (EFL). This diagnostic tool has been developed to assist Career READY/RISE participating providers. This diagnostic tool is only approved for use via the web-based platform EdReady. Any provider who uses this tool for entry EFL placement, will have to manually enter the assigned EFL into Colleague on XLEPT to avoid receiving errors generated by the flat file submission process. For scores that correlate to the correct EFL placement, providers should refer to the reference document entitled "Process for Implementation of the EdReady Alternative Assessment." Instructions for staff are detailed below.

The diagnostic tool is **not** intended to be used as a pre- or post- test. It is simply a tool for providers, who are unable to use NRS approved tests, to use as a guide for determining the level of instruction that is required to facilitate learning for students served.

The information detailed in this memo is a temporary workflow developed to be used during the COVID-19 crisis. This temporary workflow has also been put in place to help providers to avoid error reports generated during the submission of the LEIS monthly flat file.

Providers who can use NRS approved virtual assessments to evaluate students, are to continue entering NRS test scores into Colleague. Providers who can use NRS approved virtual

assessments will **not** need to use the new diagnostic tool. This diagnostic tool is only approved for use via paper and pencil for students without access to technology.

Instructions for Staff Entering an EFL Placement in Colleague After Using the New Diagnostic Tool

1. The student must have attendance entered into the system to generate a POP. When the POP has been generated, the staff will drill down beside the POP to XLEPT. Once on XLEPT, the college can assign the EFL.

NOTE: When a student does not have an initial placement, a user can assign an EFL and enter it in this field. If the student later takes a test and an initial test is found, this field will be cleared.

If a student's Initial EFL displays as **NIP**, the final LEIS file will not be accepted by the System Office. Users should enter an **Assigned EFL** on **XLEPT** for the student.

This information can be found in the **Literacy Education Information System (LEIS) for College and Career Readiness (CCR) Manual, dated May 2018, on page 15.** The LEIS Manual can be found on the CCR Moodle site under 2019-2020 LEIS Training section under the Resources section. If colleges have any questions, please submit an incident ticket through Service Now.

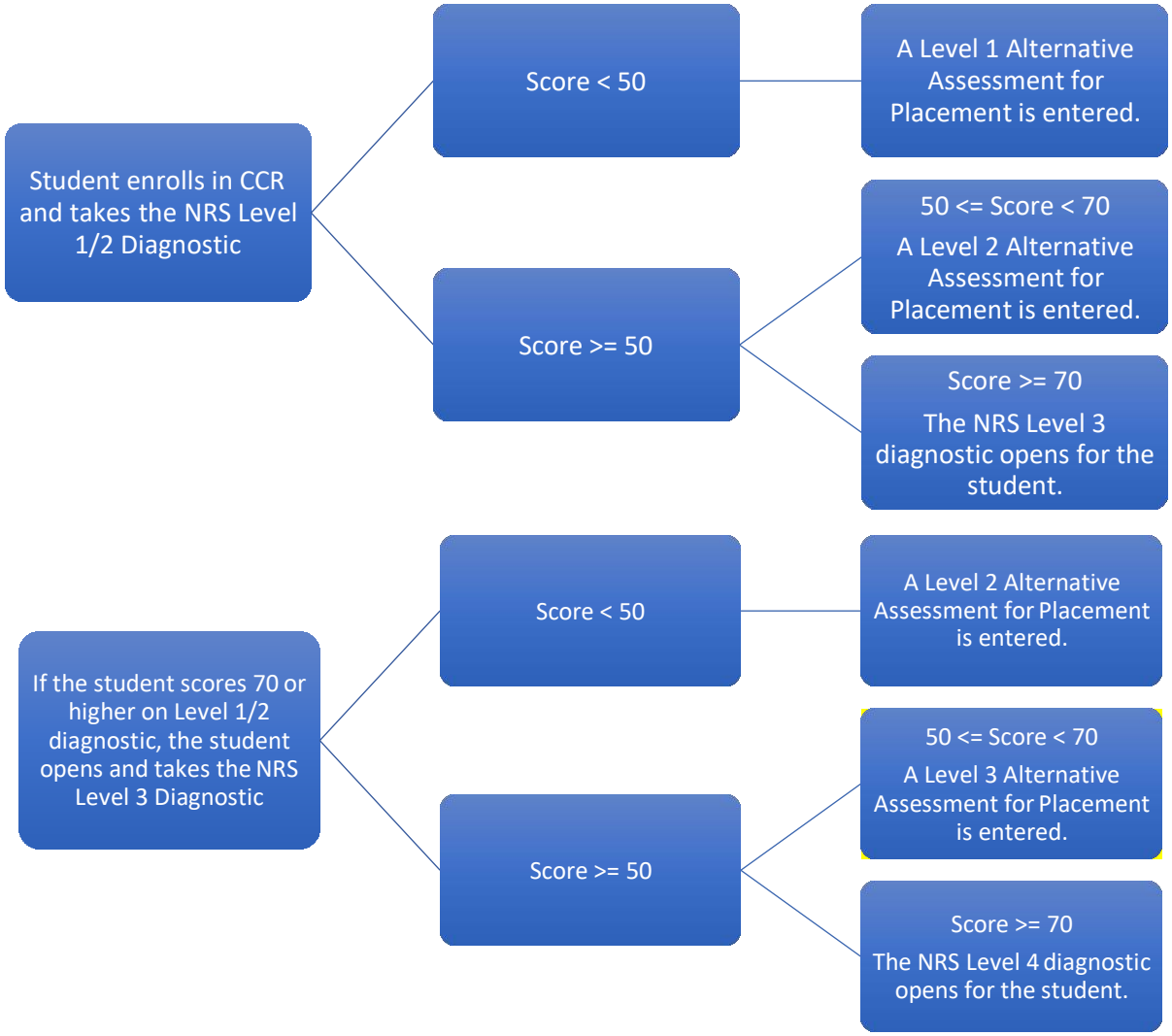
Many thanks to the Career READY Core Committee Members: Susan Huneycutt, Davidson County Community College, Laurie Weston, Pitt Community College, Dustin Walston, Lenoir Community College, and Nicole Worley, Sandhills Community College.

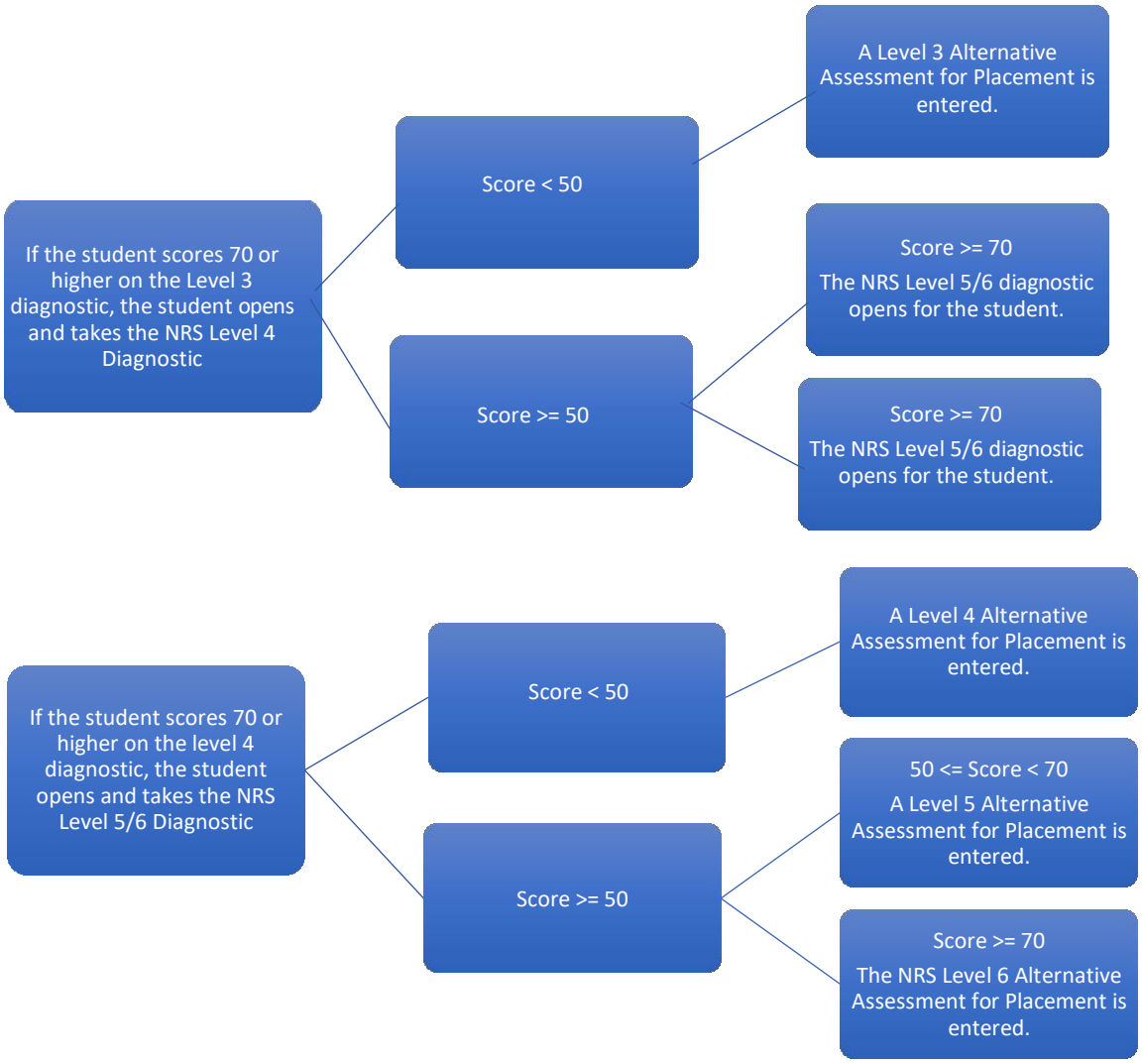
C: Dr. Kimberly Gold, Senior Vice President, Chief Academic Officer
Gilda Rubio-Festa, Associate Vice President of College and Career Readiness Nancye Gaj, Assistant State Director of College and Career Readiness

Process for Implementation of EdReady Alternative Assessment

1. Identify the System Administrator at your campus. Contact your regional Career READY representative if you need help identifying this individual.
2. Nicole McCabe is the NROC contact for North Carolina. She has made a form that schools can use to request this goal: https://bit.ly/CCR_AltAssessmentRequest.
3. When someone requests the goal, Nicole will copy the goal into their site. This will be the main "master" goal. If there needs to be several copies, then the EdReady Administrator will make those copies and give access to the goals.
4. The test is entitled BSP Career READY Prep.
5. The instructor, or student may enter the goal key (this is a local decision)

Flowchart for Determining the Correct Functional Level of a Student





Once students earn a satisfactory score, the EdReady system will automatically unlock the next diagnostic assessment. Instructors will not be required to manually unlock the diagnostic assessments for students.

Student Eligibility

It is recommended that the assessment be made available to all new incoming College and Career Readiness students as an alternate placement strategy. However, programs have the autonomy to make a local decision.

Test Administration

Please note, the EdReady Alternative Assessment may not be offered via paper. The assessment may only be facilitated via web. Proctoring is not required to facilitate the EdReady Alternative Assessment. However, colleges may make a local decision

regarding proctoring. Best practices indicate that program staff should orient and provide a brief tutorial about the assessment prior to administration.

Access to the EdReady Site

Please note, colleges must use their EdReady site to access the alternative assessment. The EdReady System Administrator must provide access to the College and Career Readiness Department. Programs must identify staff and personnel that are pertinent to the facilitation of this program.

Education Functioning Level Placement into Colleague Database

Please refer for to the Alternative Assessment Memo for Education Functioning Level (EFL) placement instructions.

Regional Area Career READY Representatives

Please contact your representative for help implementing this process.
Laurie Weston: Eastern Regional Area Career READY Representative
Susan Huneycutt: Western Regional Area Career READY Representative

College and Career Readiness Alternative Learning Packets FAQ July 21, 2020

Q1: What are Alternative Learning Packets (ALPs)?

A1: Alternative Learning Packets are print-based distance education courses approved in the 2020-2021 NC Assessment Manual.

Q2: Where can I find the NEW 2020-2021 Alternative Learning Packet Form?

A2: The Word version of the Alternative Learning Packet Form is located on the CCR NRS Assessment Training Website under "Important Documents."

Q3: How long will it take for my ALP to be approved?

A3: Expect the approval process to take 30 days from the date of your submission.

Q4: Do I need to resubmit ALPs that were approved during program year 2019-2020?

A4: No

Q5: What is the hour value of each Alternative Learning Packet?

A5: Each ALP can have an hour value of two, three, four, or five hours per packet.

Q6: Can Alternative Learning Packets be used as part of a traditional class?

A6: Yes

Q7: Can participants studying via ALPS also attend face-to-face and/or online classes?

A7: Yes

Q8: Can HSE in the Community be used as an Alternative Learning Packet?

A8: HSE in the Community is not an ALP. HSE in the Community is a fully approved curriculum created by Alamance Community College. You do not need to submit an approval form for HSE in the Community.

Q9: How do I learn more about HSE in the Community.

A9: Alamance has made all of the HSE in the Community materials including an Implementation Guide available through these links:

All HSE in the Community Lessons
Answer Keys for Booklets 6 -10
HSE in the Community Webinar Slides
Answer Keys for Booklets 1 – 5
Implementation Guide