



North Carolina Adult Education Assessment Manual 2026–2027

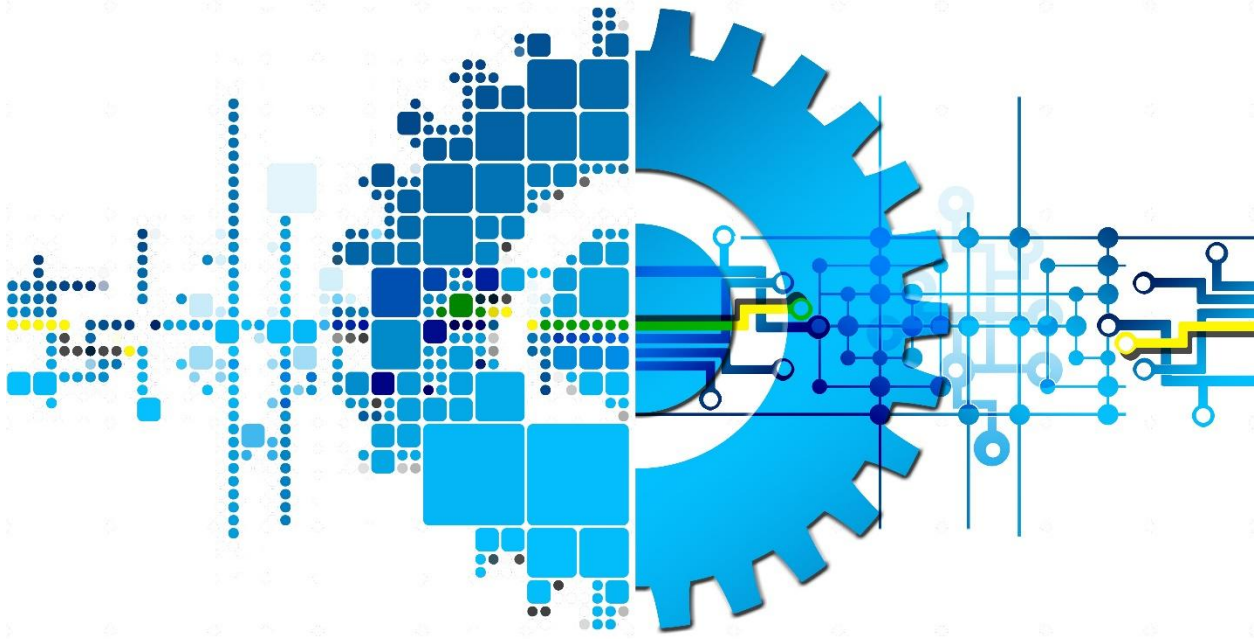


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Introduction

The North Carolina Adult Education Assessment Manual is the document which outlines the state's assessment policy for utilizing and administering assessments that are approved by the National Reporting Service (NRS). Such assessments are a required component of adult education programs that receive funding from the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA); it is required by the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE) that each state sets policies that govern the use of these assessments.

The Assessment Manual is updated each year as required by OCTAE; it is required that the policy therein is approved by OCTAE prior to use by the state. Training for each edition of the manual is facilitated by the Adult Education Assessment Office at the North Carolina Community College System.

The contents of this handbook were made possible through AEFLA funds from the United States Department of Education (ED) administered through the NCCCS Federal Programs unit. Content does not necessarily represent ED policy or [Universal Grant Guidance](#).

PUBLICATION CHANGE HISTORY

The handbook may be modified throughout the programs year with updates being highlighted and announced on the [NCCCS website](#).

Version	Publication Date	Author	Section(s) Revised
1.0	July 2026	NCCCS	Original

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Any revised or new content will be highlighted.

RESOURCES FOR INFORMATION AND OVERVIEW

Additional information, clarification, or technical assistance related to assessment policy or procedures can be found on the [NCCCS Adult Education webpage](#).

Section 1: Overview of the North Carolina Assessment Policy

The North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS) has developed policies and guidelines for the assessment of students in Title II-funded College and Career Readiness (CCR) programs. This document provides Adult Education programs with guidelines and policies 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 CCR classes must have an entering EFL as established by a standardized test, a Provisional Entering EFL, or an alternate placement. Local Adult Education 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 for ABE/ASE during the 2026-2027 program year include the following: Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) Reading GOALS, Math and Reading GOALS 2, Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) 11&12 and 13&14, and the American College Testing (ACT) WorkKeys. Allowable tests for ELA during the 2026-2027 program year include the following: CASAS Student Test of English Progress and Success (STEPS), Basic English Skills Test (BEST) Literacy 2.0, BEST Plus 3.0, and TABE CLAS-E Forms C/D. Refer to the [NRS Test Approval Periods document](#) for a complete list of approved forms and levels for all approved tests. For an exhaustive list of NRS approved test forms, please see the Appendix at the end of this document. In addition, local programs are encouraged to use a variety of informal assessments to assist instructional personnel in selecting appropriate teaching methods and materials.

Section 2: Setting the State Context

NEED FOR ASSESSMENT POLICY

Standardized, ongoing assessment of learners' progress in adult 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 all state and federally funded adult education 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. 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.

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 adult literacy skills.

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 for each student in the program. Each provider has the option to either use a paper-based or digital Literacy Education Information System (LEIS) form and enter student data at least once per week into ADVANSYS, or to enter data directly into the ContinuED feature in ADVANSYS, which will serve as the student's electronic LEIS form. Providers must also ensure that all relevant data are entered and approved in ADVANSYS within one week of initial entry in order to facilitate accurate reporting of all data in federal and state outcomes. Regular monitoring and evaluation of progress on federal measures is required to ensure continual program improvement.

Providers are required to submit data electronically using ADVANSYS. All data, including demographics, attendance, and assessments, must be entered at least once per week and approved within a week of entry. All Title II-funded programs are required to complete the following actions into ADVANSYS on a weekly basis:

1. Enter and Approve Student Registrations
2. Update and Approve Student Demographic Profiles (as needed)
3. Enter and Approve Student Test Scores
4. Enter and Approve Student Attendance
5. Enter and Approve Student Outcomes

Data must be collected for all eligible students receiving services provided by Title II AEFLA funds. This includes individuals in either the Reportable or Participant classification.

Participants

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. (For reference, each Program Year begins on July 1 of a given year and ends on June 30 of the following year.)

Participants are separated from an Adult Education program once 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 or through ContinuED into ADVANSYS. Some data are self-reported and thus should be provided by the student.

Reportables

Reportables are defined as individuals who have taken action that demonstrates an intent to use program services and who meet specific reporting criteria of the program. A Reportable has accumulated less than 12 hours of attendance, but has taken at least one of the following actions related to a local Adult Education program:

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

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 NRS-approved assessments used for accountability that are also approved for use in North Carolina are required to be entered by Adult Education Providers into ADVANSYS.

1. Use of Standardized Tests for Accountability

The following assessments are approved for North Carolina's Adult Education programs for the 2026–27 program year:

Assessment	ABE Alignment	ELA Alignment	ASE Alignment
CASAS Reading STEPS		Yes	
CASAS Listening STEPS		Yes	
CASAS Math and Reading GOALS 2.0	Yes		Yes
TABE, Forms 13 & 14	Yes		Yes
TABE CLAS-E, Forms C/D		Yes	
BEST Literacy 2.0/BEST Plus 3.0		Yes	
ACT WorkKeys Workplace Documents	Yes		Yes
ACT WorkKeys Applied Math	Yes		Yes

2. Use of Informal Assessments

The North Carolina Community College System Office encourages local Adult Education Providers to use a variety of informal assessments to assist instructional personnel in designing appropriate educational programs for adult learners. 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 have an initial placement; initial placements include a pre-test, an Entering EFL for Adult High School students, or an alternate placement. The initial placement is the basis for participant NRS level assignment and determination for entering an EFL. The initial placement for the first POP of each program year must be administered or assigned within a student's first 12 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 pre-tests for the POP. If a pre-test is not administered, the student will not have the opportunity to earn an EFL gain with a post-test.

Initial Level Placement/Assignment

Each student receives one initial level placement per POP based on their lowest valid score from any approved NRS pre-test or from an alternate placement. 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 for a Basic Skills Plus program, please reference the [WIOA Adult Education Providers' Guide](#).

New Options and Reporting Rows for Educational Functioning Level (EFL) Placement of Participants

At the state's sole discretion, states may exempt participants from NRS pre- and post-testing who are enrolled in programs designed to yield the following outcomes under the MSG indicator, as described in OCTAE Program Memorandum 17-2.

1. MSG Outcome Type:
 - b. Awarding of credits or Carnegie units.
 - c. Enrolled in postsecondary education and training during the program year.
2. Documented attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent.
3. Secondary or postsecondary transcript or report card for sufficient credit hours that shows a participant is meeting the state unit's academic standards.
4. Satisfactory or better progress report, toward established milestones, from an employer or training provider who is providing training.
5. Successfully passing an exam that is required for a particular occupation or progress in attaining technical or occupational skills, as evidenced by trade-related benchmarks.

Examples of such programs may include, but are not limited to, integrated education and training programs, workplace literacy programs, preparatory classes for high school equivalency testing, postsecondary bridge programs, adult high schools utilizing credits or Carnegie units, or other adult education programs designed to yield the MSG outcomes listed above. For these types of programs, with state approval, Providers may develop and implement alternative options for the EFL placement.

For example, a provider may use assessments that are content-driven or performance-driven such as locator tests, criterion referenced tests, diagnostic assessments, authentic assessments, or a provider may choose to develop and implement innovative crosswalks between program benchmarks and NRS EFL levels, which are then submitted to NCCCS for approval prior to use. The reporting of outcomes for participants in such programs must follow the data collection and validation requirements for the specific MSG type, as described in OCTAE Program Memorandum 19-1. Providers are not required to

exempt participants from pre- and post-testing and may continue to use assessment procedures that best meet the needs of the adult education program. Students with an alternative placement are reported on the “Alternative Placement” rows under ABE or ELA.

The following alternate placements may be used for ABE and ELA students who are seeking to earn MSGs 1b through 5. If a student cannot place on an NRS assessment due to low pre-test performance, do not use alternate placement; use NRS level 1 as a Provisional Entering EFL until the student is able to earn a valid pre-test score. Alternate placement may only be used for students who are seeking an MSG other than MSG 1a.

Student Type and MSG Type	Description	Potential MSG	Alternate Placement Documentation	Approval Method
HSE and MPHSE Diploma Seeking Students	Students who have passed official exams can take the official practice test (GED or HiSET) in an area(s) that they still need to complete. <i>Example:</i> Students may enroll in an intense bootcamp for that subject area in hopes of sitting for and passing the remaining section(s) of the official exam(s) to complete their HSE diploma.	1d, 2	A copy of an official HSE practice exam (GED Ready or HiSET Official Practice Test) maintained in the student’s master file. A GED Ready exam should have a score in the “Too Close to Call” or “Likely to Pass” range; a HiSET OPT should have a score in the “Somewhat Prepared” range or higher.	Provider will submit the Alternate Placement Approval Form for review by NCCCS (see the “ADVANSYS Resources” on the NCCCS Performance and Accountability page).
HSE Diploma Seeking Students – Spanish	Students seeking to complete their HSE diploma in Spanish can take an official practice test (GED or HiSET) in an area(s) they still need to complete.	1d, 2	A copy of an official HSE practice exam in Spanish (GED Ready or HiSET Official Practice Test) maintained in the student’s master file. A GED Ready exam should have a score in the “Too Close to Call” or “Likely to Pass” range; a HiSET OPT should have a score in the “Somewhat Prepared” range or higher.	Provider will submit the Alternate Placement Approval Form for review by NCCCS (see the “ADVANSYS Resources” on the NCCCS Performance and Accountability page). .

Student Type and MSG Type	Description	Potential MSG	Alternate Placement Documentation	Approval Method
Students intending to enroll in curriculum or continuing education programs who need academic refresher courses AND have never enrolled in or earned a curriculum credit.	Students enroll in Adult Education refresher courses prior to curriculum enrollment.	1c	A copy of the student's official transcript demonstrating secondary educational completion (high school, Adult High School, or High School Equivalency) maintained in the student's master file	Provider will submit the Alternate Placement Approval Form for review by NCCCS (see the "ADVANSYS Resources" on the NCCCS Performance and Accountability page).
Career Pathway/IET and Workplace Literacy students	Where state approved, students enrolled in a career pathway/IET or workplace literacy program. The use of alternate placement for a career pathway/IET must be noted on the provider's current career pathway/IET template on file with NCCCS.	3-5	Documentation of student's IET/Workplace Literacy participation in student's master file	Provider will submit the Alternate Placement Approval Form for review by NCCCS (see the "ADVANSYS Resources" on the NCCCS Performance and Accountability page). A copy of the alternate placement assessment must be submitted with the form to demonstrate alignment with the Career Pathway's specific objectives and outcomes.

Beyond the First POP

If a student returns to a local Adult Education program after 90 or more days of separation, the student will begin a new POP. In order to resume instruction, it is necessary for the student to establish an initial placement for their new POP; this may be accomplished by assigning an alternate placement if applicable; manually entering the EFL that reflects the most recent test from their previous POP; or, if more than six months have elapsed since the most recent test, taking a new pre-test. The initial

placement for the second or third POP must be established before the student reaches 12 hours of attendance.

This guidance is only applicable to students who separate and reenter within the same program year. If a student separates, then reenters in a new program year, the student will need to take a pre-test or take an alternate assessment measure to establish an entering EFL for the new year.

Lookback Period Policy

A student with continuous enrollment from one program year to the next will automatically have the last test within the 270-day window (Oct. 4 – June 30) pulled forward as their initial placement in the new program year. A student who begins a new POP within the same program year must either pre-test or bring forward the EFL from their most recent test in order to establish a new initial placement. 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.

4. Progress/Post-test

NRS approved tests given after the pre-tests that correspond to the manufacturer and subject area of any of the pre-tests are considered post-tests. Progression can be shown in any subject area. For example, if a student has a pre-test of CASAS Reading GOALS assessment, 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 M13 Math pre-test, the next allowable tests are TABE Math M14, D13, D14, A13, or A14. Annually, Providers are required to post-test a minimum of 65% of participants who are in levels or programs eligible for post-test gains.

5. Measurable Skill Gain

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

A participant may earn an MSG in one of the following ways, depending on their program of study:

- Achieving a level gain from a participant's NRS approved pre-test and post-test 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).*
- Enrolling in postsecondary education and training during participation in adult education (the adult education enrollment must come first).
- Passing an HSE subtest (GED or HiSET) within the program year.

A participant enrolled in an Integrated Education and Training program (IET) has the following additional options for earning an MSG:

- Satisfactory or better progress report, towards established milestones, such as completion of OJT or completion of one year of an apprenticeship program or similar milestones, from an employer or training provider who is providing training.
- Successful passage of an exam that is required for a particular occupation or progress in attaining technical or occupational skills as evidenced by trade-related benchmarks, such as knowledge-based exams.
- Secondary or postsecondary transcript or report card for a sufficient number of credit hours that shows a participant is meeting the State unit's academic standards.

Every effort should be made to ensure that a student accrues sufficient instructional hours to make an MSG before taking a post-test. However, per OCTAE policy, "Programs should not delay enrollment or services to participants until a new program year even if programs believe there is insufficient time for the participant to make any type of Measurable Skill Gain by the end of that program year." (OCTAE PM 17.2, pg. 23) Eligible students may not be denied enrollment into Adult Education programs, regardless of the time of year when they seek to enroll.

*In North Carolina, postsecondary enrollment is subject to the submission of Continuing Education Institutional Class Report as well as the National Student Clearinghouse, which is submitted after each semester load periods end.

Retroactive MSG

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

1. Pre- and Post-test of a participant with one or more valid assessments in the first POP
 - a. Upon return in a new POP within the same program year, a participant should be given a new pre-test, or the previous Entering EFL should be brought forward into the new POP.
 - b. If the participant did not have an MSG in the prior POP, the test given will be used as the pre-test for POP2 and as the post-test for POP1, if a gain is achieved.
 - c. If the MSG was applied retroactively, the current POP will need an additional post-test, after meeting test manufacturer's guidelines.
2. HSE, AHS, or Multiple Pathways to HSE (MPHSE) Diploma
 - a. Students with multiple POPs may earn an MSG for attaining their HSE, AHS, or MPHSE diploma in all current and retroactive POPs within the same program year.

SUMMARY AND OVERVIEW

Initial Screening, Appraisal Tests, and Placement into Program

At least 65% of North Carolina's CCR students must be post-tested each program year with one of the NRS approved assessments (see Appendix). Appraisals and Locators are short assessments designed to accurately determine the appropriate pre-test level for students. An Appraisal or Locator test should be used per test manufacturers' guidelines 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 can be placed at the ASE level automatically upon enrollment; however, if a provider so chooses, they may take the option to pre-test an AHS student in an appropriate NRS-approved assessment upon intake. AHS students who pre-test will be eligible to earn an MSG by making an EFL gain on a post-test. Please see the [AHS Implementation Guide](#) for more information about EFL gain options for AHS students through either pre- and post-testing or by earning Carnegie units.

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. Unless an alternate placement option is used, 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 initial placement 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 pre-tests 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 (NRS Level 6) or are placed using an alternate assessment are excluded from this 65% goal.

Goal Setting

Providers should have a goal setting process for students to meet with an instructor, intake specialist, or other designated program staff 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 skills would be a short-term goal.

In order to better assist students with identifying, clarifying, and continually working toward their desired outcomes, it is recommended – though not required – that an instructor, advisor, or other staff member enter students' goals into ADVANSYS or an internal system upon program entry. Consistent

student advising will assist with tracking goal completion and, if necessary, revising short- and long-term goals to focus on.

Section 3: General Assessment Requirements

PARTICIPANTS ASSESSED

OCTAE and NRS have determined and approved which assessments are appropriate for measuring student skill levels in Adult Education programs and assessing student progress. All Adult Education students must have valid/in-range score(s), as defined by the test manufacturer's guidelines, entered into the appropriate data system. Students must be pre-tested and post-tested on an approved NRS assessment (see Appendix) 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 (NRS Level 6) 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 ADVANSYS.

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 as specified by the appropriate test publisher. Assessment training links and other relevant information will be listed on the [NCCCS Performance and Accountability webpage](#). All Adult Education program 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.

All assessment administrators must adhere to the following principles of testing integrity:

- Students may not be provided with assistance in answering test questions.
- All testing administrations must be fully proctored in a secure environment with the test administrator remaining in the testing space for the duration of the assessment.
- Test items may not be used or made available for instructional purposes.

ASSESSMENTS PERMITTED

The following assessments meet the NRS requirements and may be used by local Providers for reporting EFL placement and gains during the 2026-2027 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.

Assessment	ABE Alignment	ELA Alignment	ASE Alignment
CASAS Reading STEPS		Yes	
CASAS Listening STEPS		Yes	
CASAS Math and Reading GOALS 2.0	Yes		Yes
TABE, Forms 13 & 14	Yes		Yes
TABE CLAS-E, Forms C/D		Yes	
BEST Literacy 2.0/BEST Plus 3.0		Yes	
ACT WorkKeys Workplace Documents	Yes		Yes
ACT WorkKeys Applied Math	Yes		Yes

SUBJECT AREAS ASSESSED

Assessment	Reading	Math	Writing	Listening	Other
CASAS GOALS 2	Yes	Yes			
TABE, Forms 13 & 14	Yes	Yes			Language
ACT WorkKeys	Yes	Yes			
BEST Literacy 2.0 & BEST Plus 3.0	Yes		Yes	Yes	Communication Fluency Pronunciation
CASAS STEPS	Yes			Yes	
TABE CLAS-E, Forms C/D	Yes		Yes	Yes	Speaking

INITIAL PLACEMENT REQUIREMENT

Initial placements must be determined at least once per program year, and their resulting scores should be entered into ADVANSYS. Each new POP must either begin with a new pre-test; by bringing forward the EFL from the most recent test in that program year; or by assigning an Alternate Placement. 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.

*Please note that for ELA students, a score that falls into the ELA Graduate criteria is not considered a valid pre-test. It will be necessary for a student scoring at that level in a pre-test to retest in an NRS-approved assessment for ABE students, either CASAS GOALS 2, TABE 13/14, or ACT WorkKeys. Please see Section 5 of this manual for the ELA Graduate cut-off scores for each ELA assessment. A student who

post-tests into the **ELA Graduate** range **in one subject area** may continue to take ELA assessments until **ELA Graduate** status has been reached in all possible content areas.

APPRAISAL / LOCATOR

Appraisals and locator tests are short assessments designed to determine the appropriate pre-test to administer for students. 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. If the NRS-approved assessment being used has an appraisal or locator test, then those tests **must** be administered prior to the test battery. 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

Assessment	Using Different Test Forms	Using the Same Test Form
CASAS	70-100 Hours	
TABE 13/14 (NRS Lvl. 1-4)	50-60 Hours	120 Hours*
TABE 13/14 (NRS Lvl. 5-6)	30-59 Hours	120 Hours*
TABE CLAS-E	50-60 Hours	100-140 Hours*
ACT WorkKeys	30 Hours	
BEST	80-100 Hours	

*Note: Although vendors allow for retesting students with the same test form with more hours in between, this option is not applicable to North Carolina Adult Education Providers. Programs in North Carolina must use different forms for pre-tests and post-tests based on ADVANSYS's programming and capabilities.

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. Within each POP, post-testing should only occur once a student has accrued the minimum hours after pre-testing in the relevant test.

Manufacturer's Minimum Post-Testing Requirements

Assessment	Required Hours
CASAS	40 Hours

Assessment	Required Hours
TABE 13/14 (NRS Lvl. 1-4)	40 Hours
TABE 13/14 (NRS Lvl. 5-6)	30 Hours
TABE CLAS-E	40 Hours
BEST Literacy 2.0/BEST Plus 3.0	40 Hours
ACT WorkKeys	30 Hours

For TABE 13/14, the minimum number of hours for retesting students at 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 as listed above 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 per POP based on their lowest valid score from any approved NRS pre-test. 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 (NRS Level 4) on Math and Low ASE (NRS Level 5) 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 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 [CCR Professional Development webpage](#).

All personnel who administer any NRS approved assessment must complete the test manufacturer's required training process. All Adult Education program staff who 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 the 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 who administer 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's established testing policies and guidelines for Adult Education Providers.

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, DRC 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 webpage with accommodations guidance 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 the complete guide to CASAS testing accommodations, please see: [CASAS Testing Accommodations Guidelines](#).

Students who do not hear, speak, or see, should not be administered the BEST Plus 3.0 Test per the publisher guidelines and should instead be administered the BEST Literacy 2.0 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 Adult Education 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

Assessment	Students for Whom Assessment is Appropriate
CASAS GOALS 2	ABE, ASE, AHS
CASAS STEPS	ELA
TABE, Forms 13 & 14	ABE, ASE, AHS
TABE CLAS-E, Forms C/D	ELA
BEST	ELA
ACT WorkKeys	ABE, ASE

ALTERNATE FORMS/USE OF APPRAISAL/SUBTESTS

Assessment	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 13 & 14	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. Minus the Locator, the TABE 13/14 complete battery takes a maximum of three hours and thirty minutes to administer.
TABE CLAS-E	TABE CLAS-E has subtests in reading, listening, writing, and speaking. Minus the Locator, the complete battery in Forms C/D takes a maximum of two hours and twenty minutes to administer.
BEST Literacy 2.0	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 3.0	BEST Plus 3.0 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. Skills in the following areas are assessed: • 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

Assessment	Alternate Forms/Use of Appraisal/Subtests
ACT WorkKeys	The Workplace Documents and Applied Math assessments are valid for pre- and post-testing. Both assessments are 55 minutes and can be delivered in either a paper-based or computer-based format. The Workplace Documents assessment measures proficiency in reading and comprehending documents that may be used in the workplace. The Applied Math assessment measures proficiency in critical thinking, mathematical reasoning, and problem solving in a workplace context.
CASAS	The majority of CASAS assessments require the use of an appraisal test. Multiple alternate forms are available. Subtests: reading, math, listening.

TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

Assessment	Training Requirements
CASAS	CASAS facilitates all training online through their Training and Resources website . Implementation Training is required prior to administering any CASAS assessment to students. Once initial training is complete, staff should attend refresher sessions every two years. NCCCS requires all local agencies to comply with the CASAS training policy presented above.
TABE	All Adult Education program staff who assess students using TABE must complete certification. Once initial training is complete, staff should attend refresher sessions every two years. Staff should review the test examiner's manual and follow the directions as printed. The TABE website houses certification or TABE 13/14 and for CLAS-E Forms C/D. NCCCS requires all local agencies to comply with the TABE training policy presented above.
BEST Literacy 2.0	The Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) does not provide any formal training for the BEST Literacy 2.0 test but does provide a manual. Any staff member who has read the BEST Literacy 2.0 manual is permitted to administer the test. NCCCS requires all local agencies to comply with the CAL training policy presented above.
BEST Plus 3.0	CAL requires that Adult Education program staff who use BEST Plus 3.0 to assess students must be trained in administering the test. Prospective test administrators may either participate in training workshops facilitated by CAL or by local certified trainers. Once initial training is complete, staff should attend refresher sessions every two years. NCCCS requires all local agencies to comply with the CAL training policy presented above.

Assessment	Training Requirements
ACT WorkKeys	ACT requires that WorkKeys testing administrators follow a specific training sequence. After reading the Test Administration Manual and related documents, new administrators should view the WorkKeys on-demand webinar and access the training site. The WorkKeys training checklist can be accessed from ACT's website .

TIME WHEN POST-TESTING SHOULD OCCUR

Assessment	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	If the pre- and post-test are for the same level but using a different form (e.g., TABE 13 Level M to TABE 14 level M): 60 hours for students at NRS Levels 1-4 and NRS ELA Levels 1-6, and 30 hours for students at NRS levels 5- 6. ➤ 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

Assessment	Time When Post-Testing Should Occur
	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 2.0/ BEST Plus 3.0	40 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.
ACT WorkKeys	ACT recommends that learners participate in at least 30 hours of instruction between pre-testing and post-testing in WorkKeys. This is the time that an average learner should be engaged in the curriculum that can produce a measurable skill gain in taking the ACT WorkKey assessments. Obviously, there can be many factors that can influence the time between pre and post testing to produce a measurable skill gain in an individual. Diligence, discipline, effective use of time, and desire (to name just a few) in the individual can reduce the time for a measurable skill gain, or lack thereof can increase the time between pre and post-test.

GUIDELINES FOR RAW SCORE CONVERSION TO SCALE SCORES/USING SCALE SCORES TO PLACE LEARNERS INTO NRS LEVELS

Assessment	Guidelines
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	See TABE Scoring Guides for information on scale scores.
BEST	See BEST Literacy 2.0/BEST Plus 3.0 manual for information on scale scores.
ACT WorkKeys	Scale score conversions are available on the ACT WorkKeys website .

QUALITY CONTROL PROCEDURES

Testing data must be entered into ADVANSYS at least once each week. In order to ensure high quality data, ADVANSYS utilizes a system in which all data must be approved prior to final entry; all data approvals must be completed no later than one week from the initial entry date.

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.

Standardized Assessment Checklist

Assessment Procedures for Test Administrators	Status (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 recorded in ADVANSYS at least once per week and approved within a week of entry.	
12. Test materials are stored in a secure locked location when not in use.	

Information Regarding Purchasing of Assessments

Assessment	Purchasing Information
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	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/2.0 BEST Plus 2.0/3.0	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.)
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.

Assessment	Purchasing Information
TABE	Website Orders: Data Recognition Corp DRC allows most products to be purchased online. Phone Orders: 800-538-9547 Email Orders: shelfcustomerservice@datarecognitioncorp.com

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 ELA literacy level and low beginning ELA level), however, programs should be cautious to not have classes of students functioning at a wide range of NRS levels if possible.

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 2 (Scaled Scores)

NRS EFL	GLE Range	CASAS Reading GOALS 2	CASAS Math GOALS 2
Beginning ABE Literacy (Level 1)	0-1	203 or <	192 or <
Beginning Basic Education (Level 2)	2-3	204-216	193-203
Low Intermediate Basic Education (Level 3)	4-5	217-227	204-213
Middle Intermediate Basic Education (Level 4)	6-7	228-238	214-224
High Intermediate Basic Education (Level 5)	7-8	239-248	225-235
Adult Secondary Education (Level 6)	9-12	249 or >	236 or >

ACT WorkKeys (Scaled Scores)

NRS EFL	GLE Range	CASAS Reading GOALS 2	CASAS Math GOALS 2
Beginning ABE Literacy (Level 1)	0-1	203 or <	192 or <
Beginning Basic Education (Level 2)	2-3	204-216	193-203
Low Intermediate Basic Education (Level 3)	4-5	217-227	204-213
Middle Intermediate Basic Education (Level 4)	6-7	228-238	214-224
High Intermediate Basic Education (Level 5)	7-8	239-248	225-235
Adult Secondary Education (Level 6)	9-12	249 or >	236 or >

TABE 13/14 (Scaled Scores)

NRS EFL	GLE Range	TABE 13/14 Reading	TABE 13/14 Math
Beginning ABE Literacy (Level 1)	0-1	300-441	300-448
Beginning Basic Education (Level 2)	2-3	442-500	449-495
Low Intermediate Basic Education (Level 3)	4-5	501-535	496-536
High Intermediate Basic Education (Level 4)	6-8	536-575	537-595
Low Adult Secondary Education (Level 5)	9-10	576-616	596-656
High Adult Secondary Education (Level 6)	11-12	617-800	657-800

NRS LEVELS AND SCORE RANGES FOR ELA ASSESSMENTS

TABE CLAS-E Forms C/D When Reporting Reading or Writing Separately (Scaled Scores)

NRS EFL	Reading	Writing
Beginning ELA Literacy (Level 1)	200-354	210-384
Low Beginning ELA (Level 2)	355-388	385-414
High Beginning ELA (Level 3)	389-427	415-437
Low Intermediate ELA (Level 4)	428-448	438-461
High Intermediate ELA (Level 5)	449-487	462-500
Advanced ELA (Level 6)	488-580	501-670

TABE CLAS-E Forms C/D When Reporting Listening or Speaking Separately (Scaled Scores)

NRS EFL	Listening	Speaking
Beginning ELA Literacy (Level 1)	200-348	170-338
Low Beginning ELA (Level 2)	349-389	339-402
High Beginning ELA (Level 3)	390-427	403-436
Low Intermediate ELA (Level 4)	428-457	437-475
High Intermediate ELA (Level 5)	458-488	476-542
Advanced ELA (Level 6)	489-620	543-760

BEST Literacy 2.0

NRS EFL	Reading	Writing	Composite
Beginning ELA Literacy (Level 1)	100-177	100-187	100-182
Low Beginning ELA (Level 2)	178-203	188-214	183-209
High Beginning ELA (Level 3)	204-233	215-254	210-244
Low Intermediate ELA (Level 4)	234-261	255-300	245-300
High Intermediate ELA (Level 5)	262-300		
Advanced ELA (Level 6)	n/a		

BEST Plus 3.0

NRS EFL	Computer-Based Test	Print-Based Test
Beginning ELA Literacy (Level 1)	600-677	600-677
Low Beginning ELA (Level 2)	678-702	678-702
High Beginning ELA (Level 3)	703-726	703-726
Low Intermediate ELA (Level 4)	727-752	727-752
High Intermediate ELA (Level 5)	753-785	n/a
Advanced ELA (Level 6)	786-849	n/a

CASAS STEPS (Scaled Scores)

NRS EFL	Reading STEPS	Listening STEPS
Beginning ELA Literacy (Level 1)	160 or <	158 or <
Low Beginning ELA (Level 2)	184-196	182-191
High Beginning ELA (Level 3)	197-206	192-201
Low Intermediate ELA (Level 4)	207-216	202-211
High Intermediate ELA (Level 5)	217-227	212-221
Advanced ELA (Level 6)	228-238	222-231

EXIT CRITERIA FROM ADVANCED ELA

- TABE CLAS-E C/D Reading - 527 and above
- TABE CLAS-E C/D Writing - 536 and above
- TABE CLAS-E C/D Listening - 533 and above
- TABE CLAS-E C/D Speaking - 568 and above
- (These TABE CLAS-E scores serve only as exit criteria. Students must retest in an approved ABE assessment to determine ABE or ASE placement.)
- CASAS Reading STEPS - 239 and above
- CASAS Listening STEPS - 232 and above
- BEST Plus 3.0 – 850 and above
- BEST Literacy 2.0 does not have exit criteria.

Section 6: Assessment of Distance Learners

DEFINITION OF DISTANCE LEARNING PROGRAMS

Distance education is defined by OCTAE as “formal learning activity where students and instructors are separated by geography, time, or both for the majority of the instructional period.” (NRS 2021 Technical Assistance Guide). 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; others are better described as hybrid or blended models, which combine face-to-face classroom learning with distance education methods.

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. More information about the NCCCS distance learning policies and procedures can be found in the [Adult Education Distance Learning Manual](#).

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 CCR students who participate in distance education must be pre-and post-tested using an NRS approved assessment; any assessment listed in the Appendix may be used. 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 in-person assessments must occur in secure, proctored settings, but it is permissible to arrange for remotely proctored 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 NRS-approved test 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 2026-2027

NRS Approved Assessments for ABE

Assessment	Forms	Format	Approval Period
Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems (CASAS) – GOALS 2 Series	Math: 921/922, 923/924, 925/926, 927/928, 929/930	paper and computer-based delivery format	Math: Approved through July 13, 2030. Reading: Approved through May 8, 2032.
Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE)	Forms 13 & 14	paper and computer-based delivery format	Approved through June 20, 2027.
American College Testing - WorkKeys	Workplace Documents: 014, 015, 016, 017 (computer-based); J18DJ, J19DJ, J20DJ, J21DJ (paper-based) Applied Math: 018, 019, 020, 021 (computer-based); J14DH, J15DH, J16DH, J17DH (paper-based)	paper- and computer-based delivery format	Approved through May 14, 2033.

NRS Approved Assessments for ELA

Assessment	Forms	Format	Approval Period
Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems (CASAS) Reading Assessments (STEPS)	621/622, 623/624, 625/626, 627/628, 629/630	paper and computer-based delivery format	Approved through July 13, 2030.
Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems (CASAS) Listening Assessments (STEPS)	621/622, 623/624, 625/626, 627/628, 629/630	paper and computer-based delivery format	Approved through July 13, 2030.
Tests of Adult Basic Education Complete Language Assessment System—English (TABE/CLAS–E)	Forms C & D	paper and computer-based delivery format	Approved through June 30, 2028.
Basic English Skills Test (BEST) Literacy 2.0	1, 2, and 3	paper	Approved through July 13, 2030.
Basic English Skills Test (BEST) Plus 3.0	1 and 2	paper and computer- adaptive delivery format	Approved through July 13, 2030.

Source: [NRS Test Approval Periods \(May 2026 edition\)](#).