

# Idaho Adult Basic Education FY16 State Assessment Policy

Division of Professional-Technical Education  
Current for: July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016

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# Idaho Assessment Policy (FY15-16)

The following assessment policy was developed in accordance with state and federal regulations to provide Idaho's Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs information and guidance about federal legislation and the role of assessment in accountability. The intent of this policy is to direct programs in their assessment activities including: which assessment instruments must be used, when assessments are conducted, how information is collected, and the responsibility for providing training to staff.

This policy contains the following sections:

- **State Context:** An overview of the accountability structure for ABE programs, the need for assessment, and a list of resources for further information.
- **General Assessment Requirements:** Information pertaining to all assessment practices, including: learners to be assessed, assessments permitted, general procedures, training for administering assessments, and accommodating students with special needs.
- **Guidelines for Each Assessment:** Information pertaining to specific assessment instruments, including: detailed information on how staff is to administer each assessment approved by the state, scoring procedures, and how assessment scores are linked to NRS levels.

## State Context

The intent of this section is to provide an overview of the accountability structure for ABE programs, explain the need for assessment and an assessment policy, and provide a list of resources for further information.

### *Accountability Structure*

Adult Basic Education is an important part of the workforce investment system and is authorized and funded under Title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014, also known as the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA). The purpose of this act is to create a partnership among the federal government, states, and localities to provide, on a voluntary basis, adult education and literacy services in order to:

- Assist adults to become literate and obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and self-sufficiency;
- Assist adults who are parents to obtain the educational skills necessary to become full partners in the educational development of their children; and
- Assist adults in the completion of a secondary school education.

In an effort to measure and improve the impact and effectiveness of AEFLA-funded activities, the US Department of Education requires all participating programs to adhere to a standardized accountability system. Through this system, the USDE provides a means by which programs can report student progress and outcomes in a valid, reliable, and measurable manner and make informed, data-driven decisions regarding improvement efforts. Not only do the accountability

standards allow administrators and programs to measure their effectiveness, they also provide a means for collecting reliable data. This data can be used to support requests for funding as well as negotiating in the collaboration process with partners.

The accountability system within Adult Basic Education reaches across all levels of the program, from the federal to the local level. This assessment policy is intended to provide local programs with targeted guidance around a specific aspect of the accountability system, namely how we measure and track student learning and skill development. Below is a brief description of the federal, state, and local roles within the overall accountability structure.

### **Federal Role**

Because Adult Basic Education programs are funded under federal legislation, they must adhere to all accountability requirements set forth therein. Established within the law (AEFLA) are the basic accountability requirements for ABE programs. In order to standardize the interpretation and implementation of these requirements, the U.S. Department of Education created the National Reporting System (NRS), which establishes a national accountability system for adult education programs.

The NRS interprets the basic accountability standards provided in AEFLA and gives guidance to states regarding reporting and accountability standards as they relate the impact of adult education instruction. Specifically, the NRS:

- Establishes a set of five measures for student outcomes as a result of participation;
  - **Educational Gain:** achieve skills to advance educational functioning level (while enrolled)
  - **Enter Employment:** whether the student obtained a job by the end of the first quarter after exiting the program
  - **Retain Employment:** whether students who entered employment still have a job in the third quarter after exit and also applies to students who enter the program employed
  - **Secondary Diploma or GED:** whether students obtain a state-recognized high equivalent after exiting.
  - **Enter Postsecondary Education or Training:** whether students enroll in a postsecondary educational or occupational skills training program after exiting.
- Defines a set of educational functioning levels and criteria for student placement and advancement within those levels,
- Establishes methods and requirements for data collection and reporting, and
- Provides a standard for training activities regarding requirements and procedures.

As noted above, the NRS establishes five performance measures regarding possible student outcomes. States must report the appropriate measures on all students who receive 12 hours or more of service. Four of these outcomes are in regard to achievements students obtain after exiting the ABE program, and are not discussed in this policy.

The remaining outcome, *Educational Gain*, is measured when a learner completes or advances one or more Educational Functioning Levels (EFLs) from the starting level measured on entry into the program. Student progress, or advancement, is measured through the use of standard assessment instruments, which will be discussed in greater depth in this policy.

You can find out more about the NRS and program measures, as well as download a copy of the NRS guidelines at their website: <http://www.nrsweb.org>.

### **State Role**

Within the accountability structure of the ABE program, the state is responsible for enforcing the standards and procedures set forth in the law (AEFLA) and NRS and for providing technical assistance and monitoring around uniform data collection policies and procedures. Other state responsibilities include:

- Ensuring professional development of local staff.
- Providing a state database to house the data collected under the NRS. In Idaho this database is called the “Idaho Management and Accountability System” or “IMAS.”
- Setting annual performance targets for the five core performance outcomes.
- Reviewing and analyzing local and statewide performance data for use in program improvement, determining funding allocations, monitoring, and corrective action processes.

The state role in regard to assessment is to create and enforce a state assessment policy. The assessment policy establishes criteria for student assessment, identifies approved assessment instruments, explains methods for conducting student assessment, and outlines training requirements for local programs, among other items.

### **Local Role**

Local programs are responsible for adhering to all regulations set forth at the federal and state level, and for allocating sufficient resources for collecting and reporting NRS measures according to state and federal requirements. As part of these responsibilities, local programs are expected to:

- Maintain up-to-date versions of all applicable policy and guidelines and train all staff on the NRS, data collection/use, and the State’s assessment policy.
- Provide accurate and timely data as part of the reporting and accountability process.
- Create a written policy regarding the local intake and data-collection process.
- Budget for and purchase the required assessment materials. The state will support the purchase of testing materials as needed.

Local programs must understand and comply with the federal and state-defined procedures for assessing students for placement into educational functioning levels and assessing progress using valid, standardized procedures to ensure comparability across programs.

Additionally, local programs are expected to understand the NRS and associated regulations, including the definitions of each measure and the procedures for recording these measures, including how to handle missing or incomplete data.

Programs in Idaho are asked to achieve no less than a 50% post-test rate; that is, of all students who are pre-tested at least 50% should also be post-tested. Programs should strive to post-test all students who meet the requirements of this policy at least once prior to program exit.

When reviewing performance, programs should be concerned with both the number of adults who remain in the program long enough to post-test, as well as the number of adults who demonstrate gain in their test results.

### *Need for Assessment Policy*

Assessment is one of the many components of a complete accountability structure. An assessment policy creates a uniform assessment process and ensures that all ABE programs are treated objectively in regard to compliance and performance. A clear assessment policy also ensures that reliable and accurate data is collected around student progress and learning trends, which helps both the State and local programs implement more effective improvement efforts and increase their overall impact within the community.

In keeping with a standardized assessment process, AEFLA-funded programs are required to use assessment instruments which are proven to be both valid and reliable:

- **Validity** is defined as the degree to which a test actually measures what it proposes to measure. If a test claims it is able to measure a student's ability to understand spoken English, then it should measure that ability. There are different types of test validity, and each type answers a different question about whether the test measures what it claims to measure.
- **Reliability** is defined as the degree to which a test yields consistent results. Statistical techniques determine reliability and help ensure that there would not be a radically different score if the student were to attempt the test a second time with no additional learning. No test is perfectly reliable, but proper test construction methods can do much to eliminate the chances of inaccurate student placement or inaccurate measurement of student progress.

Idaho uses the TABE, GAIN and CASAS assessments, which have been approved for use by the US Department of Education. Each has undergone rigorous development and validation procedures and meets the standards of the American Education Research Association (AERA), the National Council for Measurement in Education (NCME), and the American Psychological Association (APA). The TABE, GAIN and CASAS *Technical Manuals*, contain detailed information about test validity and reliability.

- For a detailed discussion of CASAS content validity evidence, see the *CASAS Technical Manual* or refer to research posted on the CASAS website at [www.casas.org](http://www.casas.org) under "Product Overview" then "Research and Evaluation" then "Assessment Research."
- For detailed information regarding the TABE, refer to the CTB McGraw Hill website at [www.ctb.com](http://www.ctb.com) then "CTB Research" then "Research Topics" and then "Test Development."
- For detailed information regarding the GAIN, refer to the GAIN website at <http://www.wonderlic.com/assessments/skills/basic-skills-test>.

## *Purposes and Uses of Assessment*

In addition to providing an equitable and objective regulation environment, and ensuring reliable and accurate data, good assessment practices can also lead to better student placement and instruction. However, while official assessment for the purpose of accountability is limited to specific instruments and timeframes, student instructional assessment should not be limited to the formal pre and post-test process.

Idaho encourages local ABE programs to use a variety of informal assessments to assist in guiding instruction. The use of teacher-made tests, unit tests and learner observations are encouraged to monitor learning and to inform instruction on a regular, ongoing basis. Informal assessment can also contribute to decisions regarding student readiness for post-testing.

Programs should avoid over-testing students as this can lead to practice effects or test burn-out, which affect the validity of the test scores.

## *Resources for Information and Assistance*

Individuals requiring information or assistance related to assessment policy or procedures in Idaho should contact the state office at (208) 334-3216 and ask for Adult Basic Education, or visit our website for the most up-to-date contact information: [www.pte.idaho.gov](http://www.pte.idaho.gov). In addition to the state office, your local program director and regional PD specialist can provide you with assistance and training regarding this assessment policy.

Here are some additional websites where you can find more assessment-related information:

- CASAS: [www.casas.org](http://www.casas.org)
- GAIN: <http://www.wonderlic.com> → Career Education → Course & Program Mastery Assessments → Adult and Youth Basic Education Programs
- TABE: <http://www.ctb.com>, → Products → TABE → TABE 9&10
- NRS: [www.nrsweb.org](http://www.nrsweb.org)

## **General Assessment Requirements**

The intent of this section is to describe the general policies, procedures, and timeframes that apply to all assessments, including which learners are to be assessed, which assessment instruments are permitted, testing and placement procedures, reporting procedures, general training requirements for test administration, and accommodation requirements for assessing students with disabilities.

### *Learners to be Assessed*

All eligible students participating in an AEFLA-funded program must be assessed in at least one skill-area within the first twelve hours of instruction after enrolling in the program. Assessment must be conducted with a state-approved instrument (see below). All students with twelve or more hours of attendance are counted on the NRS tables and must have an assessment on record.

Assessments should match the appropriate skill areas that are the focus of instruction for the student. Programs are encouraged to pre-test students in multiple skill areas in order to fully evaluate their needs. Reportable basic skill areas for ABE are reading, math, and language. Reportable basic skill areas for *English as a Second Language* (ESL) are reading and listening.

### *Permitted Assessments*

The following assessment instruments have been approved for use in Idaho:

- The *Test of Adult Basic Education* (TABE) is approved for use with all Adult Basic Education (ABE) students seeking skill development in reading, language, and math.
- The *General Assessment of Instructional Needs* is approved for use with all ABE students seeking skill development in reading, language and math, especially those in transitional programs.
- The *Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System* (CASAS) is approved for use with all English as a Second Language (ESL) students seeking skill development in reading and listening.

Please refer to the section titled “Guidelines for Each Assessment” for more detailed information on which specific versions and forms are allowed for each assessment instrument.

Idaho reserves the right to pilot and adopt new assessments provided that any such assessment meets all federal NRS requirements and is a nationally recognized and approved. All potential assessments must:

- Provide clear measures demonstrating identifiable scales scores that are normed to NRS educational functioning levels.
- Provide clear pre-test and post-test recommendations and provide comparable alternate/parallel forms for post-testing.

Any new assessment under consideration will be piloted in at least one (preferably several) AEFLA-funded programs, for six months to one year, before it may be considered for statewide purchase and use. During the pilot phase, programs will study the effects of the assessment and collect pertinent data.

This information will be used by the state to determine if the assessment is appropriate for adoption statewide. Training and funding considerations will also be analyzed prior to moving forward with a full-scale roll-out of the assessment, but will generally follow the training model described in this policy for administering assessments.

Aside from the state-approved assessment listed above, programs may not use any other methods or assessment instruments to measure learner functioning levels or gains for the purpose of NRS reporting. For example, the following instruments and methods may not be used for determining/reporting changes in a learner’s Educational Functioning Levels (EFL’s):

- General Educational Development (GED) Tests or practice tests.
- Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL).
- College placement tests.

- Instructor-designed tests or tests intended for classroom use.
- Professional judgment or observation.
- Pre-assessments such as the CASAS Appraisal or the TABE Locator.

This is not an exhaustive list. While some assessment methods may be useful for classroom purposes, the only assessments allowed in Idaho for measuring student gains for NRS reporting purposes are the TABE, GAIN and CASAS.

### *General Procedures*

In addition to assessing the appropriate learners using an approved assessment instrument, programs should also be familiar with other general aspects of administering the assessment. These include: when to administer the pre and post-test, score conversion, student placement, pre and post-test matching, determining educational gain, how long a test score is valid, quality control procedures, and test security.

### **When to Test**

Conducting an assessment within the proper time-frame ensures that a learner's starting level and progress are both measured accurately:

- **Pre-tests** must be administered to all incoming students within 12 hours of attendance after enrollment.
- **Post-tests** must be administered after an adequate amount of learner instruction has occurred to ensure learner progress (as described below).

Measuring learner progress too soon can result in learners not making gains, while waiting too long to conduct a post-test may mean missing an opportunity to record a gain. Generally speaking, Idaho recommends 50-70 hours of instruction (depending on the type and level of student) between pre-testing and post-testing and between each subsequent assessment. However, some students may require as many as 100 hours of instruction or more before demonstrating a full level gain, while other students require fewer hours.

In all cases, a student may be post-tested if that student indicates he/she is leaving the program before the scheduled post-test time and he/she has at least 40 hours of instruction. In such cases, the regional administrator must provide approval in writing. Although sometimes necessary in rural areas or when working with community partners, programs should not, as a regular practice, post-test students with fewer than the required minimum hours of instruction for each assessment instrument.

### **Determining Appropriate Test Forms**

An appropriate assessment process leads to the most accurate test results for learners, which in turn allow for more effective advising and placement within the program. Appropriate advising and placement are especially important for issues of student retention and progress.

One way to confirm appropriate advising and placement is to ensure learner assessment results are truly a measure of the learner's skills. Assessment instruments can best gauge a learner's abilities when the appropriate level of assessment is used (for example, the E,M,D, or A version of the TABE). Using the correct assessment is vital, because learners who take an inappropriate

pretest may “top” or “bottom” out—that is, they can score above or below the reliable range of the test, resulting in unreliable test results.

To determine which level of assessment is most appropriate, ABE programs are required to administer the CASAS Appraisal or TABE Locator test. The results of the appraisal/locator will guide staff in choosing the appropriate assessment for each skill area, ensuring better instructional placement for the student. CASAS provides Appraisals for reading and listening comprehension, and TABE provides the Locator for reading, math, and language. Programs must administer the CASAS (ESL) Appraisal test or TABE Locator (ABE/ASE) prior to administering the full pretest. The GAIN test automatically measures the difficulty level as the student tests, so no locator or appraisal is included.

### **Scoring and Alignment**

After an assessment is administered, a student will receive a numerical score for each skill area in which he/she is tested. This raw score is then converted into a scale score which corresponds to an Educational Functioning Level (EFL). Each test vendor (TABE, GAIN and CASAS) provides charts and guidelines for converting raw scores to scale scores. Scale scores for each test series have been subdivided into ranges that correspond to the NRS levels.

Refer to pages 21-27 of this policy for more information about each specific assessment. You may also want to refer to the “Functioning Level Table” in the *NRS Implementation Guidelines* for more information about how these scale scores correspond to EFLs.

### **Student Placement**

Even with the most accurate test results, some learners may demonstrate a range of abilities, depending on the subject matter. In other words, some learners who pre-test in multiple skill-areas will have test results that place them in a different Educational Functioning Level (EFL) for each skill-area.

If multiple skill areas are assessed and the student has different abilities in different areas, the program should record the student according to the lowest functioning level. For example, if a student is at the *beginning* level in reading and the *low intermediate* level in numeracy, then the student would be placed in the beginning level for NRS reporting purposes. The lowest functioning level also should be used to determine education gain in the subsequent assessments.

### **Post-Test Conditions**

After students have been assessed, placed in an EFL, and received an appropriate amount of instruction, they should be post-tested to measure their progress. To ensure a reliable and consistent measure of learner progress, the pre and post-tests must be aligned both with each other and instruction, and administered under identical conditions with alternate forms.

- *Alignment:* Students may only be post-tested in the skill-areas for which they have a matching pre-test AND for which they have received instruction. In other words, a student cannot be post-tested in reading if they do not have a reading pre-test OR if they have a reading pre-test but have not received reading instruction.

- *Test Conditions:* Additionally, pre-and post-tests should always be administered under identical conditions. The test environment and time allowed for taking the test should be the same for both tests. Please refer to pages 21-27 for allowable test times. Programs must also use the same assessment instrument for each test (CASAS, TABE or GAIN).
- *Test Forms:* Programs must administer post-tests using an alternate form of the instrument. For example, if a student was pretested using the TABE form 9, he/she must be post-tested using the TABE form 10. If the student was pre-tested on the A form of the GAIN he/she must be post-tested on form B. If the student was pre-tested with an even-numbered CASAS form, he/she must be post-tested with an odd-numbered form.

### **Determining Educational Gain**

Educational gain measures the primary purpose of the adult basic education program: to improve the basic literacy skills of participants. This outcome is the reason that all students are counted in the educational gain measure.

The NRS defines Educational Gain as “Learner completes or advances one or more levels from the starting level measured on entry into the program.” In other words, the scale score a student obtains on the post-test must correspond to an NRS level above the NRS level determined by the pre-test score. See pages 21-27 for score conversion information.

If a student is not post-tested, then no educational gain can be measured for that student and the student must be reported in the same educational functioning level as initially placed for NRS reporting purposes.

### **Test Score Life**

Assessment results do not have an indefinite lifetime. Under certain circumstances, test scores can become expired or may need to re-determined. In such cases students will need to be re-assessed to determine a new baseline.

#### *Separated and Returning Students*

Assessment results are considered accurate for six months; therefore, if a student is separated from the program and returns, check the date of the student’s last assessment. If the test date is less than six months old, the results remain valid and the student’s old registration can be re-opened. If the most recent test date is more than six months old, the program must create a new enrollment and administer a new assessment for the student.

However, even if the test scores are less than six months old, a new assessment may be appropriate based on a review of the student’s past attendance, progress, and test scores.

Program personnel may wish to retest “stop outs” or students returning the following semester or reporting period if they have reason to believe that during the learner’s absence a significant learning intervention occurred that may invalidate the learner’s previous assessment results. In such circumstances, retesting is always an option.

### Continuing Students

Test scores for ongoing students and students newly enrolled at the end of the program year (June 30) remain valid for the new program year beginning July 1. Students who remain enrolled through the change of program years do not need to be re-tested, provided that they meet the requirements of this policy and are either attending classes or have not been absent more than six months. For reporting purposes, in such circumstances the student’s EFL as determined by the most recent assessment of the closing program year will serve as the beginning EFL for the new year.

Any student who has 12 months of regular attendance and continuous instruction who has not received a post-test must be pre-tested again according to this policy. This will help students and instructors focus instruction.

| Student                                   | Pre-Test  | Post-Test  |
|---|---|--|
| New Students                              | Within first 12 hours of attendance   | Not applicable.  |
| Continuing students (enrolled in program) | <p><i>At end of program year:</i> Final post-test of previous year can be counted as the new pre-test, if dated within 6 months of new fiscal year</p> <p><i>After 12 mo. Continuous, regular instruction:</i> Students who have been enrolled for 12 continuous months without assessment should be given a new pre-test in accordance with this policy.</p> | <p>The following times are recommended:</p> <p>ABE: 50-60 hours of instruction</p> <p>ESL: 70-100 hours of instruction</p> <p>Please see “Guidelines for Each Assessment” for more detail. (p 21-27)</p> |
| Re-enrolling students                     | <p>Last assessment results less than 6 mo. old: Re-open previous registration.</p> <p>Last assessment results more than 6 mo. old: Re-assess within first 12 hours of new attendance.</p>   | <p>ABE: 50-60 hours of instruction since last valid assessment or after re-enrollment</p> <p>ESL: 70-100 hours of instruction since last valid assessment or after re-enrollment</p>                     |

### Quality Control Procedures

Programs must adhere to all quality control procedures for collecting, storing, and reporting student information as outlined in this section.

#### General Program Responsibilities

Programs should designate knowledgeable personnel to record and/or approve student data such as demographics, enrollment, and test results. All staff with data-entry or data-management responsibilities must be trained in the NRS as well as the use of our state database. All data must be entered and stored in the Idaho Management and Accountability System (IMAS). After data is entered, it must then be reviewed and approved by a designated staff member who is different than the person who entered the data. Data that has not been approved will not be reflected toward a program’s performance or in the report tables.

#### Intake and Pre-Tests

Each AEFLA-funded program will develop a written intake procedure regarding student enrollment, assessment, advising, and data entry. All student data will be recorded in IMAS in

accordance with the written procedure at the time of intake. However, to accommodate rural sites, data may be entered up to (but no later than) three weeks after the student completes the intake process. Programs must have a current-year intake form and signature on file for each student who is active during the program year.

Assessment results will be entered as scale scores only. If a pre- test score is not entered into IMAS, no information regarding the student will be reported on the federal tables.

#### *Post-Tests*

Post-test results should be entered no more than two weeks after a student completes the assessment. IMAS will not allow entry of any post-test score unless the student profile meets the requirements of this policy (corresponding pre-test, minimum number of attendance hours, alternate form, etc).

#### *Monitoring and Compliance*

Local programs should conduct regular, random audits of their data processes to ensure staff compliance as well as to ensure high-quality data is collected. In addition to internal reviews, each program will also be subject to state-level reviews. As part of the state-level review, programs are expected to:

- Submit quarterly desk audits, which include a random-sample file review and data analysis. Desk audits are prepared by the local director and reviewed at the state office to verify assessment and data collection policies are followed.
- Participate in regional on-site monitoring visits with state staff. Monitoring visits are scheduled in advance and conducted according to our monitoring instrument, which can be found on our website at [www.pte.idaho.gov](http://www.pte.idaho.gov)

The State Office will also conduct random IMAS checks of local programs and individual classes throughout the year, as well as regular reviews of program performance data to identify trends or technical assistance needs.

#### **Test Security**

To ensure that programs obtain reliable and accurate results from the assessment tests, learners must not be exposed to test questions or content before actual testing, whether by having access to the test or via coaching by instructors.

To maintain test security, all programs must have adequate measures in place at any location where test materials are stored. The local adult program director assumes responsibility for safeguarding all state approved assessment materials, including test administration manuals and answer sheets (which contain marks or responses).

For the purpose of test security programs should adhere to the following criteria:

- All test materials are kept in a secure location under lock and key between sessions
- Any test booklets/test series that are no longer in use must be shredded.
- All answer sheets and writing samples are treated as confidential until destroyed.
- No duplication of any test form or any portion of any test form is permitted for any reason.

Programs must also avoid intentionally or unintentionally exposing students to the test through other practices. Therefore programs may not use displays, questions, or answers that appear on any test, discontinued or current, to create materials designed to teach or prepare learners to answer test items. Instead, programs should use instructional resources provided by test vendors and other support materials to link curriculum, assessment, and instruction.

Teachers may not review specific test items with students in discussing test results, or include actual test items in any instructional materials. Teachers should focus on the competencies and the underlying basic skills in preparing students for testing.

### *Training for Administering Assessments*

To ensure the quality of the assessment process and the reliability of resulting test scores, all test administrators and examiners must demonstrate they are capable of conducting a testing session correctly and according to all applicable policies and guidelines. Additionally, all staff need to be up-to-date on all policies and procedures required by the State and the NRS.

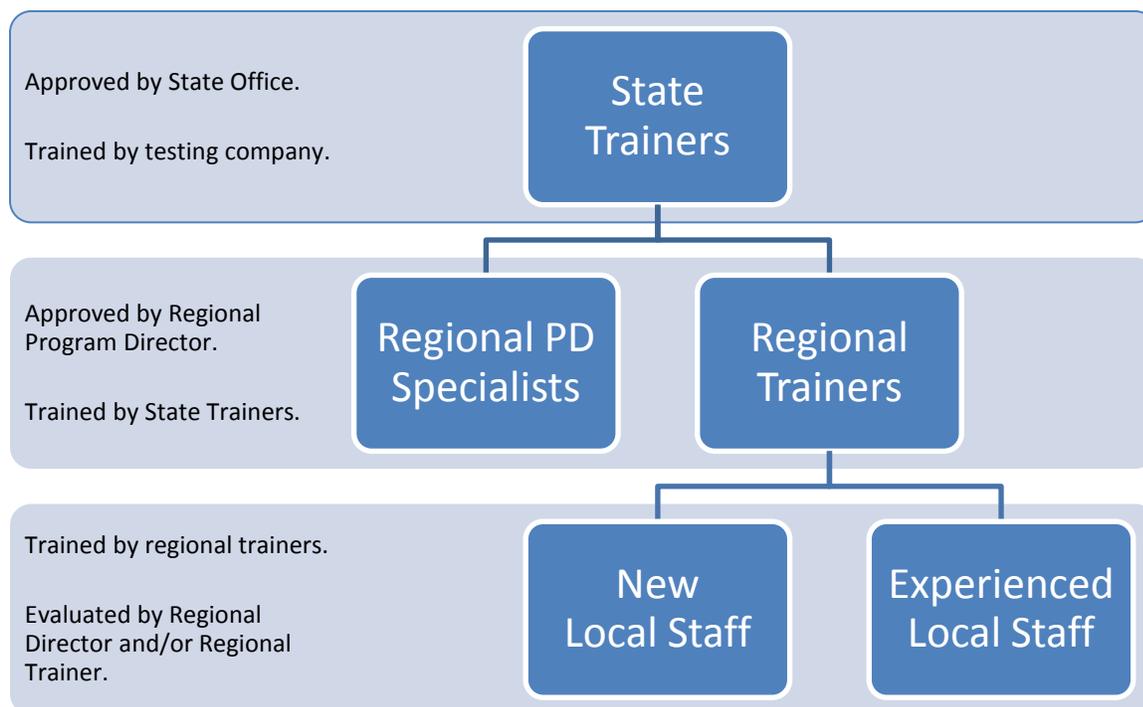
To this end, the State has developed a professional-development structure which provides quality training on NRS policies and testing procedures to all local staff involved in the assessment process and ensures they can perform the assessment process in compliance with all requirements. Below is an overview of the PD Structure in our state, the various roles within that system, and the responsibilities of local staff for completing their NRS and assessment training.

### **Professional-Development Structure**

Because the ABE programs are spread out across Idaho's large geographic area, it is necessary to establish a professional-development structure that ensures the highest quality of training in the most efficient manner. Idaho uses the following PD structure, based on a "train the trainer" model, to ensure access to quality training throughout the state. The figure on the next page demonstrates Idaho professional Development structure.

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**Figure 1: Professional Development Structure**



### *State Trainers*

The state trainers are the statewide source of expertise on the NRS policy and assessment procedures being trained directly by the testing company. They are responsible for keeping up with changes in policies, testing procedures, best practices, and other policies as issued by the State, the US Department of Education, and the testing companies. The State Trainers also provide ongoing support and technical assistance to regional PD Specialists and Trainers. In Idaho we have one State Trainer for each assessment: TABE, GAIN and CASAS.

### *Regional PD Specialists and Trainers*

Each regional program has a Professional-Development Specialist who is responsible for keeping track of the region’s training needs, identifying staff who require training, and collecting and storing all training-related data. The PD Specialists are also responsible for collecting trainee follow-up documentation, such as written evaluations.

The Regional Trainers are trained as a group by the State Trainers, and then return to their region to conduct training for both new and experienced assessment staff. The Regional Trainers work with the Regional PD Specialists to identify which staff are in need of assessment, when and where to conduct the training, and when to conduct follow-up evaluations.

### *Local Staff*

Training is provided to, and required of, any local staff who are involved in the assessment process (including test administrators and examiners). All such staff are required to complete state-approved training in the NRS and any assessment instrument they are expected to

administer. Such training ensures accurate use of tests, appropriate interpretation of learner results, and correct placement into instruction. Proper training also maintains the integrity and quality of the assessment process. No staff shall administer any assessment test prior to completing the required training.

Training is provided via several methods, including online training and in-person evaluations. All AEFLA-funded programs must provide opportunities for staff to attend NRS and assessment training. Programs must include sufficient funds in their budgets to pay for staff time to attend trainings, as well as PD Specialist and Regional Trainer salaries. Programs will submit a professional development plan and budget each year that supports assessment training for staff as part of their annual extension plan.

### **NRS Training Requirements for Staff**

The type and extent of NRS training a staff person receives will depend on his or her years with the program. More extensive information about Idaho's NRS Training process can be found on the Division of Professional-Technical Education's website here:

[http://www.pte.idaho.gov/ABE/Providers/Professional\\_Development.html](http://www.pte.idaho.gov/ABE/Providers/Professional_Development.html)

In summary, all new teachers must complete the New Staff and 2<sup>nd</sup> year Online trainings within their first two years with the program. Experienced teachers should complete a refresher training (titled 3<sup>rd</sup> + year Updates) every year.

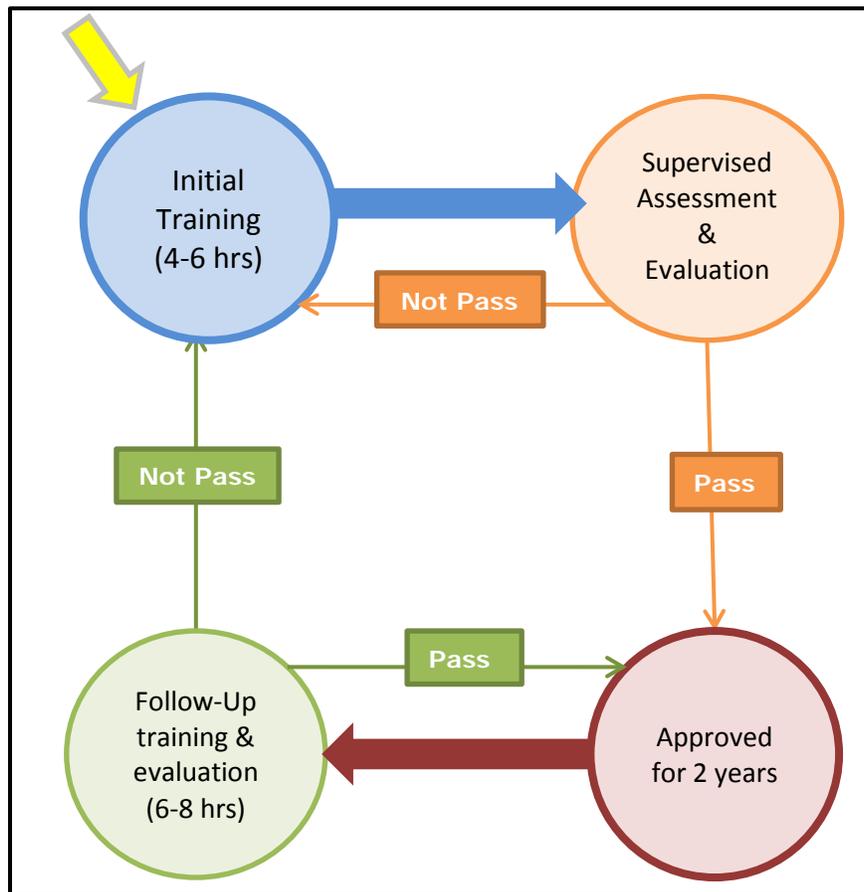
- New Staff Training- New Teacher/Staff Training conducted by the Regional Professional Development Specialist, group training or one-on-one /Required for all new teachers.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Year NRS Online - Update Training for any policy changes and NRS Online Training (6 hrs.) completed individually and documented with certificates/ Required
- 3<sup>rd</sup> + Year – Refresher and Update Training for any policy changes and from NRS Online and NRS.org: The Local Connection: Building a Data Use Learning Community. This is required yearly training.

### **Assessment Training Requirements for Staff**

The diagram on the next page outlines the assessment training process required for all local test-administrators/examiners.

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**Figure 2: Assessment Training Process**



### *Initial Training*

The assessment training process starts with the initial training. This step is required of all new testing staff as well as certain experienced staff who require a refresher. This training consists of the following components:

- **TABE:** The initial training for TABE consists of a series of videos and workbooks which are self-directed and trainee completes within a set time, on their own schedule.
- **GAIN:** The initial training for GAIN consists of an online Webinar with GAIN staff and the completion of the “Test Administration Examination,” which is scored by the testing company. A certificate is then awarded to the individual and is valid for two years.
- **CASAS:** The initial training for CASAS is called the “Initial Implementation Training” and consists of a self-directed online course which is offered through the testing company. The course covers use of both the Appraisal instrument as well as the full battery.

Staff should work with their Regional PD Specialists to make arrangements for completing each training. Regional Trainers are also available for technical assistance if staff have questions or need clarification during the self-directed portion of the training.

### *Supervised Assessment & Evaluation*

Once a trainee completes the initial training portion, he/she is required to conduct an assessment session under the supervision of the Regional Trainer. The trainee will be evaluated on his/her performance and will either pass the evaluation and be approved to conduct assessments for two years, or if he/she does not pass the evaluation, the trainee will need to go back to the initial training phase. In this case, the trainee may need to work with the Regional Trainer to identify areas that still need improvement, and may receive technical assistance in improving these areas prior to the next evaluation.

### *Two-Year Approval Period*

If a trainee passes the supervised assessment and evaluation, he/she becomes an approved test-administrator/examiner for two years. However, if at any time during this two-year period an approved staff-member feels the need for technical assistance, that person may contact his/her Regional PD Specialist to discuss options for TA, refresher training, or an evaluation. Approved testing staff are also subject to unscheduled monitoring visits throughout this two-year period.

### *Follow-Up Training/Evaluation*

After two years, approved test-administrator/examiners must renew their “approved” status for any assessment they administer. Staff should be in touch with their Regional PD Specialist as their two-year approval period nears its end. The PD Specialist will help local staff make arrangements for completing the renewal process:

- **TABE**—Testing staff must conduct a review of testing procedures and pass an evaluation by the Regional Trainer. The evaluation will consist of a supervised testing session with the Regional Trainer or other appropriate supervisor as determined by the regional program director.
- **GAIN**— After two years each staff member must complete recertification as listed above under “Initial Training.”
- **CASAS**—Testing staff must take a CASAS refresher training and pass an evaluation by the Regional Trainer. The CASAS refresher training is available online, and is called the “Beyond Implementation Training.” The evaluation will consist of a supervised testing session with the Regional Trainer or other appropriate supervisor as determined by the regional program director.

If the staff member successfully completes the refresher training and evaluation, he/she will be approved to conduct assessments for another two year period. If the staff member does not successfully complete this step, he/she will be asked to re-take the initial training and complete an additional evaluation prior to being approved for another two years.

### *Accommodating Learners with Special Needs*

In some cases, programs will need to make accommodations to assess students with special needs or disabilities. This section defines what is meant by “accommodation” and outlines the processes and procedures for administering such assessments.

## **General Definition**

Accommodation is defined as an alteration of the conditions for administering a test, or changes in the nature of an assessment instrument, for the purpose of providing test takers with disabilities an opportunity to demonstrate their skills and knowledge more accurately. Proper accommodations make the test more accessible without changing what a test is intended to measure.

## **Responsibilities**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, Title III, Section 36.309, requires that programs provide accommodated testing to allow learners with disability to demonstrate their level of understanding or mastery of a subject.

Local agencies are responsible for providing fully accessible services and for ensuring that these services meet reasonable criteria and comply with ADA and other regulations. 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 for accommodation should be documented in official learner records, such as the Individual Program Education Plan (IPP). The documentation must show that the disability prevents the learner from demonstrating their true skill-level on the test under normal testing conditions. The information can come from a doctor's report, a diagnostic assessment from a certified professional, and other clinical records. Agencies can also contact the local Division of Vocational Rehabilitation or a secondary school to request documentation of a disability.

## **Allowable Accommodations**

Programs may make certain testing accommodations without documentation when those accommodations meet the following criteria:

1. They do not alter the way a test is scored, and the resulting test scores can be interpreted in the same way as the scores of other students who take the test under normal testing conditions, AND
2. They are not expected to influence student performance in a way that alters the interpretation of the assessment.

The following example accommodations, similar to "test-taking strategies," meet these criteria and may be allowed with no documentation:

- Use of visual magnifying equipment or large-print edition
- Use of markers to maintain place, mark responses in test booklets, mark responses on large-print answer document, or use of template to maintain place for responding
- Taking the test alone, in a study carrel, or with a small group or different class
- Use of adaptive furniture, special lighting, and/or acoustics
- Taking more breaks that do not result in extra time or opportunity to study information in a test already begun (e.g. taking a break between each subtest)
- Providing a flexible schedule (e.g. time of day, days between sessions) that does not result in extra time or opportunity to study information in a test already begun.

Any other forms of accommodation which do not meet the criteria listed above must be documented and conducted according to the testing company's guidelines.

### **Additional Information**

You can find additional information for testing accommodations through the testing company(s) which publish each assessment.

#### **TABE**

Additional information on accommodations for TABE is available at [www.ctb.com](http://www.ctb.com) → CTB Research → Research Topics → Students with Disabilities. TABE provides an audio version of the TABE Locator and TABE Survey assessments and pre-tests, and also large print assessments. CT McGraw-Hill also provides Guidelines for Inclusive Test Administration.

#### **GAIN**

Additional information on accommodations for GAIN is available in the "GAIN Administrator's Guide for ABE/ASE Use." GAIN provides a paper version of the test and extended time limits.

#### **CASAS**

Additional information on accommodations for CASAS is available at [www.casas.org](http://www.casas.org). You can find the *Guidelines for Providing Accommodations Using CASAS Assessment for Learners with Disabilities* under Training and Support → Testing Guidelines → Accommodation Guidelines. Additionally, the CASAS "Life and Work" materials are available in large-print test as well as braille.

## **Guidelines for Each Assessment**

The intent of this section is to provide detailed information on each of the approved assessments in our state including: appropriate uses, scoring procedures, how assessment scores are linked to NRS levels, and post-test requirements for each assessment.

Programs should be aware that the requirements outlined below apply to assessment for the purpose of accountability and program performance. In addition to the formal testing process outlined here, programs should use informal instructional assessment to identify learner progress in the classroom.

When deciding when/whether to administer a post-test, programs should be guided by actual student progress and not solely on the number of instructional hours a student has received. In some cases a student may not be ready for formal assessment, despite having received the minimum hours of instruction. Instructional assessments provided in class indicate how well students are learning and applying concepts, which can help inform post-test readiness.

### ***Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE)***

This section includes pertinent information about the TABE exam, including appropriate uses, and testing procedures. Also included in this section are tables outlining Locator interpretation, accurate test ranges, approved test time-limits, and scale-score conversion.

## Appropriate Uses

The TABE forms 9 and 10 on paper and TABE Online are approved for use in Idaho. These tests are appropriate for use in assessing all levels of Adult Basic Education (ABE) students in the skill areas of reading, language, and numeracy (math). All ABE students must be assessed in at least one of these skill areas upon entering the program.

The TABE Locator is appropriate for determining which level of assessment to use with a student (L, E, M, D, or A). The Locator is not appropriate for use in lieu of a full-length assessment test.

Neither the TABE Locator nor the full TABE assessment may be administered by any staff member who has not completed the required training. Training for administering the TABE includes a set of self-directed videos and workbooks, and conducting a testing session under supervision, with an evaluation. Please see page 15 for more information on Idaho's professional development structure.

## TABE Testing Procedures

Testing procedures include pre-testing, score conversion, placement, and post-testing. Information about general testing procedures can be found beginning on page 10. This section outlines those procedures as they apply to the TABE assessment.

### *TABE Pre-Testing*

Applicable students must be assessed with the TABE within twelve hours of instruction after enrollment. All ABE students must be pre-tested in at least one skill-area. To determine which level of TABE to use (and thus receive the most accurate score), the student must first complete the TABE Locator exam.

The Locator is made up of reading, numeracy, and language test items, and gives separate scores for each of those areas. Program staff will administer the Locator prior to pre-testing in a level. It is an un-timed test, though the publisher recommends allotting 20 minutes for the Practice Session (if needed) and 35 minutes for the test itself. Below is a reference table for converting Locator results into TABE levels.

| If the Locator Test Score Is... |             |           | Use TABE Level:                     |
|---------------------------------|-------------|-----------|-------------------------------------|
| Reading                         | Mathematics | Language  |                                     |
| 0-5                             | 0-5         | 0-5       | Literacy (L)<br>(may be indicated)* |
| 6 & below                       | 6 & below   | 6 & below | Easy (E)                            |
| 7 - 8                           | 7 - 8       | 7 - 8     | Medium (M)                          |
| 9-10                            | 9-11        | 9-10      | Difficult (D)                       |
| 11-12                           | 12-16       | 11-12     | Advanced (A)                        |

\*See TABE Test Directions Manual

Once the Locator results are determined, the program will administer the pre-test using the appropriate level TABE exam for each skill area. Each level of the TABE is designed to accurately measure learner skills within a certain range. Below is a table outlining the accurate range for each level of the TABE assessment (refer to Table 5 for information on how assessment scores align to NRS levels):

| <i>TABE Level</i> | <i>Accurate Range</i>                        |
|-------------------|--|
| Literacy (L)      | NRS Level 1 (Beginning Literacy)             |
| Easy (E)          | NRS Levels 1-3 (Beg. Lit – Low Intermediate) |
| Medium (M)        | NRS Levels 1-3 (Beg. Lit – Low Intermediate) |
| Difficult (D)     | NRS Levels 2-6 (Beginning ABE – High ASE)    |
| Advanced (A)      | NRS Levels 2-6 (Beginning ABE – High ASE)    |

Below are the allowable time limits for each portion of the TABE, by subject area. These time limits apply to both pre and post-tests.

| <i>Primary Area</i> | <i>Sub-Test</i>     | <i>Number of Items</i> | <i>Time (mins.)</i> |
|---------------------|---------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| ABE Reading         | Reading             | 50                     | 50                  |
| ABE Writing         | Language            | 55                     | 55                  |
| ABE Math            | Math Computation    | 40                     | 24                  |
|                     | Applied Mathematics | 50                     | 50                  |

*TABE Score Conversion*

Once the exam has been administered, programs will convert the scale score from each skill area into an NRS Level. The NRS Level will then be used for student placement in instruction, as well as determining the student’s Educational Functioning Level (EFL) for the purpose of determining educational gain. (Please note: the composite math score comprises both the Applied Math and the Math Computation scores.)

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| NRS Level              | Grade Level Equivalent | Scale Scores (by skill area) |           |            |
|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|-----------|------------|
|                        |                        | Language                     | Reading   | Total Math |
| Beginning ABE Literacy | 0 - 1.9                | <389                         | <367      | <313       |
| Beginning ABE          | 2 – 3.9                | 390 – 490                    | 368 – 460 | 314 - 441  |
| Low Intermediate ABE   | 4 – 5.9                | 491 – 523                    | 461 - 517 | 442 - 505  |
| High Intermediate ABE  | 6 – 8.9                | 524 - 559                    | 518 – 566 | 506 - 565  |
| Low ASE                | 9 – 10.9               | 560 - 585                    | 567 - 595 | 566 - 594  |
| High ASE               | 11 – 12.9              | 586>                         | 596>      | 595>       |

*TABE Instructional Placement*

Once the student’s pre-test scores are converted to NRS Levels, the program should conduct an advising session with the student and place him/her in an instructional program according to their NRS Level. When discussing scores with the student, programs should aim to discuss results in terms of scale scores and avoid using grade-level equivalents when possible.

If multiple skill areas are assessed and the student has different abilities in different areas, the program should place the student according to the lowest functioning level. For example, if a student is at the beginning level in reading and the low intermediate level in numeracy, then the student would be placed in the beginning level. The lowest functioning level also should be used to determine educational gain in subsequent assessments (post-test).

*TABE Post-Test*

When a student has received an appropriate amount of instruction, he/she should be assessed using an alternate form (9/10) of the appropriate level test (L, E, M, D, A). Students should only be post-tested in the skill areas where they received instruction.

Programs may only administer post-tests to students who have who attended the required hours of instruction. For the purpose of the TABE assessment, the following minimum time requirements apply. These requirements are in compliance with the number of instructional hours recommended by CTB McGraw Hill when using TABE forms 9/10. (see next page)

- NRS Levels A1-A3: These students shall be post-tested after receiving no fewer than 60 hours of quality instruction.
- NRS Levels A4: These students shall be post-tested after receiving no fewer than 50 hours of quality instruction.
- NRS Levels A5- A6: These students shall be post-tested after receiving no fewer than 40 hours of quality instruction.

Once a student has completed the post-test, the resulting scale score(s) should be converted to a corresponding NRS level(s) to determine if the student has made an educational gain.

### *General Assessment of Instructional Needs (GAIN)*

This section includes pertinent information about the GAIN exam, including appropriate uses, and testing procedures. Also included in this section are tables outlining accurate test ranges, approved test time-limits, and scale-score conversion.

#### **Appropriate Uses**

The GAIN forms A and B are approved for use in Idaho and are appropriate for use in assessing all levels of Adult Basic Education (ABE) students in the skill areas of reading, language, and numeracy (math). All ABE students must be assessed in at least one of these skill areas upon entering the program.

The GAIN assessment may not be administered by any staff member who has not completed the required training. Training for administering the GAIN consists of an online Webinar with GAIN staff and then the completion of the “Test Administration Examination” which is scored by the testing company. A certificate to administer the test is then awarded to the individual and is valid for a two year period.

#### **GAIN Testing Procedures**

Testing procedures include pre-testing, score conversion, placement, and post-testing. Information about general testing procedures can be found beginning on page 10. This section outlines those procedures as they apply to the GAIN assessment.

#### *GAIN Pre-Testing*

Applicable students must be assessed with the GAIN within twelve hours of instruction after enrollment. All ABE students must be pre-tested in at least one skill-area.

Below are the allowable time limits for each portion of the GAIN, by subject area. These time limits apply to both pre and post-tests.

| <b>Table 6: GAIN Time Limits</b> |                  |                        |                     |
|----------------------------------|------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| <i>Primary Area</i>              | <i>Sub-Test</i>  | <i>Number of Items</i> | <i>Time (mins.)</i> |
| ABE Math                         | Math             | 75                     | 45                  |
| ABE English                      | Reading/Language | 80                     | 45                  |

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### *GAIN Score Conversion*

Once the exam has been administered, programs will convert the scale score from each skill area into an NRS Level. The NRS Level will then be used for student placement in instruction, as well as determining the student’s Educational Functioning Level (EFL) for the purpose of determining educational gain.

| <b>NRS Level</b>       | <b>Scale Scores (by skill area)</b> |  |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
|                        | <b>Mathematics</b>                  | <b>English (reading &amp; writing)</b> |
| Beginning ABE Literacy | 200 -314                            | 200 - 406                              |
| Beginning ABE          | 315 – 522                           | 407 - 525                              |
| Low Intermediate ABE   | 523 – 669                           | 526 - 661                              |
| High Intermediate ABE  | 670 – 775                           | 662 - 746                              |
| Low ASE                | 776 – 854                           | 747 - 870                              |
| High ASE               | 885 – 1000                          | 871 - 1000                             |

### *GAIN Instructional Placement*

Once the student’s pre-test scores are converted to NRS Levels, the program should conduct an advising session with the student and place him/her in an instructional program according to their NRS Level. When discussing scores with the student, programs should aim to discuss results in terms of scale scores and avoid using grade-level equivalents when possible.

If multiple skill areas are assessed and the student has different abilities in different areas, the program should place the student according to the lowest functioning level. For example, if a student is at the beginning level in reading and the low intermediate level in numeracy, then the student would be placed in the beginning level. The lowest functioning level also should be used to determine educational gain in subsequent assessments (post-test).

### *GAIN Post-Test*

When a student has received an appropriate amount of instruction, he/she is required to be assessed using an alternate form (A/B). Students should only be post-tested in skill areas where they have received instruction.

Programs may only administer post-tests to students who have attended the required hours of instruction. For the purpose of the GAIN assessment, all students must receive no fewer than 60 hours of quality instruction prior to post-testing. This requirement is in compliance with the number of instructional hours recommended by Wonderlic when using GAIN forms A/B.

Once a student has completed the post-test, the resulting scale score(s) should be converted to a corresponding NRS level(s) to determine if the student has made an educational gain.

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## *The Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS)*

This section includes pertinent information about the CASAS exam, including appropriate uses, and testing procedures. Also included in this section are tables outlining Appraisal interpretation, approved test time-limits, and scale-score conversion.

### **Appropriate Uses**

The CASAS is appropriate for use in assessing all levels of *English as a Second Language* (ESL) students in the skill areas of reading and listening. All ESL students must be assessed in at least one of these skill areas upon entering the program. Allowed assessment forms are listed below:

- Life and Work Reading, Life Skills Reading, Reading for Citizenship, forms 27, 28, 81, 82, 81X, 82X, 83, 84, 85, 86, 185, 186, 187, 188
- Life and Work Listening forms 981L, 982L, 983L, 984L, 985L, 986L. (Please note that the listening series is on conditional approval from US Department of Education).

The CASAS Appraisal is appropriate for determining which level of assessment to use with a student (Literacy, A, Ax,Rx, Bx, C, D). The Appraisal is not appropriate for use in lieu of a full-length assessment test.

Neither the CASAS Appraisal nor the full CASAS assessment may be administered by any staff member who has not completed the required training. Training for administering the CASAS includes a self-directed online training, followed by conducting a testing session under supervision, with an evaluation. Please see page 16 for more information on Idaho's professional development structure.

### **CASAS Testing Procedures**

Testing procedures include pre-testing, score conversion, placement, and post-testing. Information about general testing procedures can be found beginning on page 11. This section outlines those procedures as they apply to the CASAS assessment.

#### *CASAS Pre-Testing*

All ESL students must be assessed with the CASAS within twelve hours of instruction after enrollment. To determine which level of CASAS to use (and thus receive the most accurate score), the student must first complete a CASAS Appraisal exam.

The CASAS Form 80 Appraisal for both Reading and Listening is approved for use in Idaho. The Appraisal is a short test which provides a quick, general indicator of reading and listening abilities, which then determine which level of pretest to administer. Program staff will administer the Appraisal test prior to pre-testing in a level. Test administrators should refer to the CASAS Administrator's handbook for full details on using and interpreting Appraisal exams.

Once the Appraisal results are determined, the program will administer the CASAS pre-test using the appropriate level exam for each skill area. All ESL students must be pre-tested in at least one skill-area. The time limit for each of the leveled tests is one hour, however CASAS allows the examiner to give examinees "a few minutes to finish the question they are on."

Table A below provides information about which levels of CASAS are available and the forms for each level. For more information regarding the number of items and time-limits for each test form, please consult the publisher’s user manual.

| <i>Level</i>           | <i>Reading</i>   | <i>Listening</i> |
|------------------------|--|------------------|
| CASAS Appraisal        | 80   | 80               |
| Beginning Literacy     | 27/28  | Not applicable   |
| Level A                | Life and Work: 81/82<br>Reading for Citizenship: 951/952     | 981/982          |
| A Extended (AX, or RX) | Life and Work: 81x/82x<br>Reading for Citizenship: 951x/952x | Not Applicable   |
| Level B                | 83/84  | 983/984          |
| Level C                | 85/86 (Workplace focused)<br>185/186                         | 985/986          |
| Level D                | 187/188  | Not Applicable   |

*CASAS Score Conversion*

Once the pre-test exam has been administered, programs will convert the scale score from each skill area into an NRS Level. The NRS Level will then be used for student placement in instruction, as well as determining the student’s Educational Functioning Level (EFL) for the purpose of determining educational gain.

| <b>NRS Level</b>       | <b>Scale Scores (by skill area)</b> |  |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
|                        | <b>Reading Scale Score</b>          | <b>L &amp; W Listening Scale Score</b> |
| Beginning ESL Literacy | <180                                | <162 - 180                             |
| Low Beginning ESL      | 181 – 190                           | 181 - 189                              |
| High Beginning ESL     | 191 – 200                           | 190 - 199                              |
| Low Intermediate ESL   | 201 – 210                           | 200 - 209                              |
| High Intermediate ESL  | 211 – 220                           | 210 - 218                              |
| Advanced ESL           | 221 – 235                           | 219 - 227                              |

*CASAS Instructional Placement*

Once the student’s pre-test scores are converted to NRS Levels, the program should place the student in an instructional program according to their NRS Level. If multiple skill areas are assessed and the student has different abilities in different areas, the program should place the student according to the lowest functioning level. For example, if a student is at the low

beginning level in reading and the low intermediate level in listening, then the student would be placed in the low beginning level. The lowest functioning level also should be used to determine educational gain in subsequent assessments (post-test).

#### *CASAS Post-Test*

When a student has received an appropriate amount of instruction, he/she should be assessed using an alternate form (even/odd). Students should only be post-tested in the skill areas where they received instruction.

Programs may only administer post-tests to students who have received an adequate amount of instruction. For the purpose of the CASAS assessment, the following minimum time requirements apply. These requirements are in compliance with the number of instructional hours recommended by CASAS when using the *Life and Work* series.

An ESL student (from any level E1-E6), may be post-tested when he/she meets one of the following conditions:

- Received no fewer than 70 hours of quality instruction -OR-
- Completed a quarter, term, semester, or other block of instruction with a minimum of 50 hours of attendance in programs offering low intensity courses with less than 70 hours in a semester, quarter, term, or other block of instruction (such as rural outreach sites).

Once a student has completed the post-test, the resulting scale score(s) should be converted to a corresponding NRS level(s) to determine if the student has made an educational gain.

## **Appendix 1:**

### *Idaho ABE Assessment Policy: Quick Reference Summary*

## Idaho ABE Assessment Policy: Quick Reference

This document serves as a concise reference of the approved test forms and instructional hours. Programs/staff should familiarize themselves with the entire assessment policy and vendor guidelines prior to conducting assessments at their sites.

### Permitted Assessments for FY16, as of July 1, 2015:

- The *Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE)* forms 9 & 10, on paper and computer, for all levels of ABE students seeking skill development in reading, language, and numeracy.
- The *General Assessment of Instructional Needs (GAIN)*, forms A and B on paper and computer, for all levels of ABE students seeking skill development in reading, language, and numeracy.
- The *Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS)* is approved for use with all levels of ESL students seeking skill development in reading and listening. The following forms have been approved on paper:
  - Life and Work Reading, Life Skills Reading, Reading for Citizenship, forms 27, 28, 81, 82, 81X, 82X, 83, 84, 85, 86, 185, 186, 187, 188
  - Life and Work Listening forms 981L, 982L, 983L, 984L, 985L, 986L. (Please note that the listening series is on conditional approval from US Department of Education).

### Pre and Post-Test Times

- *Pre-Test*: All students must be assessed with a state-approved assessment instrument within the first 12 hours of instruction after enrolling in the program
- *Post-Test*: Students must be assessed after an adequate amount of instruction has occurred as described below.
  - **TABE**: Post-test hours for the TABE depend on the student's entering EFL:
    - NRS Levels A1-A3: These students shall be post-tested after receiving no fewer than 60 hours of quality instruction.
    - NRS Levels A4: These students shall be post-tested after receiving no fewer than 50 hours of quality instruction.
    - NRS Levels A5- A6: These students shall be post-tested after receiving no fewer than 40 hours of quality instruction.
  - **GAIN**: No fewer than 60 hours of quality instruction at all NRS levels.
  - **CASAS**: ESL students shall be post tested after they have:
    - Received no fewer than 70 hours of quality instruction – OR –
    - Completed a quarter, term, semester, or other block of instruction with a minimum of 50 hours of attendance in programs offering low intensity courses with less than 70 hours in a semester, quarter, term, or other block of instruction (such as rural outreach sites).

In all cases, a student may be post-tested if that student indicates he/she is leaving the program before the scheduled post-test time if he/she has at least 40 hours of instruction and the regional administrator has provided approval in writing.

## **Appendix 2:**

### *Idaho Distance Learning Policy*

## Idaho Distance Learning Policy

This addendum to Idaho’s Assessment Policy provides definitions for distance learning as it pertains to the NRS and reporting. The policy also outlines approved methods of norming materials for proxy hours.

### *Definitions*

For the purpose of the State Assessment policy and NRS reporting, it is important to distinguish between *homework*, *Distance Learning Activities* and *Distance Learning Students*.

**Distance Learning Activities (what)** –A distance learning activity is any instructional activity that takes place outside of the classroom or face-to-face setting. Such activities differ from homework, in that homework is supplemental to the primary form of instruction, while a distance learning activity serves as the primary source of instruction. As a note of clarification, homework may include materials which have been normed for distance learning purposes, but *these activities are not considered distance learning for the sake of NRS reporting if they are supplemental to in-class instruction*.

Distance learning activities may be used in a variety of settings and for a variety of learners. Students may participate in such activities as part of their overall instruction without being considered a “Distance Learner” for NRS reporting, subject to the definition below.

Both homework and/or participation in a distance learning activity may be counted toward a student’s hours for the purpose of post-testing if the proxy hours for the activity have been normed by the program using the State’s approved norming method. (Please see page three for more information on norming)

**Distance Learning Student (who)** – Distance Learning (DL) Students are a subset of students who meet specific criteria and must be identified as NRS Distance Learners in IMAS for the purpose of reporting on Table 5a. A DL student is one who receives the majority of his/her instruction via distance learning activities (as defined above). Additionally, a DL student must be identified in advance and his/her instructional plan must reflect this designation.

Because distance learning activities vary from program to program, the term “majority of instruction” as it pertains to a DL student may be determined through a variety of methods, so long as it is done consistently across the program and approved by the state. For example, some programs may determine “majority of instruction” based on the amount of time a student spends in the classroom vs in distance learning activities. Others may measure a “majority” based on the number of lessons or learning objectives completed in the classroom vs through distance learning.

**Proxy Hours** – Proxy hours are used to determine instructional hours for distance learning activities for the purpose of assessment and NRS reporting. Proxy hours are assigned to students based on normed materials which have been approved by the State. Proxy hours are determined using the average clock-time required to complete a lesson or unit. A student who has completed a lesson or unit shall be assigned the estimated clock-time associated with that lesson or unit.

Only curricula which have been normed through the process outlined in this policy and approved by the State can be used to assign proxy hours for the purpose of NRS reporting. Please see the section “Procedure for Norming Materials used for Distance Learning Proxy Hours” for more information.

*Assessment and Reporting for Distance Learning Students*

Students who have been identified as *NRS Distance Learners* pursuant to the above definition must be identified in advance within the State’s data system and will be reported on table 5a. These students must meet the same assessment and reporting requirements set forth for all students as outlined in Idaho’s Assessment Policy:

- Students must have at least 12 hours of contact with the program (including proxy hours) before they can be reported to the NRS.
- Students must be assessed according to the Idaho Assessment Policy using only assessment instruments approved in the policy for NRS reporting purposes.
- Programs must administer all pre and post-test assessments in person, at a proctored site within the state and in accordance with the Idaho Assessment Policy.
- Distance Learning Students must meet the minimum hours required for post-testing as outlined in Idaho’ Assessment Policy. Proxy hours may be used to meet this requirement.

*Procedure for Norming Materials for Distance Learning Proxy Hours*

Programs must use “proxy hours” to estimate how much time a student has spent on distance learning activities. Proxy hours can be applied to a student’s minimum attendance hours for the purpose of post-testing (as per the state assessment policy). Proxy hours may also be used to determine if a student is considered a DL student for reporting purposes (as per definition on the previous page).

Proxy hours should be determined through a norming process such as the one outlined below. The materials to be normed may be selected by either the Regional ABE Program or State ABE Office. If material is selected by a regional program, request for approval to proceed on the project is made to the State ABE Office. Before conducting a norming project, the Regional ABE Program should designate a project coordinator to oversee the project from beginning to end.

**Step 1: Construct a recording sheet for data collection.** The collection sheet should break down the selected material into individual units or lessons (See example below).

| <b>Contemporary’s Achieving TABE Success in Reading- Level D</b> |   |              |             |                        |
|--|---|--------------|-------------|------------------------|
| <i>√</i>   | <i>Unit/Lesson Name</i>                 | <i>Pages</i> | <i>Date</i> | <i>Time in Minutes</i> |
|  | Skills Pretest                          | 7-15         |             |                        |
| <b>Chapter 1: Words in Context</b>                               |   |              |             |                        |
|  | Greek and Latin Roots/Multiple Meanings | 19-20        |             |                        |
|  | Recognizing Synonyms                    | 21-24        |             |                        |
|  | Using Synonyms                          | 25-28        |             |                        |

| Contemporary's Achieving TABE Success in Reading- Level D |  |              |             |                        |
|---|--|--------------|-------------|------------------------|
| <i>√</i>  | <i>Unit/Lesson Name</i>                | <i>Pages</i> | <i>Date</i> | <i>Time in Minutes</i> |
|   | (etc., through to the end of the book) |              |             |                        |

**Step 2: Select appropriate classes to participate in the norming project.** The more students who participate, the more statistically sound the results are. Ideally, around ten classes would participate, but given program constraints, we recommended at least three classes participate.

**Step 3: Prep your teachers.** Give the recording sheets to teachers in each of the participating classes and explain the data collection process. Teachers should record the date and time (in minutes) for each line on the record sheet. The “Time in Minutes” column will include the total time it takes to complete each unit or lesson with students, including time to introduce the topic, time for students to read and complete ALL activities and items on each page, and time it takes students to check and correct their work. The entire book and/or all applicable units/lessons should be taught and times for all units/lessons recorded.

Time for an individual unit/lesson may continue over more than one class period. If this is the case, the teacher should record the dates and times spent during each class period on that unit/lesson and add them together when complete. The total time should be recorded in the “Time in Minutes” column.

**Step 4: Teachers submit their data to the project coordinator.** When all classes have completed the recording process, the original collection sheets should be submitted to the project coordinator, who will complete the remaining steps of the process.

**Step 5: Compile data from all classes.** Create a spreadsheet such as the example on the next page to collect and compile the raw data from each class. The data entered into each “Class” column will be the “Total Time In Minutes” recorded for each unit/lesson for that class.

| Contemporary's Achieving TABE Success in Reading- Level D |              |                |                |                      |              |                 |                    |
|---|--------------|----------------|----------------|----------------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| <i>Unit/Lesson Name</i>                                   | <i>Pages</i> | <i>Class 1</i> | <i>Class 2</i> | <i>Class 3 (etc)</i> | <i>Total</i> | <i>Avg. Min</i> | <i>Proxy Hours</i> |
| Skills Pretest  | 7-15         |                |                |                      |              |                 |                    |
| Chapter 1: Words in Context                               |              |                |                |                      |              |                 |                    |
| Greek and Latin Roots/Multiple Meanings                   | 19-20        |                |                |                      |              |                 |                    |
| Recognizing Synonyms                                      | 21-24        |                |                |                      |              |                 |                    |
| Using Synonyms  | 25-28        |                |                |                      |              |                 |                    |

**Step 6: Calculate the average minutes for each lesson.** Add up the minutes for each class to get the total minutes for each lesson/unit. If one class has recorded minutes that are 50% higher or lower than the other classes, this data is omitted from the total and average for that row. The

average is then calculated for each row by dividing the total minutes by the number of classes included in the total.

**Step 7: Calculate the average proxy hours for each lesson.** Divide the average minutes for each unit by 60 (one hour) and round to the nearest higher half hour. Some projects choose to round to the nearest higher full hour. Either process is acceptable, but should be used uniformly across each norming project. Whether you round to the half or whole hour will be based on the most reasonable approximation for the type and level of students who will be using the materials being normed.

### *List of Previously Normed Materials*

An extensive list of normed materials which have been approved for use in distance learning can be found on the state website at [www.pte.idaho.gov](http://www.pte.idaho.gov) under “Adult Basic Education” then “Providers” and “Guidelines and Policies.”

This list is not intended to be exhaustive or serve as a limitation on the types of materials a program can or should use for distance learning activities. If your program has other materials which have been normed and used successfully, please contact the state office for further discussion and review so these materials can be added to the list.