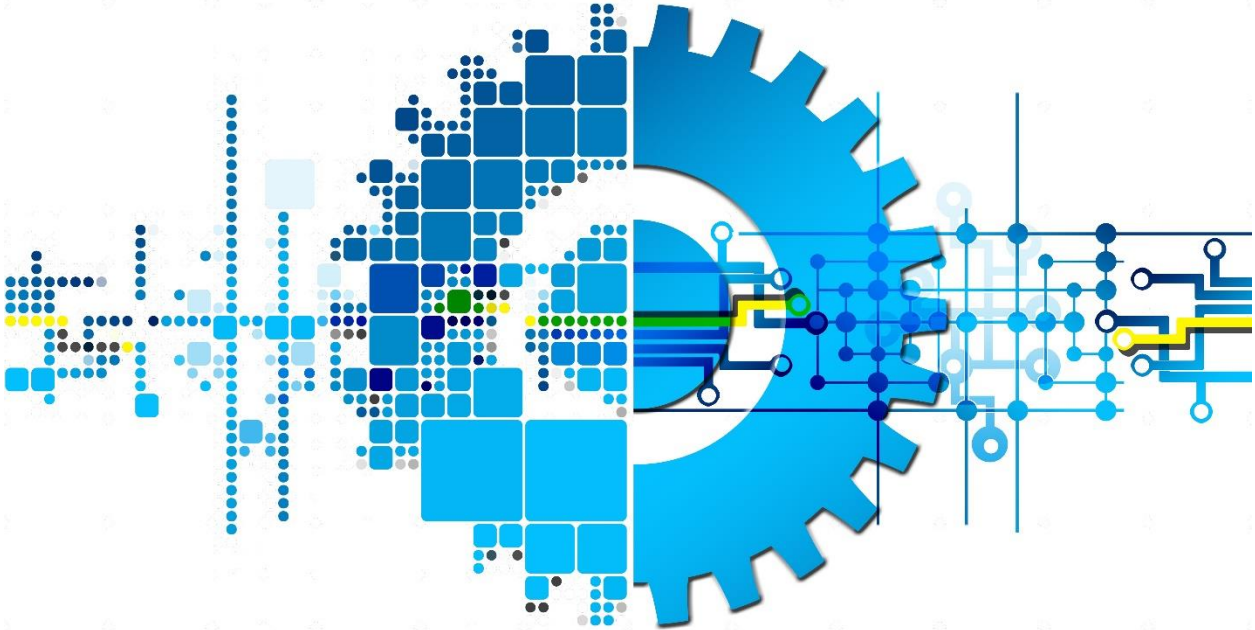# NC COMMUNITY COLLEGES
CREATING SUCCESS

NORTH CAROLINA COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS ASSESSMENT MANUAL
2022 – 2023

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, 2023 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, 2023 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 while they are transitioning to the ADVANSYS system, ADVANSYS for Community Colleges that have completed the transition, and ADVANSYS for all 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 ADVANSYS). 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 the appropriate data system (Colleague or ADVANSYS).

1. Use of Standardized Tests for Accountability

The following assessments are approved for North Carolina Basic Skills programs for the 2022-2023 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.

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 <mark>Basic Skills Plus Policies and Procedures Implementation Guide</mark>.

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 <mark>program year</mark>, 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.

<mark>Lookback Period Policy</mark>

<mark>A student with continuous enrollment from one program year to the next, will automatically have the last test within the 270-day window (Oct. 3 – June 30) pulled forward as their initial placement in the new program year. If the student has exited the program for at least 90 days and then begins a new Period of Participation (PoP) within the same program year, his/her test scores are valid for calculating EFL gain as long as the scores have not exceeded the 270-calendar day validity period. If the scores fall outside of this range, a new assessment must be administered within the first 12 hours of instruction in the new program year. If the student has exited the program for at least 90 days and then begins a new PoP in a new program year, his/her test scores are NOT valid for calculating EFL gain, and a new assessment must be administered</mark>

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.

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 while they are transitioning to the ADVANSYS system, ADVANSYS for Community Colleges that have completed the transition, and ADVANSYS for all 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 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 2022-2023 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 pretest 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.

The North Carolina Community College System Office, College and Career Readiness Department provides professional development and training on NRS and accountability policies as well as on certain approved assessment instruments. During the fiscal year, local programs funded by NC CCR must designate personnel to participate in staff development related to NRS and accountability policies, administration of assessments, scoring, interpretation of the results, and placement of adult learners. All professional development sessions are recorded and provided on the College and Career Readiness Professional Development webpage.

All personnel who administer any NRS approved assessment must complete training by certified trainers. All Basic Skills/literacy staff who are administer tests must have a refresher course every two years. 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).

The training opportunities are designed to address the following:

• Developing rapport with learners to minimize test anxiety and develop test-taking skills.

• Providing foundational information on the definition of measures.

• Administering and interpreting the assessment instrument.

• Understanding cultural diversity and the implications for successful student performance.

• Providing accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

• Identifying the appropriate level for placement and completion.

• Selecting instructional strategies based on assessment results.

• Understanding NRS policy, implementing accountability procedures, and data collection processes.

Training of personnel administering assessment instruments is required to ensure test security and appropriate testing procedures, including accommodations for students with disabilities. Adult educators and administrators designated to administer the state-approved assessments are required to abide by the assessment standards of the test publishers and NCCCS CCR established testing policies and guidelines.

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 | 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 |

11 & 12 TABE CLAS-E	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 the appropriate data management system 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 ADVANSYS, 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 ADVANSYS 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: <mark>Data Recognition Corp</mark>** 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- and 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.

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.

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.

APPENDIX:

NRS Approved Assessments for NC for Program Year 2022-2023

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 February 5, 2025. Math GOALS approved through March 7, 2023.
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, 2023.
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, 2023.
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, 2023.
BEST			
Basic English Skills Test (BEST) Literacy	B, C, & D	paper	Approved through February 2, 2023.
Basic English Skills Test (BEST) Plus 2.0	A, B, & C	paper and computer-adaptive delivery format	Approved through February 2, 2023.

Source: Federal Register September 7, 2017
Source: Federal Register February 5, 2018
Source: Federal Register September 21, 2018
Source: Federal Register March 7, 2019
Source: Federal Register August 7, 2020
Source: Federal Register December 6, 2021