Texas Adult Education and Literacy Testing Guide

Program Year 2024–2025

CONTENTS

CONTACT INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Texas Workforce Commission Adult Education and Literacy

Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) contact information for general program questions and technical support requests is as follows:

- Email adulteducation@twc.texas.gov for general AEL program information.
- Email aelta@twc.texas.gov for all questions on this guide or other policy clarifications.
- Email teams.technicalassistance@twc.texas.gov for questions related to data collection and the Texas Educating Adults Management System (TEAMS).
- Call the toll-free number for AEL at 1+ (855) 594-0012.

Texas Professional Development Center

The Texas professional development center for TWC AEL is the Texas Research-based Adult Instruction Network Professional Development (TRAIN PD) Consortium at the Texas Center for the Advancement of Literacy and Learning (TCALL) at Texas A&M University.

Email TrainPD@tamu.edu or call 1+ (800) 441-7323 toll-free.

Resources and Definitions

Following is a list of federal and TWC AEL policy and guidance for providers to reference for additional information related to AEL program requirements, performance and accountability, and more. TWC AEL will notify AEL providers of policy revisions and new policy issuances published on the TWC Workforce Policy and Guidance page via email or GovDelivery.

Definitions

"Alternative Placement" is used to describe students without a National Reporting System (NRS)-approved test to determine initial educational functioning level (EFL) for the purpose of reporting Measurable Skill Gains (MSG).

"Assessment" describes the process of collecting information that relies on multiple qualitative and quantitative measures and standardized tests.

"Baseline" is now used to refer to the use of tests in the calculation of performance. "Progress test" is no longer used. Tests are either "pretests" or "posttests."

"Content area" describes the various subject fields tests measure. An example of a content area is math or reading.

"Domain" is no longer used and was a holdover from "domain of significance (DOS)," which is no longer part of performance calculation.

"Providers" refers to grant recipients, subrecipients, or any provider that offers AEL services

funded by the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA).

"Students" describes "individuals," "participants," or "customers," depending on where they are in the eligibility process.

"Valid test" is used to refer to an NRS-approved test with a score in TEAMS that is less than 365 days old.

INTRODUCTION TO THE AEL TESTING GUIDE

Introduction
This section provides an overview of the AEL Testing Guide's (Testing Guide) intended audience, performance options and flexibility under WIOA, and relationship to an AEL program's performance—specifically the Achievement on a Pretest-Posttest MSG (Type 1a)—and how providers must document attainment of the Type 1a MSG. This guide was formerly called the Assessment Guide.

What Is the AEL Testing Guide, and Why Is It Required?
Assessment through testing is one of many essential components of exemplary service delivery to support participant success.

A comprehensive performance accountability system is required of AEL grantees under WIOA and TWC Chapter 805 Adult Education and Literacy rule §805.4. Federal regulations at 34 CFR §462.40 requires states to have a testing policy or assessment policy. The Testing Guide standardizes the process of determining participant placement, measuring progress toward outcomes, and collecting and reporting data based on the [NRS Technical Assistance (TA) Guide](#) (issued April 2024) as well as on TWC AEL Letters and Workforce Development (WD) Letters where noted.

Comprehensive Assessment
Assessment of an AEL customer through testing is only one component of a holistic, comprehensive appraisal of a participant's needs and goals, further detailed in the [AEL Guide](#) in order to provide the most appropriate AEL services. The Testing Guide focuses on the requirements related to the testing component of comprehensive assessment, and providers should refer to the AEL Guide for greater detail on comprehensive assessment, which includes a collection of required reporting data elements, eligibility documentation, referral to support services, and testing and placement information.

Federal and State Policy and Guidance
The US Department of Labor (DOL) and US Department of Education (ED) provide guidance to states on the implementation of WIOA performance accountability measures (also referred to as indicators) and reporting requirements to support implementation of the WIOA §116

performance accountability requirements and associated regulations. TWC AEL applies federal guidance throughout this Testing Guide and associated AEL Letters and WD Letters to support effective AEL provider measurement and reporting to help program participants achieve positive workforce and educational results.

Who Is the AEL Testing Guide's Audience?

TWC AEL grantees and their service providers funded under TWC Request for Applications (RFA) 32024-00017 must comply with the guidance outlined in the Testing Guide. Additionally, grantees funded under other AEL special initiative solicitations, such as Accelerate Texas or Ability-to- Benefit, may be directed to use all or portions of the Testing Guide to direct testing processes.

Special initiative grantees may also be required to use additional reporting guidance to meet the grant reporting requirements, which will be provided to these grantees either within the specific RFA, or through guidance delivered during project implementation.

The Testing Guide provides a resource for performance accountability staff, teachers, testing supervisors, data entry staff, and other administrators on testing, assessment, and local reporting requirements. A proper understanding of this guide forms the foundation for measuring effective education, training, and employment strategies.

Uniform implementation of performance reporting and the proper administration of the valid and reliable tests approved in the Testing Guide supports state reporting within the common performance accountability framework of WIOA.

Uniform Implementation

The requirements in this guide provide a detailed explanation of the state and local program responsibilities for participant assessment through testing specific under the NRS, other WIOA guidance, and state requirements.

Providers must adhere to uniform implementation of the requirements in the Testing Guide to deliver fair and equitable access to services for participants, manage performance, and identify the areas for program improvement. While providers are required to follow test publishers' guidelines specific to test administration, providers also must adhere to requirements outlined in this guide; for example, TWC requires specific test supervisor and administrator training through TWC-approved trainings. Additionally, while this guide includes information on test publishers' minimum hours for posttesting, hours may be updated by publishers, and TWC will notify providers of such changes.

Consistent implementation of the testing procedures and practices outlined in this guide provide the basis for reporting state and federal performance as well as for comparison of provider efforts and is monitored by TWC. Deviance from the requirements and procedures outlined in the Testing Guide may result in compliance findings and corrective action.

Defining Validity and Reliability

Test data must meet validity and reliability standards to accurately measure participant performance. Data quality begins at the provider level and continues through implementation of the requirements outlined in this guide, guidance from test publishers, and other TWC AEL policy. "Test validity" means the accuracy of a test's measurement—that is, the extent to which a test measures what it is intended to measure. "Test reliability" means the degree of consistency shown in performance on the test, or the extent to which an individual can be expected to perform similarly across multiple administrations of a test or when tested under different conditions.[1]

Test data is useful only if the information is valid and reliable and is collected and reported consistently across providers. To ensure validity, only the tests approved in this guide are allowed for Title II WIOA–eligibility and performance purposes. Approved tests may include NRS-approved tests and those outlined in the state's Alternative Placement policy. For reliability, test publishers' guidance must be followed, and administration must be consistent. Providers' adherence to the Testing Guide and all administration policies for approved tests is monitored by TWC's Subrecipient Monitoring (SRM) department, including, but not limited to, matching testing data with supporting documentation in participant files. See Monitoring of Testing and Related Activities.

Brief Overview of WIOA Primary Indicators of Performance

WIOA supports the alignment of performance-related definitions and measures, thereby facilitating comparable data collection and integrated reporting across the six core WIOA programs and program-specific requirements. The six core programs are the Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs, authorized under WIOA Title I and administered by DOL; the AEFLA-funded program, authorized under WIOA Title II and administered by ED; the Employment Service program, authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by WIOA Title III and administered by DOL; and the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program, authorized under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA Title IV and administered by ED.

Table 1: WIOA Performance Indicators contains a summary of each performance measure. Further detail on each measure, as well as the associated methodologies for performance calculation, can be found in ED Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE) Program Memorandum 17-2, Change 3, and the AEL Performance Guide.

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[1]See the NRS TA Guide for more information on test validity and reliability.

Table 1: WIOA Performance Indicators

Indicator	Summary

MSGs	Measures of the documented progress (academic, technical, occupational, or other) that a participant makes during participation toward obtaining basic education, a credential, or employment-related performance.
	
	● EFL MSG (Type 1):
	  ○ Achievement on a Pretest-Posttest MSG (Type 1a)
	  ○ Postsecondary Enrollment MSG (Type 1c)
	  ○ Passing of high school equivalency (HSE) sub-test (Type 1d)
	● HSE Achievement MSG (Type 2)
	
	Options for Integrated Education and Training (IET) and Workplace Literacy MSGs are:
	
	● Postsecondary Transcript or Report Card MSG (Type 3)
	● Progress Milestone (Type 4)
	● Skills Progression (Type 5)

Employment-Related Indicators	Measures employment and earnings for participants during the second and fourth quarters after exit from the program.
Credential Attainment Indicator	A measure of postsecondary and HSE credential attainment that a participant makes during participation or one year after exit. **Note:** For an HSE credential to count in the numerator of this measure, the participant must be either: ● enrolled in Post Secondary Enrollment within 365 days after the Date of Exit; or ● employed in one or more of the four calendar quarters after the quarter that contains the Date of Exit.
Effectiveness in Serving Employers	Measures percentage of participants in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit who were employed by the same employer in the second and the fourth quarters after exit.

A Strong Local Model

The multifaceted performance accountability system under WIOA requires a strong local AEL service delivery model to ensure both strong performance and compliance, and requires the active participation of most, if not all, local provider staff members at some level. Performance accountability staff required under the AEL statewide grant plays a critical role in supporting implementation of the local reporting system. All staff members must be properly trained and have the necessary resources to support the implementation of the local reporting system.

Instructors, lead instructors, and career navigators who have the most contact with participants must play an active role in performance management. It is important that these staff members clearly understand which performance options are most appropriate to measure activities related to a participant's goals and programs of study so that the staff members can plan and monitor services and performance accordingly. Additionally, it is important that participants be aware of the program's plan for measuring their accomplishments.

Increased Oversight

Expanded options and flexibility increase the need for compliance oversight. Varied points for data collection, including supplemental data collection and some data collection that is relatively new to historical adult education practices, have increased the need for programs to reexamine traditional staffing and data management models to ensure increased performance. Programs are now required to have specific performance accountability and quality assurance staff to provide effective follow-up services and ensure data collection for exit-based measures. Further guidance on post-exit follow-up may be found in AEL guidance on education, training, and employment outcomes, including the AEL Guide and AEL Performance Guide.

Measurable Skill Gains

MSGs are measures of documented progress that a participant makes toward obtaining basic education, an HSE, postsecondary education, or training credential or toward reaching employment-related performance indicators within each program year (PY).

This section describes requirements for a participant to earn the Achievement on a Pretest-Posttest MSG (Type 1a). Information on requirements related to the other types of MSGs, as well as credential attainment, employment, and earnings measures are further detailed in AEL guidance on education, training, and employment outcomes, including the AEL Guide and AEL Performance Guide.

Identifying the Planned MSG

During comprehensive assessment, providers can align appropriate criteria to measure progress and outcomes, including forecasting a Planned MSG. The Planned MSG is the MSG identified during a participant's initial comprehensive assessment and forecast to be the MSG most likely to allow the individual to make performance gains within the PY. The forecast is based on the participant's level at intake, initial objectives, goals, and the program of study selected during enrollment. During comprehensive assessment, a provider can determine which MSG is appropriate based on a participant's goals and objectives and time remaining in the PY.

Because not all aspects of a participant's success can be forecast and a participant's program objectives may change, the Planned MSG may change. Providers should consider the information below when assessing whether the MSG Type 1a is the most appropriate Planned MSG option for a participant.

Pretest-Posttest MSG, Type 1a

The Achievement on a Pretest-Posttest MSG (Type 1a) is a comparison of a participant's improvement in EFL, as measured by a pretest with an NRS-approved test instrument, with the participant's EFL, as measured by a posttest on the same NRS-approved test instrument. TEAMS will automatically establish the pretest level based on test scores available in the system prior to the first direct contact hour after the NRS-approved test is given. A test given to a participant after the pretest is considered a posttest. Posttests must correspond to the alternate form listed for that test or to the required minimum hours if using the same form and must be given after the required minimum number of instructional hours, as described in the test publisher's guidelines, unless a justification is provided. For example, if a participant has a pretest using the BEST Plus 3.0, then only the administration of a BEST Plus 3.0 test with an alternate form will count as a posttest.
The MSG is earned when a participant's skills progress from the established pretest level to a next higher EFL in any of the content areas measured by a posttest. Once a gain is earned, it cannot be unearned by further testing.

Documentation for the Type 1a MSG must be maintained in a participant's file. Examples of documentation include:

- the original test answer sheet;
- the test booklet cover page that has the participant's name, date, and test ID;
- a Scantron; or
- an online printout of scores such as a score report or Individual Skills Profile (with both scores) for computer-based tests.

For MSGs other than Type 1a, programs should refer to AEL guidance on education, training, and employment outcomes, including the AEL Guide and AEL Performance Guide.

Providers must be aware of the following pretesting and posttesting requirements and options for attainment of the Type 1a MSG:

Criteria for Achieving MSG Type 1a

- **Achievement in any Content Area Flexibility:** Achieving a level gain through the Achievement on an NRS Approved Pretest-Posttest MSG (Type 1a) may take place in any content area, not only the area with the lowest score, historically known as the DOS.

  While the DOS is no longer the only measurement of pretest or posttest gains, it is still used to categorize participants for reporting purposes and is referred to as a content area.

- **Flexibility in Selecting Testing Competencies**: Numeracy descriptors are allowed for English Language Learner (ELL) participants, and speaking and listening tests are allowed for native English speaker participants if the participant's needs and the program's instruction warrant such an approach. See the [Individuals to be Assessed](#) section for more information.

- **High Adult Secondary Education (ASE) Participants:** Participants who score into High ASE cannot show a gain through an MSG Type 1a and can earn MSG performance only through Postsecondary Enrollment MSG (Type 1c), Passing HSE Sub-Test (Type 1d), or HSE Achievement MSG (Type 2). Procedures for these MSGs are described in AEL guidance on education, training, and employment outcomes, including the AEL Guide and AEL Performance Guide.

- **IET Participants:** For IET participants, testing may only be in the content area identified as most critical for the participant to succeed in workforce training, as documented on the syllabus's common learning objectives.

A Gain Is a Gain

Providers must be aware that once a participant makes a gain on a posttest, it can never be lost, or "ungained." For example, if a participant has a pretest in August and makes a gain to the next level on a posttest in December, the participant has attained a Type 1a MSG. If the participant then takes another posttest in March but remains at the same level or does not achieve a gain, they will not lose the initial Type 1a MSG performance, as illustrated in Figure 1: A Gain Is a Gain.

Figure 1: A Gain Is a Gain
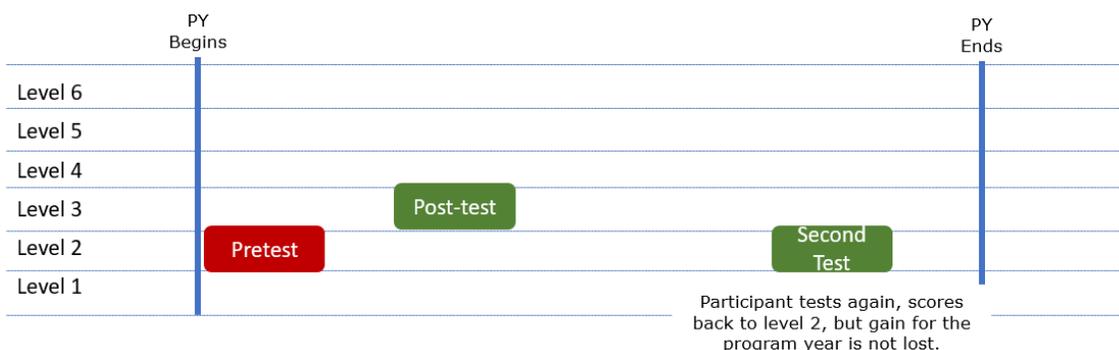
Similarly, participants who earn performance through a Postsecondary Enrollment MSG (Type 1c) or HSE Achievement MSG (Type 2), have earned MSG performance. The positive performance is not lost if the participant does not complete posttesting or show achievement on a posttest.

Participation Rate and Posttest Rate

Each year, TWC may choose to implement these rate measures and/or may include these measures as part of performance-based funding criteria. TWC will notify programs of any requirements in an AEL Letter or in other guidance.

Participation Rate Measure

The participation rate measure is the percentage of overall participants who reach enough hours to take a posttest. The measure is calculated by the unique hour requirements of each test, based on the test publisher's guidelines.

Note: The 2024-2025 participation rate is to be determined.

Posttest Rate Measure

The posttest rate measure is the percentage of participants who have taken a posttest and made a level gain.

Note: The 2024–2025 posttest rate is 65 percent.

Providers must follow a test publisher's guidelines when posttesting participants in order to monitor the participant's progress and evaluate the program's instructional impact. Participants must wait at least one calendar day after reaching the appropriate number of instructional hours to take a posttest, unless there is a justification on file for early posttesting.

GRANT REQUIREMENTS RELATED TO TESTING AND ASSESSMENT

Providers must comply with the requirements stipulated in grants awarded under the AEL statewide grant, which include requirements related to assessment and testing. This compliance includes, but is not limited to, the testing and placement of a participant in accordance with the following:

- Requirements of this Testing Guide
- Participant's testing results for placement in or referral to the most appropriate programs or services to address the participant's immediate needs and goals
- Criteria for identifying individuals who may have learning needs and benefit from referral to VR services, or other organizations, for additional cognitive testing and assessment.

Standard Operating Procedures

Providers are required to develop Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) related to comprehensive assessment, testing, and placement, which must include the Planned MSG, as well as an SOP on customer profile data collection, personally identifiable information (PII), and data management.

The comprehensive assessment, testing, and placement SOP must describe in sufficient detail a process for measuring participant progress and outcomes that best align with the participant's goals and program. The SOP must:

- identify the program staff members who make the planned designation;
- explain how participants, instructors, and other relevant staff members are informed about a participant's MSG status;
- explain the process for selecting an MSG type, based on a participant's performance, goals, objectives, or participation; and
- explain how plans for determining the best MSG type are modified when a participant's performance, goals, objectives, and/or participation change.

Additionally, the SOP must explain how documentation is collected, when it is collected, and by whom the appropriate documentation is collected so that the MSG can be entered into TEAMS. See Data Collection and Entry Requirements for more information.

Alternative Placement Policy

Starting in PY'24–25, providers may use Alternative Placement for students who, after a careful comprehensive assessment, may be more suited for non-NRS–approved test options. Alternative test cannot be used for the purpose of measuring a pre- or posttest gain (MSG Type 1a). Alternative Placement tests must still comprise content- or performance-driven assessments such as, locator tests, criterion-referenced tests, or diagnostic assessments. It is also important to ensure that alternative tests are

aligned with the participant's individual needs and goals.

For this reason, Texas' PY'24–25 non-NRS–approved alternative test options include the following:

- Texas Success Initiative Assessment (TSIA 2.0)
- Accuplacer
- GED Practice Test
- TABE Locator
- Employer-Identified Test
- Industry-Specific Content-Based Exam
- Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL)

Each AEL grant recipient and/or consortia who choose to utilize Alternative Placement must develop an Alternative Placement policy that outlines the acceptable use for alternative tests, including:

- circumstances for allowable use of alternative tests;
- limitations on the use of alternative tests;
- a selection of what alternative tests are acceptable for use; and
- the process for eligibility determination.

Determining Eligibility Under Alternative Placement
AEL grant recipients must ensure they are determining eligibility for students using alternative placement. Eligibility determinations must ensure that students enrolled into AEL services meet one of the following eligibility requirements, as outlined in WIOA Section 203(4). An "eligible individual" is someone who is 16 years of age, is not enrolled or not required to be enrolled in school under state law, and:

- is basic-skills deficient;
- lacks a high school diploma or recognized equivalent and has not achieved an equivalent level of education; or
- is an ELL.

Alternative Placement Scenarios
The state has identified several scenarios in which an alternative placement may be a viable option for students. These scenarios may help inform local policy creation and adoption on circumstances for allowable use of alternative tests, including the following:

- Transition/bridge to college
- GED preparation—those who only lack one or two tests for attaining a HSE certificate
- Workplace literacy
- IET

INDIVIDUALS TO BE ASSESSED

Introduction

The requirements in the Testing Guide pertain to the testing of all individuals to determine basic-skills deficiency and placement. Eligible individuals as defined under AEFLA include individuals who are basic-skills deficient, individuals who are ELLs, and individuals without a high school diploma or its equivalent.

The general term "customer" refers to anyone accessing AEL services. All customers have a status as either a "reportable individual" (or just "individual") or a "participant."

A participant is an individual who has been determined eligible and has entered a period of participation (POP) by earning 12 direct contact hours. A participant whose POP crosses into a new PY will count as a participant in the new PY if the POP remains intact through direct contact hours in the new PY.

Testing Considerations

Providers must be aware that the need for testing at intake can be influenced by the customer's status in the program. Some customers may be completely new to AEL, with no previous record in an AEL program and no existing participant or testing information. Others may be continuing without a break across a PY or be returning to services after exit and have some evidence of previous participation, such as test scores in TEAMS.

Providers must also be aware that customers may engage in AEL services with the same provider or different providers in the local workforce development area or across the state, and any information in TEAMS on that participant will follow the customer to another provider. This information can be valuable in determining the participant's next steps in service, as well as testing requirements, hours within a POP, performance calculations, and data collection requirements.

Providers are federally required to measure the educational gain of all participants receiving 12 or more hours of instruction by using:

- an NRS-approved test, as outlined in this guide, for MSG Type 1a attainment; or
- other MSG attainment options.

Tests to Determine Educational Functioning Level Placement

Providers who are not using Alternative Placement must test the following customers to determine the appropriate EFL:

- Individuals new to AEL
- Individuals or participants without a valid test score in TEAMS, including:
  - individuals who have exited and returned to AEL services without a valid test;
  - participants who are continuing services across a PY and who have not exited but who do not have a valid test; and
  - participants returning from a planned gap and who do not have a valid test.

For more information on testing requirements, see Testing Requirements, Recommendations, and Flexibility: 365-Calendar-Day Test Validity.

Individuals are eligible for AEL services if they:

- are **basic skills deficient**, meaning they function at less than a secondary school completion level;
- **lack a secondary school credential**, such as a diploma or high school equivalency; or
- are an **ELL**.

The pretest forms the basis for:

- **basic skills deficiency,** based on a need for reading, writing, mathematics, or English proficiency, established through a score on a Texas-approved standardized test within the range of literacy-related tasks specific to the content areas of the NRS functioning level tables (see the NRS Test Benchmarks and EFL Indicators section);
- a **baseline pretest score** to assess Achievement on a Pretest-Posttest MSG (Type 1a); and
- **instructional placement** in AEL services.

Individuals Who Lack a Secondary School Credential

It is possible that an individual will test beyond the range of Level 6 High ASE but still be eligible for services because he or she lacks a secondary school credential. When this occurs, AEL providers are not required to show basic skills deficiency with a test score, as these individuals are already eligible for AEL services. These individuals can show positive MSG performance by earning either a Postsecondary Enrollment MSG, Passing an HSE sub-test or an HSE Achievement MSG, but they will not be able to attain a Type MSG 1a (posttest gain). These individuals may be good candidates for the Alternative Placement option.

Initial EFL Placement

All students will be assigned into an EFL at their first contact hour in the PY.

It is possible that an individual's initial EFL placement is reported under Alternative Placement and that individual later receives an NRS-approved pretest. In this instance, the initial EFL placement for purposes of federal reporting would be "Alternative Placement." An Alternative Placement EFL does not prohibit a student from later taking an NRS-approved pre- or posttest and making an EFL gain through a Type 1a MSG. See Pretest-Posttest MSG, Type 1a for how pretests and posttests are calculated for the purpose of earning an EFL gain.

Figure 2: Utilizing Alternative Placement as Initial EFL Designation
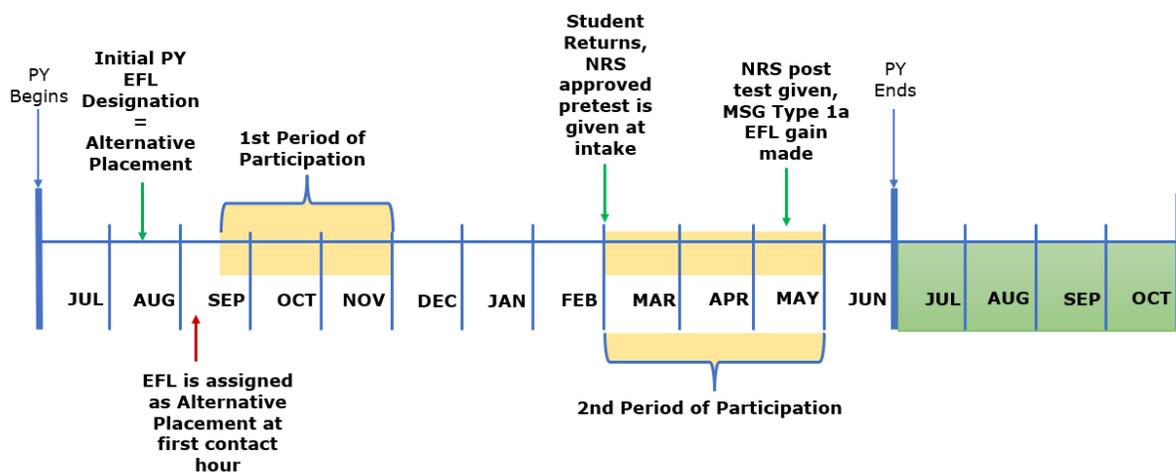
AEL providers using NRS-approved tests to determine initial EFL placement are required to test individuals in all content areas, and an individual will be placed at an EFL for federal reporting requirements at the first contact hour of the PY based on one of the

following criteria:

- The lowest test score, if all content area tests are taken on the same day
- The earliest test score available, given new flexibilities to stagger tests in different content areas

For example, an individual tested with the TABE 11/12 (with all content area tests taken on the same day) may score at an adult basic education (ABE) Level 3 in reading and an ABE Level 2 in math. In this scenario, the individual would be placed at an EFL Level 2 (the lower of the two). However, the AEL provider may provide instruction in the area most relevant to the individual's needs, such as reading.

Pretests for English Language Learners

ELLs are individuals who have limited ability in reading, writing, speaking, or comprehending English, and whose native language is a language other than English, or individuals who live with a family or in a community where a language other than English is dominant.

AEL grantees must establish whether a participant is an ELL and must document that demographic characteristic on the participant enrollment form and in the participant profile in TEAMS.

For individuals identified as ELLs in TEAMS participant profiles, AEL grantees must use the comprehensive assessment to determine the most appropriate test to administer based on the individual's English language proficiency and goals.

If an AEL provider determines through comprehensive assessment that an ELL may test out of the score range of state-approved English as a Second Language (ESL) tests (as outlined in Overview of Tests Permitted for Use in Texas) the provider must document in the participant's file how English proficiency was determined.

Examples of the facts on which a determination of proficiency is based include the following:

- The participant tested out of range on a state-approved ESL test.
- The participant completed an alternate ESL test, including a locally developed test, that verified sufficient English proficiency for the participant to meet their goals.

If the provider has made and documented a determination of English proficiency in the participant's file, the provider may use any test approved in this guide as the pretest for ELLs, including tests approved for ABE or ASE levels. ABE- or ASE-approved tests may also be used for posttesting under an Achievement on a Pretest-Posttest MSG (Type 1a). The participant will be considered an ABE or ASE participant in the NRS and must make

appropriate gains on an NRS-approved test or must earn one of the other MSGs.

Accommodations for Participants with Disabilities or Other Special Needs

Participants with documented disabilities will be granted reasonable accommodations upon request during testing and any program services.

During program intake and comprehensive assessment, providers must ensure that participants have the opportunity to identify needs, including, but not limited to, identified or suspected disabilities, that may require additional testing supports and review. If applicable, support must be provided to ensure that participants with disabilities have an equal opportunity to benefit from services.

"Documented disabilities" means that an individual can present a formal document provided by a qualified professional (physician, educational counselor, psychologist, special education teacher, or a rehabilitation counselor) such as a doctor's report, a diagnostic test, or other formal record of disability that includes the following:

- Diagnosis of the disability, whether physical or cognitive
- Evaluation of the educational implications of the diagnosis and the impact of the disability on areas of functioning
- Recommendations for the specific strategies and accommodations in education, reasonable and necessary as provided by laws and regulations protecting individuals with disabilities, required by the disability

Accommodations provided for testing should be the same accommodations used during instruction. Test administrators must follow accommodations guidance provided by the test publisher, as indicated in each test administration manual from the publisher.

The Data Recognition Corporation (DRC) made large print, Braille, and audio CDs of each paper-based test form and level (as well as text-to-speech functionality for computer-based tests) available for individuals who may need accommodations. Magnified screens and adjustable screen-color options are also available for individuals taking computer-based tests. Additional test administration staff may be required when providing accommodations. DRC provides guidance on administering tests with accommodations in TABE Guidelines to Inclusive Testing Accommodations.

Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems (CASAS) describes the following as ways to accommodate learners with disabilities when administering a test:

- Allowing extra testing time
- Using a different room

- Allowing for frequent breaks
- Providing an interpreter
- Other accommodations found in the test administration manual for each CASAS test

More guidelines on are available on the [CASAS Assessment Accommodations](#) page.

The Center of Applied Linguistics (CAL) outlines accommodations for the Best Plus 3.0 and Best Literacy 2.0 tests that include, but are not limited to, using rulers, color overlays, and/or glasses.

Accommodations that may alter the results of a test are not allowed. Regarding the Best Plus 3.0, CAL states that "Best Plus 3.0 is not appropriate for use with individuals whose visual impairment prevents them from seeing the picture cue prompts even when enlarged or otherwise enhanced." Similarly, Best Literacy 2.0 guidelines state that it "is not an appropriate accommodation for someone to read the test questions to an examinee with sight impairment, as Best Literacy 2.0 is a test of reading, not listening."

ACT WorkKeys also provides accessibility supports to emphasize an individualized approach to implementing assessment practices for examinees with diverse needs who participate in large-scale standardized testing. ACT provides a list of allowable accessibility supports and accommodations which are outlined in the [WorkKeys Accessibility Supports](#).

CONTENT TESTING REQUIREMENTS

Introduction
To support continued growth in MSG attainment, specifically in posttest gains with Type 1a MSGs, Texas providers have new flexibility aimed at easing test administration burden and facilitating timely posttesting.

Testing Requirements, Recommendations, and Flexibility: 365-Calendar-Day Test Validity
TEAMS determines initial EFL placement each PY at the first contact hour. See [Initial EFL Placement](#) for more information.

A valid test may be pulled forward to establish the initial EFL placement. When pulling a test score to determine initial EFL placement in a new PY, providers must be aware that all tests administered are valid for no more than 365 calendar days, and only valid tests will be used for initial placement into EFL.

Figure 3: Valid Tests Carryforward

Test is less Than 365 Days old, Test and Test Hours Carried Forward, No requirement to establish a new baseline test

Pretest

APR | MAY | JUN | JUL | AUG | SEP
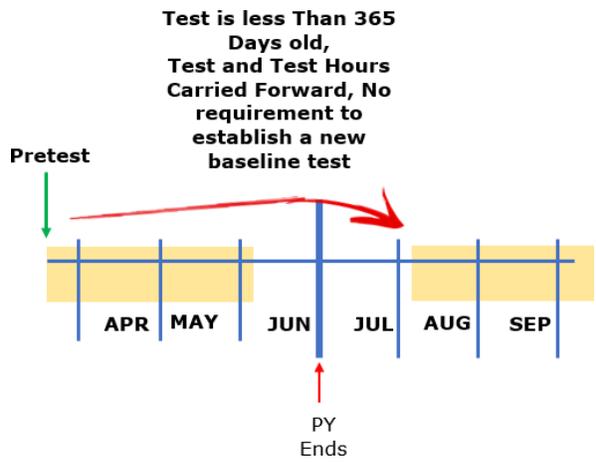
PY Ends

Figure 4: Testing in a New PY

PY 1

Test

PY 1 ends and PY 2 begins

PY 2 Ends and PY 3 Begins

MAY | JUN | JUL | AUG | SEP | OCT | NOV | DEC | JAN | FEB | MAR | APR | MAY | JUN | JUL | AUG | SEP | OCT | NOV | DEC

365-day test validity period

Test Required
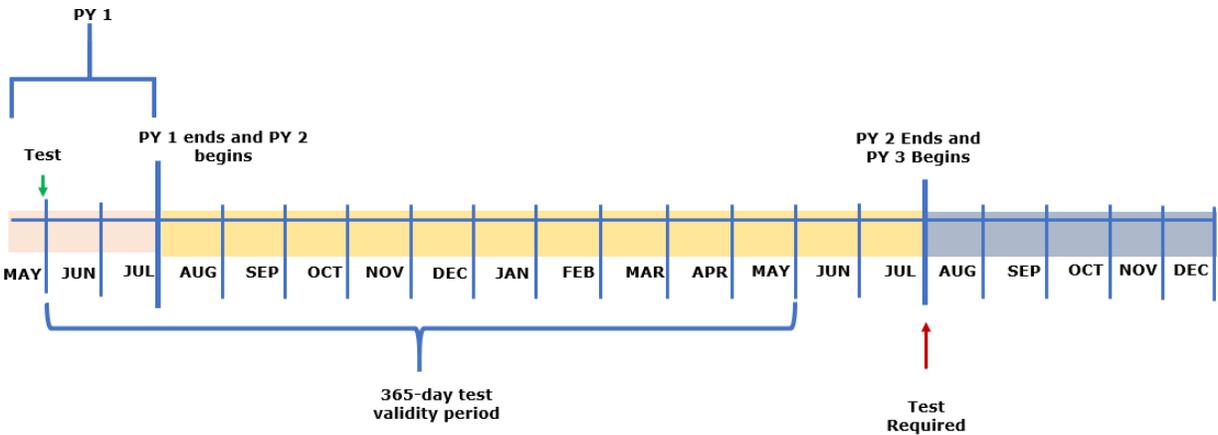
Since more than 365 days have passed since the last test, an approved test must be administered either before the PY ends or at the start of the new PY in order to enter contact hours.

Recommended: Timely Posttesting Within 150 Calendar Days

Participants may be posttested with an approved test in each content area of the test when they have reached sufficient hours based on the test publisher's posttesting guidelines.

Although testing is not required after a participant has earned an MSG, continued testing on either approved tests or non-NRS−approved tests is recommended to continue to monitor the participant's progress. It is also important to note that the participant must be ready for posttesting.

Initial Testing in One Content Area Flexibility

Unless using Alternative Placement policy, providers have the option to test individuals in

just one content area to determine eligibility, enroll an individual in a class if the individual is found eligible, then stagger delivery of the remaining content area tests after the start of services while the individual is earning contact hours.

Providers retain the option to administer all tests to an individual at one time, or more than one test in a test series, before placing the participant in a class.

The objective of this option is to offer flexibility for providers to schedule services in such a way as to reduce potential test fatigue and place participants more quickly into immediate educational services, as well as to improve retention.

Requirements for Programs Electing to Implement the Option to Test in One Content Area

Providers must be aware of the following:

- **Five Class Days, No More than 12 Hours:** The provider must complete testing in the remaining content areas within five class days of direct instruction, but no later than the first 12 contact hours, unless the individual has requested an exemption from testing in all content areas.

- **Flexibility in Selecting Content Areas:** Providers have discretion in selecting which content areas to administer first in the test series and should do so based on the individual's predetermined objectives, class curriculum, or other criteria.

- **After Eligibility, Tests Can Accrue Contact Hours:** While hours accrued during the initial pretest to determine eligibility cannot be recorded as contact hours, after eligibility has been established through the initial pretest, and individuals are placed into classes, the remainder of the tests in the pretest sequence can be counted toward direct contact hours by entering them into TEAMS. When direct testing time is entered, TEAMS will round the testing time to the nearest quarter hour.

- **Test until Eligible (with Exceptions):** If the first test does not establish basic skills deficiency, the provider must administer a test in another content area to determine eligibility, unless the individual lacks a secondary school credential. For example, if a participant scores at Level 6 High ASE in math, then basic skills deficiency must be established with another test before the participant can receive AEL services. Figure 5 provides an illustration of this process.

- **Exception:** Individuals who lack a secondary school credential are eligible regardless of skill level; thus, an individual who scores at Level 6 High ASE in all content areas is eligible based on the need for high school completion, as described in the Individuals Who Lack a Secondary School Credential section.

- **Date Test Administration Accordingly:** While AEL programs have flexibility to initially test individuals in only one content area, providers must ensure that all test

scores for each individual content area are dated the exact date that the test in
that content area was completed.
- **SOPs:** Providers will need SOPs to manage the testing cycle.

Figure 5 shows an example of staggered testing. In this example, classes are held Monday and Wednesday and the student is deemed eligible for AEL services with the first pretest in the reading content area. The student takes the remaining tests (mathematics and language) on Day 2 and Day 4 of class and may accrue direct contact hours, well as instructional time received for tests taken on those days.

Figure 5: Staggered Tests and Accruing Direct Contact Hours
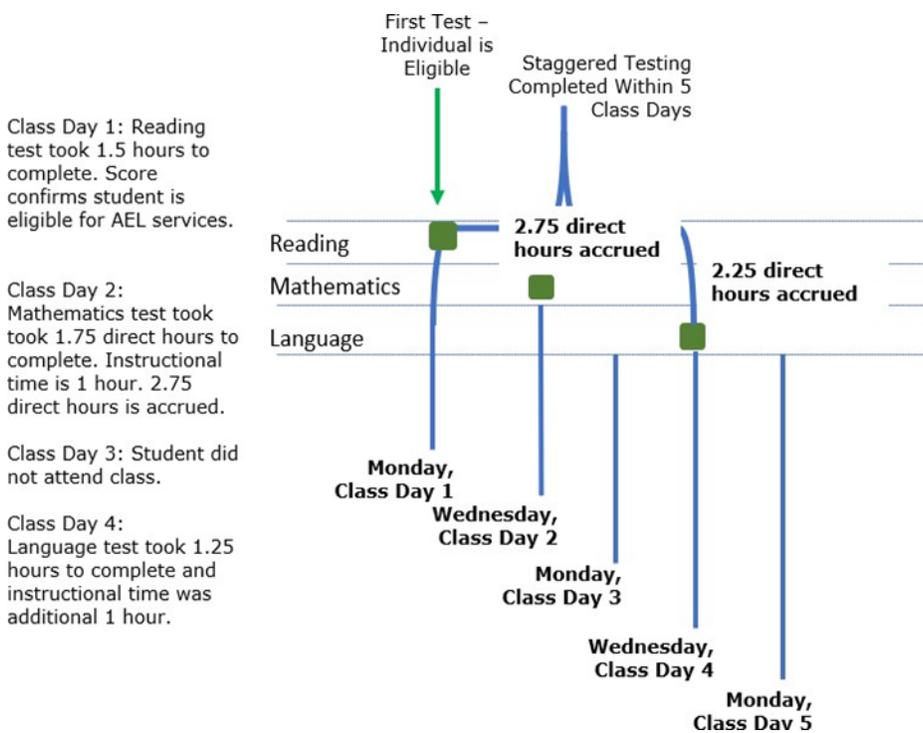
In the example shown in Figure 6, the individual has a diploma or an equivalent and tests too high for eligibility on the first test but takes a second test and is found eligible. Contact hours can be counted after the second test.

Figure 6: Test until Eligible
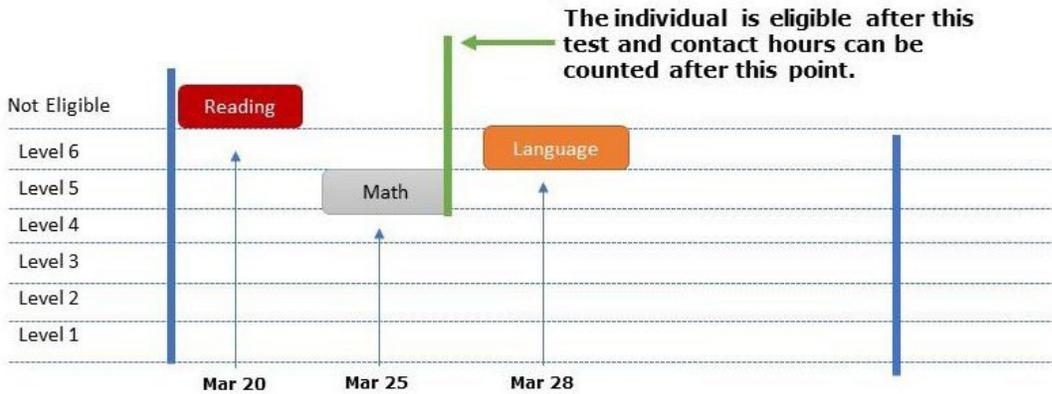
Considerations When Testing Initially in One Content Area

Providers are encouraged to consider the following points related to implementing the option of testing in one content area and directly placing participants into services, as follows:

Staggered Pretests Means Staggered Posttests

Providers must be aware that implementing staggered pretests requires that posttests also be staggered, as shown in Figure 7.

Figure 7: Staggered Pretests and Posttests Within Different Content Areas
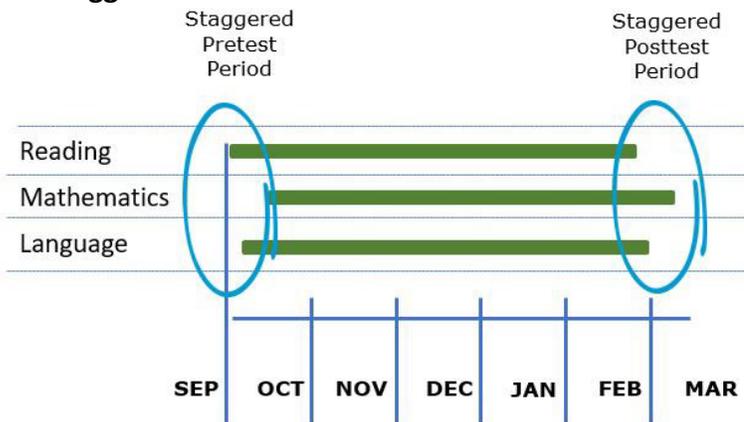
Because a gain may be earned in any content area, providers are encouraged to consider posttesting in all content areas to increase the possibility that a participant will earn a gain. Posttesting in all content areas also increases the number of test results that can be pulled forward into a new PY to be used to determine the student's instructional needs in an ongoing period of participation that crosses PYs. When staggering posttests, providers must consider the 365-day validity of a test in each content area, unless the individual meets exemption criteria from testing in all content areas.

Exemptions from Testing in All Content Areas

All content areas of a test must be administered in the pretest and posttest sequences, with the following exceptions:

- If a participant is a referral from a college to AEL and has a documented Texas Success Initiative Assessment (TSIA2) score, providers may administer only the content area AEL test for which the participant has placed on the TSIA2 as "not college ready." In general, on the TSIA 2 Diagnostic Test, scoring under a 5 would initiate remedial or co-requisite courses. However, many colleges have developed co-requisite models and may only want AEL serving Levels 1-3. College-ready guidance is available through your local institution of higher education.
  Note: AEL grantees must establish a local policy in alignment with the referring postsecondary institution that outlines placement and service model priorities and ensures a comprehensive assessment process is in place to support the participant's goals and program outcomes.
- If a participant is a referral from a college and has a documented exemption from taking the TSIA2 with an approved HSE test score in a content area of 165 or above, the provider does not need to test in that same content area in which the participant has attained an exemplary score and is considered college ready.
- If a participant enrolls in a class that provides instruction in only one content area (for example, a Math TSIA2 Boot Camp), the provider may administer only the content area test applicable to the instruction.
- If a participant has passed a section of the Texas Certificate of High School Equivalency (TxCHSE), they are not required to be tested in the content area they have passed.
- If a participant is enrolling in an IET program at the time of the pretest, the provider may administer the content areas most relevant to measuring the participant's success in the IET.
- If there is another documented reason for administering only one content area of the pretest, such as a specific participant goal or objective, the participant does not need to be tested in all content areas.

Providers must document on the **Participant's Note** page in TEAMS the reason for not administering all content areas of the pretest and maintain any corresponding documentation in the participant's file.

GENERAL TEST ADMINISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

Introduction

This section provides overall requirements and guidelines related to test administration. The section includes information on participant orientation to the testing process, test security, and general test administration guidelines.

Providers must ensure that any individual administering tests meets the staff training and administration guidelines found in this guide, as well as in the test publisher's test administration manual. See Staff Professional Development Requirements for more information.

Providers must ensure that test administration requirements for remote testing follow the test publisher's guidelines.

Participant Orientation to the Testing Process

The testing process must be transparent and must be explained in advance to participants. Providers should consider that the quality of test data at intake increases the validity of testing and the effectiveness of service delivery to support participant goals and program performance is only one factor that affects the validity of testing. Other factors that affect the validity of testing include the reliability of the test, the appropriateness of the test for the participant, and the consistency of the test administration.

Confidentiality

Providers must inform participants of the following:

- Test scores and participant files, which include PII, are kept confidential.
- Designated program staff will have access to test scores, but scores are kept secure and shared only on a need-to-know basis.
- Participant information must be entered into a statewide database system, but it is kept confidential, and only certain local program staff and state office staff members have access to the database information.
- Students can access their information by request.

If providers have data-sharing agreements with external organizations, participants also must be informed of how that information is used and of the process by which they provide their consent.

Setting Testers at Ease

It is important that before testing, every effort is made to help individuals feel at ease to produce valid and reliable test results.

Before Testing

Before a test, staff must:

- inform individuals of the reason and purpose of the test length, and the number and frequency of breaks; and
- provide individuals the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the test environment and testing instruments.

Participants may need basic mouse and keyboard review if they are taking a computer-based test. Research indicates that familiarity with the room and plenty of time to "settle in" improves test performance, so individuals should be allowed to enter the room and get comfortable with the environment before taking the test.

After Testing

Providers must ensure that test scores are made available in a timely manner. Once individuals get their test scores, it is best to schedule a confidential review of each individual's test results to explain the scores in the context of the individual's goals and objectives, which have been collected during comprehensive assessment.

General Test Security Guidelines

Adhering to general and test-specific test security is essential to ensuring the integrity of the testing process and results. Test security begins from the time the provider receives test materials and must be monitored throughout the life of the testing process.

Security breaches may result in invalidation of test results and monitoring findings. Test publishers may suspend or cancel the testing privileges of the provider or testing center in the event of a breach. For this reason, providers should have a plan in place to address security breaches quickly.

Providers are encouraged to consult the test publisher's test administration guide for test-specific security guidelines.

General Procedures for Test Materials

As a rule, test materials that must be kept secure include the following:

- Test books
- Test directions
- Completed answer forms and scantron sheets
- Used scratch paper

Test administrators and proctors must maintain the security of test materials. Only approved and trained staff should handle test materials and have access to the secured area or cabinet where test materials are stored.

Common Unauthorized Practices

TWC monitoring has found the following unauthorized practices in use during program reviews. AEL grantees must ensure that test administrators do not take such actions. Local test administration training must include information on proper test administration and must define the authorized testing materials, scoresheets, and other materials to use to avoid the following:

- Using locally produced, unofficial test score sheets
- Scoring tests in pencil, not ink
- Using test booklets that have been previously written in
- Test takers using pens rather than pencils, and then attempting to change test answers

In the rare event that a change must be made to a test form during administration, and erasing the answer is either not possible or creates an illegible answer, the change must have the test taker's signature as authorization. Providers must always consult the test publisher's guidelines when developing guidance related to test takers who make changes to their answers.

Unauthorized Materials and Clothing

Individuals taking tests are not permitted to bring the following items into the area where testing will occur:

- Cell phones and other electronic devices, except for calculators authorized for the test and authorized accommodation devices
- Books, notebooks, or any paper, unless the paper is authorized scratch paper
- Watches with calculator features
- Headphones or any listening devices, unless authorized as accommodation devices
- Purses or backpacks
- Food or drinks
- Sunglasses, unless the sunglasses are considered authorized accommodation devices or otherwise medically necessary

Prior to the test, the test administrator or proctor must inform participants not to bring listed items to the testing area, and there must be a secure place where participants may store any unauthorized items.

Test administrators also must inform individuals that using prohibited items may result in test invalidation.

Security During Testing

Test security procedures must be addressed in the provider's SOP for PII and data management and/or in the SOP for testing and placement, or within another SOP that addresses test security guidelines.

Providers must include, at a minimum, the following in test security procedures:

- Processes for notifying individuals of following:
  - Unauthorized materials and clothing, as well as availability of secure storage for such items
  - Unauthorized talking during testing
- Processes for assuring the following:
  - Only official sample questions are used when preparing individuals for a test; old versions of tests must not be used as practice material unless approved by the test publisher. It is also important that actual test questions are not used in classroom instruction.
  - There are restrictions on visitors, other individuals who are not testing, other staff, or any other unauthorized individuals in the test area after testing has begun.
  - The test administrator or proctor can see all individuals in the testing area throughout the testing process. Individuals must never be left alone with test materials.
  - Security of test administration manuals, actual participant paper-based or electronic tests, and answer sheets that contain marks, responses, or participant digital test results. These security measures should also include scratch paper, which should never be put into the trash or recycling bin. Scratch paper must be securely shredded or placed in a secure recycling container.
  - Disposal of test materials that have become defaced or unusable in accordance with the test publisher's guidelines.
  - Test administrators or proctors are always in control of the testing materials. Participants must never be allowed to collect, transport, or store test materials.
  - Calculator (if authorized for the test) memories are cleared before and after testing. For individuals who require them, Braille calculators may be used. Talking calculators or calculator memory functionality may also be used for individuals who are taking Braille versions of the test or who have received approval. (It is recommended that individuals bring and use the device with which they are used to working in their regular educational environments.)
  - Unauthorized duplication of any test form or any portion of any test form, unless explicit permission to do so is in writing, is obtained from the test publisher.

> ➢ Original score sheets from tests and/or electronic score reports with results of an individual's pretest and posttest scores are stored and/or backed up on appropriate media or printed out and filed in hard copy and made available for local, state, and federal audit purposes.

Additionally, program staff must adhere to all test security procedures and policies provided by the test publisher.

OVERVIEW OF TESTS PERMITTED FOR USE IN TEXAS

Introduction

This section outlines the tests AEL providers may use in Texas as ABE, ASE, and ESL tests and the requirements for administering each test. Providers may assess ELLs with any approved test, including a test designed to assess ABE/ASE levels, listed in this guide, but must adhere to the requirements for documenting an ELL, as outlined in the Pretests for English Language Learners section. OCTAE provides the list of approved tests and their expiration dates for NRS reporting through *Federal Register* Notices. The latest *Federal Register Notice* was published in March 2024.

The following tests and forms are approved for ABE and ASE in Texas through the dates provided, unless otherwise extended for use by the ED:

Table 2: NRS-Approved Tests–ABE

ABE Test Names	Forms	NRS Approval Expiration Date	NRS Sunset Date
ACT WorkKeys Workplace Documents	**Forms 018, 019, 020, and 021**	7/13/2026	6/30/2027
ACT WorkKeys Applied Math	**Forms 014, 015, 016, and 017**	7/13/2026	6/30/2027
CASAS Reading GOALS	**Forms 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, and 908**	2/5/2025	6/30/2025
CASAS Math GOALS	**Forms 900, 913, 914, 917, and 918**	3/7/2024	6/30/2024
CASAS Math GOALS 2	**Forms 921/922, 923/924, 925/926, 927/928, and 929/930**	7/13/2030	6/30/2031

ABE Test Names	Forms	NRS Approval Expiration Date	NRS Sunset Date
MAPT–CCR for Reading	N/A	5/2/2026	6/30/2026
MAPT–CCR for Mathematics	N/A	5/2/2026	6/30/2026
TABE (11/12)	Forms 11 and 12	9/7/2024	6/30/2025

Table 3: NRS-Approved Tests–ESL

ESL Test Names	Forms	NRS Approval Expiration Date	NRS Sunset Date
BEST Literacy	Forms B, C, and D	2/2/2024	6/30/2025
BEST Literacy 2.0	Forms 1, 2, and 3	7/13/2030	6/30/2031
BEST Plus 2.0	Forms D, E, and F	2/2/2024	6/30/2025
BEST Plus 3.0	Forms 1 and 2	7/13/2030	6/30/2031
CASAS Reading (Life and Work, Life Skills, Reading for Citizenship, Reading for Language Arts—Secondary Level)	Forms 27, 28, 81, 82, 81X, 82X, 83, 84, 85, 86, 185, 186, 187, 188, 310, 311, 513, 514, 951, 952, 951X, and 952X	2/2/2024	6/30/2025
CASAS Life and Work Listening	Forms 981L, 982L, 983L, 984L, 985L, and 986L	2/2/2024	6/30/2025
CASAS Reading STEPS	Forms 621/622, 623/624, 625/626, 627/628, and 629/630	7/13/2030	6/30/2031
CASAS Listening STEPS	Forms 621/622, 623/624, 625/626, 627/628, and 629/630	7/13/2030	6/30/2031
TABE CLAS-E	Forms A and B	2/2/2024	6/30/2025

Requirement to Follow Test Publisher's Administration Policies

AEL providers must adhere to all test publishers' test administration policies, including the requirement to administer a locator or appraisal to determine the most suitable test form for administration to an individual. The test administrator, sometimes referred to as the examiner or proctor, administers tests, verbally provides test directions to individuals, and is responsible for ensuring compliance to administrator and Testing Guide policies before, during, and after individuals take the test on the day of the test. The testing supervisor oversees assessment services for the entire AEL program.

Providers must follow test administration training requirements outlined on the Statewide Professional Development Center website: Staff Qualifications and Definitions of Roles .

Administering Remote Testing

Providers may implement remote test proctoring using the assessments approved for use in this guide and must adhere to the test publisher's procedures for remote testing. TCALL will publish updated information on remote testing on the TCALL website's Remote Testing Guidance Chart.

Requirement to Use Test Publisher's Materials

Providers must not create or modify test materials when administering and scoring tests and must use only the test publisher's materials, including locators/appraisals, test booklets, Scantrons, scoring sheets, and test administration manuals.

Unless expressly permitted in the Testing Guide—as with the administration of a locally developed literacy screening tool for the Best Literacy 2.0—modifications and locally developed test products are not authorized to be used.

Publisher Contact Information and Purchasing Tests

Providers must order tests from the test publishers and can find information on how to order tests on publishers' websites, as shown in Table 4. For additional assistance, providers may also contact the statewide professional development center for information on discounts for bulk orders that may be available.

Table 4: Test Publisher Contact Information

Publisher and Tests	Website	Phone
CASAS • Listening STEPS • Reading STEPS • Reading GOALS • Math GOALS 2.0	www.casas.org	1+ (800) 255-1036 or 1+ (858) 292-2900
DRC ● TABE CLAS-E ● TABE 11&12	https://www.datarecognitioncorp.com	1+ (800) 538-9547
CAL ● BEST Plus ● Best Literacy	https://www.cal.org/aea/	1+ (855) 543- 9461
ACT WorkKeys • Applied Math • Workplace Documents	https://www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/act-workkeys/act-workkeys-assessments.html	1+ (800) 967-5539

Publishers' Recommended Hours Between Tests

While providers are encouraged to follow a test publisher's recommended hours between tests, programs must, at a minimum, provide the number of instructional hours required between tests, as shown in Table 5: Test Publishers' Recommended Hours Between Tests. The column that shows the minimum required hours between tests corresponds to both a test publisher's and TWC's minimum required hours, as opposed to recommended hours as a best practice.

Posttesting must occur at least one calendar day after the participant has accrued the appropriate number of instructional hours.

Table 5: Test Publishers' Recommended Hours Between Tests

Publisher and Tests	Required Minimum Hours Between Tests	Publisher's Recommended Minimum Number of Hours Between Tests	Publisher's Recommended Maximum Number of Hours Between Tests
CASAS • Listening STEPS • Reading STEPS • Reading GOALS • Math GOALS 2	40 hours	Also recommended is a two-month lapse (60 calendar days) between tests, or 70-100 hours.	Also recommended is a two-month lapse (60 calendar days) between tests.
DRC • TABE CLAS-E • TABE 11&12	40 hours for ABE/ESL and 30 hours for ASE	For individuals testing into NRS ABE and all ESL levels, 40 hours is recommended. For individuals testing into NRS Levels 5&6 (ASE), 30 hours is recommended. 50 hours for testing with alternate forms 60 hours for testing with same form	For individuals testing into NRS Levels 5 & 6 (ASE), 59 hours is recommended. 60 hours for testing with alternate forms 80 hours for testing with same form
CAL • BEST Plus 2.0 • Best Literacy	60 hours	80 hours	100 hours
CAL • Best Plus 3.0 • Best Literacy 2.0	40 hours	40 hours	100 hours
ACT WorkKeys • Applied Math • Workplace Documents	30 hours	30 hours	N/A

Providers must be aware that CASAS does not allow the use of the same test form twice in a row. Alternate forms must be given at the same level, or one of the alternate forms at the next level, depending on the guidance in the Next Assigned Test chart in the test administration manual.

DRC's [pretesting and posttesting recommendations for TABE tests](#) are available online.

CAL's pretesting and posttesting recommendations for BEST tests are available online in the [Frequently Asked Questions](#).

Testing Before the Required Minimum Hours of Instruction

Exceptions that allow testing below the required minimum number of hours between pretest and posttest, as outlined by the test publisher, should be rare and limited, and all justifications for early testing must be documented on the TEAMS **Participant's Note** page and/or maintained in a participant's file for monitoring purposes.

Justifications for early testing may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The participant, due to the intensity of program or quality of instruction, has made progress more quickly than the publisher's recommended number of hours.
- The participant is anticipated to leave the program before reaching the minimum number of recommended hours and has made progress.
- The participant is determined to be test ready, intends to take the HSE exam, and will not return to the program for a posttest.
- The provider can document that instructional time has been reduced in order to meet an employer objective in a workplace literacy class.
- Test is being sunsetted by OCTAE and provider is transitioning to new test instrument.

Testing After the Recommended Maximum Hours

Additionally, there may be reasons that certain participants have far more instructional hours than the test publisher's recommended maximum number of hours between tests or are tested late.

Reasons may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The participant needs additional instructional time to make a gain, as identified by the instructor.
- The participant has already attained a Type 1a MSG in the PY, and the program intends to use instructor-developed tests for further assessment.
- The participant has attained a Postsecondary Enrollment or HSE Achievement MSG.

NRS Test Benchmarks and EFL Indicators

Providers can read more about each EFL and the skills an individual in a specific EFL will have in the TA Guide.

AEL grantees must be aware that TWC anticipates that the ED may approve new tests or reapprove new versions of existing tests over the next year, so the tables are subject to change. TWC will release any changes to the tables through an AEL Letter and an update of the Testing Guide.

The most recent update to the NRS Test Benchmarks for all EFLs can be found on the Test Benchmarks for Educational Functioning Levels web page.

Table 6: EFL Descriptors and Scale Scores for ABE Tests (All Content Areas)

NRS EFLs	TABE 11&12	CASAS	ACT WorkKeys
ABE Level 1	Reading: 300–441 Mathematics: 300–448 Language: 300–457	Reading GOALS: 203 and below Math GOALS 2: 192 and below	Applied Math: 71−73 Workplace Documents: N/A
ABE Level 2	Reading: 442–500 Mathematics: 449–495 Language: 458–510	Reading GOALS: 204–216 Math GOALS 2: 193–203	Applied Math: 74−78 Workplace Documents: 73−74
ABE Level 3	Reading: 501–535 Mathematics: 496–536 Language: 511–546	Reading GOALS: 217–227 Math GOALS 2: 204−213	Applied Math: 79−82 Workplace Documents: 75−77

NRS EFLs	TABE 11&12	CASAS	ACT WorkKeys
ABE Level 4	Reading: 536–575 Mathematics: 537–595 Language: 547–583	Reading GOALS: 228–238 Math GOALS 2: 214–224	Applied Math: 83–85 Workplace Documents: 78–80
ABE Level 5	Reading: 576–616 Language: 584–630 Mathematics: 596–656	Reading GOALS: 239–248 Math GOALS 2: 225–235	Applied Math: 86–87 Workplace Documents: 81–82
ABE Level 6	Reading: 617–800 Language: 631–800 Mathematics: 657–800	Reading GOALS: 249 and above Math GOALS 2: 236 and above	Applied Math: 88–90 Workplace Documents: 83–90

Table 7: EFL Descriptors and Scale Scores for New ESL Tests

NRS EFLs for ESL	CASAS Reading and Listening STEPS Series	BEST Plus 3.0	Best Literacy 2.0
ESL Level 1	Reading: 183 and below Listening: 181 and Below	Computer-Based: 600–677	Reading: 100–177 Writing: 100–187 Composite: 100–182

NRS EFLs for ESL	CASAS Reading and Listening STEPS Series	BEST Plus 3.0	Best Literacy 2.0
ESL Level 2	Reading: 184–196 Listening: 182–191	Computer-Based: 678–702	Reading: 178–203 Writing: 188–214 Composite: 183–209
ESL Level 3	Reading: 197–206 Listening: 192–201	Computer-Based: 703–726	Reading: 204–233 Writing: 215–254 Composite: 210–244
ESL Level 4	Reading: 207–216 Listening: 202–211	Computer-Based: 727–752	Reading: 234–261 Writing: 255–300 Composite: 245–300
ESL Level 5	Reading: 217–227 Listening: 212–221	Computer-Based: 753–785	Reading: 262–300[3]
ESL Level 6– Advanced	Reading: 228–238[4] Listening: 222–231[5]	Computer-Based: 786–849[6]	N/A

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[3]Students can be placed into High Intermediate ESL using Best Literacy 2.0, but the test does not assess skills beyond this level, so students cannot exit High Intermediate ESL with this test. Retesting of students who enter this level with another assessment is recommended.

[4] Above ESL Level 6: 239 and higher

[5] Above ESL Level 6: 232 and higher

[6] Above ESL Level 6: 850 and higher on computer-based test

Table 8: EFL Descriptors and Scale Scores for Extended ESL Tests

NRS EFLs for ESL	CASAS Life and Work Reading and Listening Series	BEST Plus 2.0	BEST Literacy	TABE CLAS-E[7]
Beginning ESL Literacy (ESL Level 1—all subjects)	Reading: 180 and below Life and Work Listening: 162–180	88–361	0–20 (SPL[8] 0–1)	Total Reading and Writing: 225–394 Total Listening and Speaking: 230–407
Low Beginning ESL (ESL Level 2—all subjects)	Reading: 181–190 Life and Work Listening: 181–189	362–427	21–52 (SPL 2)	Total Reading and Writing: 395–441 Total Listening and Speaking: 408–449
High Beginning ESL (ESL Level 3—all subjects)	Reading: 191–200 Life and Work Listening: 190–199	428–452	53–63 (SPL 3)	Total Reading and Writing: 442–482 Total Listening and Speaking: 450–485
Low Intermediate ESL (ESL Level 4—all subjects)	Reading: 201–210 Life and Work Listening: 200–209	453–484	64–67 (SPL 4)	Total Reading and Writing: 483–514 Total Listening and Speaking: 486–525
High Intermediate ESL (ESL Level 5—all subjects)	Reading: 211–220 Life and Work Listening: 210–218	485–524	68–75 (SPL 5)	Total Reading and Writing: 515–556 Total Listening and Speaking: 526–558
Advanced ESL (ESL Level 6—all subjects)	Reading: 221–235 Life and Work Listening: 219–227	525–564 (exit 565) and higher	76–78 (SPL 6)	Total Reading and Writing: 557–600 Total Listening and Speaking: 559–600

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[7] TABE CLAS-E scale scores shown here are for total scores and do not indicate score ranges for individual tests.

[8] SPL refers to "Student Performance Level."

TABE Tests

Providers are encouraged to contact DRC, the publisher of TABE, for additional information on TABE tests and how to purchase test materials at 1+ (800) 538-9547 or on the [TABE website](#).

DRC is working with the ED on revisions to the TABE materials. TWC is currently waiting on additional information related to TABE CLAS-E. Since this guide is for PY'24–25, the TABE CLAS–E has been removed as it will expire June 30, 2024.

If TABE CLAS-E is extended or renewed, this guide will be updated.

TABE 11&12

TABE 11&12 is an NRS-approved test published by DRC for ABE (grade levels 1–8) and ASE (grade levels 9–12) individuals, as well as for adults functioning at lower math, reading, and language skills. The purpose of TABE 11&12 is to assess adult basic skills in the content areas of reading, mathematics, and language. The test is aligned to OCTAE's College and Career Readiness Standards in these three areas. Approved forms for both paper-based and computer-based delivery formats are Form 11 and Form 12.

The TABE series includes versions of the test at various skill areas. The levels are as follows:

- Limited Literacy (L) (paper-based version only)
- Easy (E)
- Medium (M)
- Difficult (D)
- Advanced (A)

Use of TABE 11&12 Locator During Pretesting

Providers must administer the TABE locator test (locator) in each content area to determine the correct level of each subtest to be administered to the participant for initial placement. The locator may indicate a different level test for each content area.

If a participant is unable to complete the locator (for example, the participant has no reading or writing skills), the following alternatives for testing are available:

- The TABE Level L should be administered to participants who are unable to read or write to complete the locator. TABE Literacy test scores are entered into TEAMS.
- The TABE Word List may be used for initial appraisal of participants who are unable to read or write to complete the locator. Participants tested with the TABE Word List are not reflected on the federal report unless another NRS-approved test is administered.

DRC encourages correct usage of the locator to determine appropriate tests and levels to

be administered.

TWC recommends that providers maintain documentation of the locator in the participant's file, as applicable, for paper-based administered tests.

Parallel Forms
There are only two forms for TABE 11&12, which are Form 11 and Form 12. These parallel forms should be administered alternately between pretest and posttest.

Administration and Scoring Procedures for TABE 11&12
Test administrators must follow the test administration requirements outlined in DRC's TABE 11&12 Test Administration Manual, which includes guidance on procedures to follow before, during, and after administering the test. DRC requires at least one test examiner, and any additional floating examiners as needed, for every 20 individuals in the testing room.

TABE 11&12 may be administered in both paper-based and computer-based testing formats. DRC computer-based tests are administered using DRC Insight, a web-based system that does not require software. Tests administered through DRC Insight on a computer are also scored by DRC Insight. Paper-based tests may be hand-scored or scanned using TABE Scanning Services and then transferred to the online DRC Insight Portal system.

When paper-based tests are hand scored, raw scores must be converted to scale scores before entering score information into TEAMS. TABE 11&12 scoring guides must be used to convert raw scores into scale scores and NRS levels.

When scoring the pretest, test administrators should make note of participants who score at the top NRS level of a content area. These participants will need to be posttested at the next highest TABE® level in that content area to show a measurable gain.

Participants cannot earn a gain on a posttest if placed in NRS Level 6 (High ASE). Participants at this level must show an MSG gain through a Postsecondary Enrollment MSG or HSE Achievement MSG, described in AEL guidance on education, training, and employment outcomes, including the AEL Guide.

TABE Testing Times
Maximum allowable times for TABE tests are set forth on [DRC's website](#) and in Table 9. Any changes to test times approved by the US ED will be communicated to AEL grantees through an AEL Letter and the updated Testing Guide.

Table 9: TABE 11&12 Maximum Allowable Testing Times

Level	Reading Part 1	Reading Part 2	Language	Math Part 1	Math Part 2
E	50 minutes	50 minutes	55 minutes	65 minutes	N/A
M	50 minutes	50 minutes	55 minutes	55 minutes	10 minutes
D	50 minutes	50 minutes	55 minutes	35 minutes	30 minutes
A	50 minutes	50 minutes	55 minutes	30 minutes	35 minutes

Total testing times for each locator subtest are as follows:

- Reading—35 minutes
- Language—20 minutes
- Math—10 minutes (Part 1) and 10 minutes (Part 2)

TABE Complete Language Assessment System—English

The TABE CLAS-E is an NRS-approved test published by DRC that provides teachers with a reliable, easy-to-use system that accurately identifies the instructional needs of ESL participants. TABE CLAS-E assesses English proficiency levels to accurately measure participants' reading, listening, writing, and speaking skills. The speaking test is optional and gives providers flexibility in the testing process. Additional information and answers to frequently asked questions about the TABE CLAS-E are available on the TABE website.

Use of TABE CLAS-E Locator During Pretesting

Providers must administer the TABE CLAS-E locator in each content area to determine the correct level of each subtest to be administered to the participant for initial placement. It is recommended that providers maintain documentation of the locator in a participant's file, as applicable, for paper-based administered tests.

Parallel Forms

Pretests and posttests are available at four levels to ensure that participants test within the correct range for their abilities. Different forms must be used for pretesting and posttesting. Forms A and B may be administered alternately for posttesting.

Administration and Scoring Procedures for the TABE CLAS-E

The TABE CLAS-E provides the number-correct (raw) and scale scores for each skill area—reading, writing, listening, and speaking—for the total battery of tests. Providers must convert the raw score to the scale score for each subtest and enter the scale score for each subtest into TEAMS. Additional score reports include NRS proficiency levels, objective mastery scores, and Participant Performance Levels (SPLs). TABE CLAS-E also offers scoring with TestMate TABE.

Testing Time for TABE CLAS-E

Estimated times to complete each section of the TABE CLAS-E are the following:

- Reading—25 minutes
- Listening—20 minutes
- Writing—47 minutes
- Speaking—15 minutes

Documentation of TABE Tests

Providers must maintain documentation of tests provided to individuals. For paper-based TABE tests, it is required that, at a minimum, answer sheets be maintained in the participant file. If the TABE Level L test booklet is administered to a student, it must be maintained in the file, as it is a consumable. For computer-based tests, providers must maintain a printout of a score report that provides information on test scores, such as, but not limited to, the Individual Skills Profile report. See the Monitoring of Testing and Related Activities section.

BEST Test Series

The BEST Plus and Best Literacy tests are ESL tests published by CAL. The BEST Plus is designed to assess speaking proficiency, and the Best Literacy is designed to assess reading and writing skills. For PY'24–25, both versions of each test will be permitted for use.

For more information on the Best Plus and Best Literacy such as training, ordering tests, and other general questions, providers can refer to CAL's Frequently Asked Questions.

Administration Requirements for BEST Tests

Providers must administer both the BEST Plus (either 2.0 or 3.0 version) and a literacy screening tool, either the Best Literacy or Best Literacy 2.0 or a locally developed literacy screening tool, to all individuals to ensure valid assessment of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. For an example of a standardized literacy screening tool, see ADDENDUM 1. If an individual exhibits no literacy skills whatsoever, providers must administer a standardized literacy screening tool, and, depending on the individual's level of literacy, providers may forgo administering the Best Literacy test. All individuals, however, must be administered the Best Plus (either version), a test of English listening and speaking skills, regardless of their ability to complete the standardized literacy screening tool or the Best Literacy test.

BEST Plus 2.0

The BEST Plus 2.0 is an oral test administered face-to-face in an individual setting and is available in a print version and computer-adaptive version. Information on the BEST Plus 2.0 test usage policy is available online.

Use of BEST Plus 2.0 Locator During Pretesting

The print-based version of the BEST Plus 2.0 includes versions of the test at the following skill levels:

- Level 1 (low)
- Level 2 (middle)

- Level 3 (high)

The computer-adaptive version of BEST Plus 2.0 does not have a locator. Test items are selected by the computer program, which chooses the most appropriate question based on the examinee's demonstrated ability level on previous responses.

It is recommended that providers maintain documentation of the locator in a participant's file, as applicable, for paper-based administered tests.

Parallel Forms

The print-based version has three parallel forms (D, E, and F) for pretesting and posttesting purposes. Different forms must be used for pretesting and posttesting.

The computer-adaptive version of BEST Plus 2.0 does not have parallel forms. The program randomizes questions and question difficulty from a large bank of questions. Test software ensures that individuals do not receive the same question twice.

Administration and Scoring Procedures

Individuals taking the print-based version are administered a locator, which is scored by a test administrator as the test progresses. Answers are assessed in listening comprehension, language complexity, and communication. An individual is then given the appropriate-level test based on locator scores as indicated on the chart in the individual test booklet. The raw scores are entered into the computer via the BEST Plus 2.0 scores management software to obtain a complete score report. Scores from the print-based version are comparable to the scores from the computer-adaptive version. The computer-adaptive version of BEST Plus 2.0 selects the test items appropriate for the individual, as determined by the administrator's scoring of the individual's responses using the BEST Plus scoring rubric. On completion of the test, test administrators can access an immediate score report.

Testing Time for BEST Plus 2.0

The Best Plus 2.0 takes from five to 20 minutes, depending on the individual's proficiency level.

The BEST Literacy

The BEST Literacy is a print-based test of both reading and writing skills in authentic situations specifically geared to adult ELLs. Reading tasks include basic life skills, such as reading dates on a calendar, labels on food and clothing, bulletin announcements, and online employment ads. Writing tasks include addressing an envelope, writing a rent check, filling out a personal background form, and writing personal notes.

Screening for Nonliterate Individuals

The BEST Literacy test does not have a locator test, although some adults entering an English language program may have limited knowledge of written English and/or literacy skills and will struggle with or be unable to complete a literacy test such as BEST Literacy. In some instances, individuals may exhibit no literacy skills and have limited knowledge of written English and/or have limited or no literacy skills in their native language. For example, nonliterate individuals may:

- exhibit difficulties completing enrollment forms;
- directly inform the intake or test administration staff that they cannot read or write;
- refuse to take the BEST Literacy test;
- declare before even looking at the BEST Literacy test that they would be unable to understand any portion of it; or
- not open the BEST Literacy test booklet when it is distributed.

In these instances, providers must administer a standardized literacy screening tool to assess the individual's reading and writing abilities. There are samples of screening tools in ADDENDUM 1.

Maintaining Documentation for the Standardized Literacy Screening Tool
Providers must use the screening tool as verification and documentation that a BEST Literacy was not administered, because the screening tool indicates that the individual is nonliterate, and, therefore, administration of the BEST Literacy is not required.

Parallel Forms
BEST Literacy is available in three parallel forms (B, C, and D) for pretesting and posttesting. Providers must use different forms for pretesting and posttesting.

Administration and Scoring Procedures for the BEST Literacy
BEST Literacy can be administered individually or to groups. Each examinee is given one test booklet that contains the instructions and the test questions. The test administrator verbally provides test directions, and individuals write their answers in the test booklet.

Scoring instructions are provided in the BEST Literacy Test Manual. Using the separate scoring sheet that corresponds to the appropriate examinee test booklet, the individuals' responses are scored based on comprehensibility. Correct answers for the reading and writing sections are provided for the scorer on the scoring sheet.

The BEST Literacy Test Manual contains a writing rubric and benchmarks to score the writing tasks. A raw score is calculated based on the combined scores of the reading and writing tasks. A scale score is determined using the conversion tables located in the BEST Literacy Test Manual.

Testing Time for BEST Literacy
The BEST Literacy should be completed within one hour.

BEST Plus 3.0
The BEST Plus 3.0 is an oral test administered face-to-face in an individual setting. Only the computer-adaptive version is approved for use in Texas. Information on the Best Plus 3.0 test usage policy is available online.

The computer-adaptive version of Best Plus 3.0 does not have a locator. Test items are selected by the computer program, which chooses the most appropriate question based on the examinee's demonstrated ability level on previous responses.

Parallel Forms

The computer-adaptive version of Best Plus 3.0 does not have parallel forms. The program randomizes questions and question difficulty from a large bank of questions. Test software ensures that individuals do not receive the same question twice.

Administration and Scoring Procedures

Individuals taking the print-based version are administered a locator, which is scored by a test administrator as the test progresses. Answers are assessed in listening comprehension, language complexity, and communication. An individual is then given the appropriate level test based on locator scores as indicated on the chart in the individual test booklet. The raw scores are entered into the computer via the Best Plus 3.0 scores management software to obtain a complete score report. Scores from the print-based version are comparable to the scores from the computer-adaptive version.

The computer-adaptive version of Best Plus 3.0 selects the test items appropriate for the individual, as determined by the administrator's scoring of the individual's responses using the BEST Plus scoring rubric. On completion of the test, test administrators can access an immediate score report.

Testing Time for Best Plus 3.0

The Best Plus 3.0 takes from five to 20 minutes, depending on the individual's proficiency level.

The Best Literacy 2.0

The Best Literacy 2.0 is a print-based, combined test of reading and writing skills in authentic situations specifically geared to adult English language learners. Reading tasks include reading weather forecasts, product reviews, opening times on a business schedule, and flyer, memo, and bulletin announcements. Writing tasks include filling out a class registration form, making a party reservation, writing a plan for the day, and requesting a doctor's appointment.

Screening for Nonliterate Individuals

The Best Literacy 2.0 test does not have a locator test, although some adults entering an English language program may have limited knowledge of written English and/or literacy skills and will struggle with or be unable to complete a literacy test such as Best Literacy 2.0. In some instances, individuals may exhibit no literacy skills and have limited knowledge of written English and/or have limited or no literacy skills in their native language. For example, nonliterate individuals may:

- exhibit difficulties completing enrollment forms;
- directly inform the intake or test administration staff that they cannot read or write;
- refuse to take the Best Literacy 2.0 test;
- declare before even looking at the Best Literacy 2.0 test that he or she would be unable to understand any portion of it; or

- not open the Best Literacy 2.0 test booklet when it is distributed.

In these instances, providers must administer a standardized literacy screening tool to assess the individual's reading and writing abilities. Examples of standardized screening tools are available in ADDENDUM 1.

Maintaining Documentation for the Standardized Literacy Screening Tool
Providers must use the screening tool as verification and documentation that a Best Literacy 2.0 was not administered, because the screening tool indicates that the individual is nonliterate, and, therefore, administration of the Best Literacy 2.0 is not required.

Parallel Forms
Best Literacy 2.0 is available in three parallel forms (1, 2 and 3) for pretesting and posttesting. Providers must use different forms for pretesting and posttesting.

Administration and Scoring Procedures for the Best Literacy 2.0
Best Literacy 2.0 can be administered individually or to groups. Each examinee is given one test booklet that contains the instructions and the test questions. The test administrator verbally provides test directions, and individuals write their answers in the test booklet.

Scoring instructions are provided in the Best Literacy 2.0 Test Manual. Using the separate scoring sheet that corresponds to the appropriate examinee test booklet, the individuals' responses are scored based on comprehensibility. Correct answers for the reading and writing sections are provided for the scorer on the scoring sheet.

The Best Literacy 2.0 Test Manual contains a writing rubric and benchmarks to score the writing tasks. A raw score is calculated based on the combined scores of the reading and writing tasks. A scale score is determined using the conversion tables located in the Best Literacy 2.0 Test Manual.

Testing Time for Best Literacy 2.0
The Best Literacy 2.0 should be completed within one hour.

Documentation of BEST Tests
Providers must maintain documentation of tests provided to individuals. For the Best Literacy and Best Literacy 2.0 test, it is required that, at a minimum entire test booklets, cover sheets, and answer sheets be maintained in the participant file and that the BEST Plus 2.0 answer sheets be maintained. As the Best Plus picture cue book is reusable, providers do not need to maintain that in the file.

See the Monitoring of Testing and Related Activities section for more information.

CASAS Tests

Administration and Scoring Procedures for CASAS

CASAS offers online and paper-based testing options. Test administrators must follow the test administration requirements outlined in CASAS Test Administration Manuals (TAM) for each test series. For PY'24–25, all NRS-approved CASAS test versions will be permitted for use in Texas.

CASAS eTests are online versions of paper tests. The eTests and paper tests are interchangeable. Pretests and posttests do not have to be administered in the same modality. The online system combines the locator and the pretest. TOPSpro Enterprise (TE) is the web-based data management system for CASAS, managing eTests, scanned answer sheets, or manually entered test scores to help programs score tests and generate test results and instructional reports. TE software and CASAS eTests automatically convert raw scores to scale scores.

The following criteria describe how certain tests may be administered:

- The Reading and Math GOALS 2 tests and the Reading STEPS tests can be administered using CASAS eTests or paper test booklets.
- The CASAS Listening STEPS and Reading STEPS tests can be administered using CASAS eTests or paper-based booklets and listening audio CDs.
- The Life and Work Reading tests can be administered using CASAS eTests or paper test booklets.
- The CASAS Life and Work Listening and Life and Work Reading tests can be administered using CASAS eTests or paper test booklets and audio CDs.

Providers should give ESL students who had little or no difficulty during the initial screening a locator or an appraisal test (on paper) to determine the appropriate level pretest. ESL students who had some difficulty during the screening may be administered the Level A Reading and Listening tests using paper tests or eTests.

Posttests

CASAS provides recommended posttest forms based on previous scale scores. These recommended posttest forms are provided in the CASAS test TAM for each test series. Paper-based test proctors used Next Assigned Test charts to determine the appropriate posttest based on initial or pretest results. Students taking the eTests will be automatically placed in the next appropriate level test.

CASAS Reading GOALS Series

The CASAS Reading GOALS Series is a series of reading tests designed for ABE and ASE participants. The Reading GOALS Series assesses adult basic skills in reading comprehension. The test measures vocabulary, reading comprehension, and higher-order reading skills.

Approved forms for both paper-based and computer-based delivery formats are Forms 901R, 902R, 903R, 904R, 905R, 906R, 907R, and 908R. Reading passages and test questions are academically rigorous and set in real-life contexts, including workplace contexts, that are relevant and engaging for adult learners.

More information on the Reading GOALS Series is available on the CASAS website. Answers to frequently asked questions on Reading GOALS are also available.

Use of Reading GOALS Locator/Appraisal during Pretesting
For the CASAS eTests online version of the Reading GOALS Series, the Form 104R Reading GOALS Locator can be used to place an individual with the correct test form. The Locator takes 10 to 15 minutes to complete.

For the paper-based version of the CASAS Reading GOALS Series, the Form 900R Reading GOALS Appraisal is the only permitted appraisal. The appraisal functions as a locator with 28 questions. Allow up to 30 minutes for this test.

CASAS Reading GOALS also offers optional Writing Screening and Reading Screening activities to determine whether an individual has very minimal writing or reading abilities.

It is recommended that providers maintain documentation of the appraisal in a participant's file, as applicable, for paper-based administered tests.

Parallel Forms
There are two alternate pretests and posttests at each test level (A through D) in the Reading GOALS Series, and the two forms are parallel in content and difficulty. The odd-numbered form is usually a pretest form, and the even-numbered form is usually a posttest form. However, providers may use either form for either purpose. Form numbers are shown in Table 10.

Table 10: Reading Goals Alternate Test Forms

Level	Alternate Test Form Numbers (Reading GOALS Progress Tests)
A	901R, 902R
B	903R, 904R
C	905R, 906R
D	907R, 908R

Providers may refer to the Reading GOALS Test Administration Manual for information on the next tests that programs should administer based on an individual's scores.

Pretesting and Posttesting

Individuals who score too low on a Level A pretest to obtain a scale score may use Form 27/28 as a beginning literacy-level test to receive a scale score. Additionally, individuals who score too low on Levels B, C, or D pretests to receive a scale score must retest at the next lower level to obtain a scale score. Similarly, individuals who score above the scale score range can retest at the next higher level.

Individuals who achieve a high-end (also called conservative estimate) scale score on a pretest or posttest may retest at a higher level or use the conservative estimate score, as outlined in the Reading GOALS TAM.

Testing Time for Reading GOALS

Maximum allowable times for the tests are listed in Table 11. Please note that it is acceptable to allow individuals a few extra minutes to complete the question they are working on when the test administrator calls time.

Table 11: Reading GOALS Maximum Allowable Testing Times

CASAS Level	Form Number	Number of Test Items	Test Time	Scale score ranges
A	Forms 901R - 902R	39	60 minutes	165–212
B	Forms 903R - 904R	40	75 minutes	196–225
C	Forms 905R - 906R	40	75 minutes	210–238
D	Forms 907R - 908R	40	75 minutes	228–262

CASAS Math Goals 2 Series

The CASAS Math Goals 2 900 Series is a series of math tests designed for ABE and ASE participants. The Math Goals 2 Series assesses academic math skills, both for basic and advanced levels, and, like other CASAS tests, has work-focused questions. Math GOALS 2 includes five levels (A through E). Approved forms for both paper-based and computer-based delivery formats are Forms 919M Appraisal, 921M, 922M, 923M, 924M, 925M, 926M, 927M, 928M, 929M, and 930M. As described on the CASAS website, "This math series helps to identify the rigorous academic and everyday math skills that your students need as you prepare them to function productively in today's society, to transition to postsecondary education and training, and to achieve success in the workplace."

More information on the Math Goals 2 Series is available on the CASAS website. Answers to frequently asked questions on Math Goals 2 are also available.

Use of Math Goals 2 Locator/Appraisal during Pretesting

For the CASAS eTest online version of the Math Goals 2 Series, the Form 920M Math Goals 2 Locator can be used. The locator takes about 15 minutes to complete and has 14 questions.

For the print-based version of the CASAS Math Goals 2 Series, the Form 919M Math Goals 2 Appraisal is the only permitted appraisal. The appraisal has 28 questions and takes about 30 minutes to complete.

It is recommended that providers maintain documentation of the locator/appraisal in a participant's file, as applicable, for paper-based administered tests.

Parallel Forms

The Math Goals 2 Series offers two alternate pretests and posttests at Levels A/B and Levels C/D. Form numbers are shown in Table 12.

Table 12: CASAS Math Goals 2 Test Forms

CASAS Level	Form Number	Number of Test Items	Test Time	Scale score ranges
Appraisal	919M	28	30 minutes	N/A
Locator	920M	14	15 minutes	N/A
A	Forms 921M - 922M	33	50 minutes	171−203
B	Forms 923M - 924M	36	65 minutes	193−213
C	Forms 925M - 926M	36	75 minutes	204−224
D	Forms 927M - 928M	36	75 minutes	214−235
E	Forms 929M - 930M	36	90 minutes	225−255

Providers may refer to the Math Goals 2 TAM for information on the next tests that programs should administer based on an individual's scores.

Pretesting and Posttesting

It is recommended that individuals who score too low on the Level A Math pretest to obtain a scale score be given another content area of the test (reading, for example) in order to place them in a class. Once individuals have obtained additional instruction, they may be given the Math GOALS 2 test to assess instructional levels. Additionally, individuals who score too low on the Level C/D pretest to receive a scale score must retest at the next lower level to obtain a scale score.

Individuals who achieve a high-end (conservative estimate) scale score on a Level A

pretest or posttest may retest at the next higher level to get an accurate baseline pretest score, or use the conservative estimate score, as outlined in the Math Goals 2 Test Administration Manual.

Testing Time for Math Goals 2

Maximum allowable times for the tests are listed in Table 12. Please note that it is acceptable to allow individuals a few extra minutes to complete the question they are working on when the test administrator calls time.

CASAS Life and Work Listening Tests

The CASAS Life and Work Listening 980 Series is an NRS-approved test series published by CASAS for ESL participants. The tests are available online with CASAS eTests as paper-based tests using CDs for the listening prompts. The tests can be administered individually or in a group setting.

The CASAS Life and Work 980 Listening Series focuses on employment and life-skills content, with test questions framed around real-life situations.

This test series assesses listening comprehension. Test questions range from matching a photo to an accompanying description, to listening to a comprehension question and responding with a multiple-choice answer, to selecting the best next line to complete a conversation.

More information on the CASAS Life and Work Listening 980 Series is available on the CASAS website.

Use of CASAS Life and Work Listening Locator/Appraisal During Pretesting

Providers may use either the CASAS Form 80 Listening Appraisal or the Listening Locator (Form 89L), available as CASAS eTests or the Form 80 Listening Appraisal in the CD version, to determine the appropriate pretest form to use. Providers have the option of creating and using a locally developed procedure to determine the pretest most appropriate for an individual.

It is recommended that providers maintain documentation of the locator/appraisal in a participant's file, as applicable, for paper-based administered tests.

Parallel Forms

There are two alternate pretests and posttests in the Life and Work Listening Series, and the two forms are parallel in content and difficulty. The odd-numbered form is usually a pretest form, and the even-numbered form is usually a posttest form. However, programs may use either form for either purpose. Form numbers are shown in Table 13.

Table 13: CASAS Life and Work Listening Alternate Test Forms

Level	Alternate Test Form Numbers for Life and Work Listening Progress Tests
A	981L, 982L
B	983L, 984L
C	985L, 986L

Testing Time for CASAS Life and Work Listening

All tests in the CASAS Life and Work Listening 980 Series require 49 to 51 minutes to complete, depending on the form.

CASAS Life and Work Reading Tests

CASAS Life and Work Reading Series (Forms 27, 28, 81, 82, 81X, 82X, 83, 84, 85, 86, 185, 186, 187, 188) is a series of reading tests for ESL participants. The test is available online with CASAS eTests and in a paper-based version. The tests can be administered individually or in a group setting.

The CASAS Life and Work Reading Series assesses the progress of participants' reading skills and focuses on measuring reading skills in real-life and workplace contexts.

More information on the CASAS Life and Work Reading Series is available on the CASAS website.

Use of CASAS Life and Work Reading Locator/Appraisal During Pretesting

Use the following information to determine which pretest to administer to an individual:

- Use the Form 102R Locator for the CASAS eTests online version of the Life and Work Reading Series. The locator usually takes 10 to 15 minutes to complete.
- Use the Form 80 Appraisal for the print-based version of the CASAS Life and Work Reading Series. The appraisal has 25 questions and has a set time of 25 minutes to administer.

It is recommended that providers maintain documentation of the locator/appraisal in the participant's file, as applicable, for paper-based administered tests.

Parallel Forms

There are two alternate pretests and posttests in the Life and Work Reading Series, and the two forms are parallel in content and difficulty. The odd-numbered form is usually a pretest form, and the even-numbered form is usually a posttest form. However, providers may use either form for either purpose. Form numbers are listed in Table 14.

Table 14: CASAS Life and Work Reading Alternate Test Forms

Level	Alternate Test Form Numbers for Life and Work Reading Progress Tests
A (Beginning Literacy Reading)	27, 28
A	81, 82
AX	81X, 82X (**Note:** These forms are an extension of Level A; they are a bridge between Levels A and B.)
B	83, 84
C	185, 186 85, 86 (**Note:** Forms 85 and 86 are employment-focused and should not be used as alternating forms with 185 and 186.)

Level	Alternate Test Form Numbers for Life and Work Reading Progress Tests
D	187, 188

Testing Time for CASAS Life and Work Reading
Providers should allow up to one hour for all pretests and posttests in the CASAS Life and Work Reading Series.

CASAS Listening STEPS Tests
The CASAS Listening STEPS Series is an NRS-approved test series published by CASAS for ESL participants. The tests are available online with CASAS eTests as paper-based tests using CDs for the listening prompts. The tests can be administered individually or in a group setting. When administering Listening STEPS using CASAS eTests in a group setting, headphones are required for each individual test taker and multiple levels can be administered at once. The CASAS Listening STEPS Series focuses on employment and life skills content, with test questions framed around real-life situations.

This test series assesses listening comprehension. Test questions range from matching a photo to an accompanying description, to listening to a comprehension question and responding with a multiple-choice answer, to selecting the best next line to complete a conversation.

More information on the CASAS Listening STEPS Series is available on the CASAS website.

Use of CASAS Listening STEPS Locator/Appraisal During Pretesting
Providers may use either the CASAS Form 619L0 Listening Appraisal or the Listening Locator Form 620L (available as CASAS eTests), or the Form 620L Listening Appraisal (in the CD version), to determine the appropriate pretest form to use. Providers have the option of creating and using a locally developed procedure to determine the pretest most appropriate for an individual.

It is recommended that providers maintain documentation of the locator/appraisal in a participant's file, as applicable, for paper-based administered tests.

Parallel Forms
There are two alternate pretests and posttests for five levels in the Listening STEPS Series, and the two forms are parallel in content and difficulty. The odd-numbered form is usually a pretest form, and the even-numbered form is usually a posttest form. However, programs may use either form for either purpose. Form numbers are shown in Table 15.

Table 15: CASAS Listening STEPS Alternate Test Forms

CASAS Level	Form Number	Number of Test Items	Test Time	Scale score ranges
Appraisal	619L	28	30 minutes	N/A
Locator	620L	14	15 minutes	N/A

CASAS Level	Form Number	Number of Test Items	Test Time	Scale score ranges
A	Forms 621L - 622L	33	28 minutes	158–191
B	Forms 623L - 624L	36	45 minutes	182–201
C	Forms 625L - 626L	39	52 minutes	192–211
D	Forms 627L - 628L	39	56 minutes	202–221
E	Forms 629L - 630L	39	38 minutes	212–235

Testing Time for CASAS Listening STEPS
All tests in the CASAS Listening STEPS Series require 28–56 minutes to complete, depending on the form.

CASAS Reading STEPS Tests
CASAS Reading STEPS Series is a series of reading tests for ESL participants. The test is available online with CASAS eTests and in a paper-based version. The tests can be administered individually or in a group setting.

The CASAS Reading STEPS Series assesses the progress of participants' reading skills and focuses on measuring reading skills in real-life and workplace contexts.

More information on the CASAS Reading STEPS Series is available on the CASAS website.

Use of CASAS Reading STEPS Locator/Appraisal During Pretesting
Use the following to determine which pretest to administer to an individual:

- Use the Form 102R Locator for the CASAS eTests online version of the Reading STEPS Series. The locator usually takes 10 to 15 minutes to complete.
- Use the Form 80 Appraisal for the print-based version of the CASAS Reading STEPS Series. The appraisal has 25 questions and has a set time of 25 minutes to administer.

It is recommended that providers maintain documentation of the locator/appraisal in a participant's file, as applicable, for paper-based administered tests.

Parallel Forms
There are two alternate pretests and posttests in the Reading STEPS Series, and the two forms are parallel in content and difficulty. The odd-numbered form is usually a pretest form, and the even-numbered form is usually a posttest form. However, providers may use either form for either purpose. Form numbers are listed in Table 16.

Table 16: CASAS Reading STEPS Alternate Test Forms

CASAS Level	Form Number	Number of Test Items	Test Time	Scale score ranges
Appraisal	619R	28	30 minutes	N/A
Locator	620R	14	15 minutes	N/A
A	Forms 621R - 622R	33	30 minutes	160−196
B	Forms 623R - 624R	36	50 minutes	184−206
C	Forms 625R - 626R	36	75 minutes	197−216
D	Forms 627R - 628R	36	75 minutes	207−227
E	Forms 629R - 630R	36	75 minutes	217−251

Testing Time for CASAS Reading STEPS

Providers should allow the recommended test time in Table 16 or all pretests and posttests in the CASAS Reading STEPS Series.

Documentation of CASAS Tests

Providers must maintain documentation of tests provided to individuals. For CASAS tests, it is required that at minimum, answer sheets be maintained in a participant's file. If the Form 27 Literacy level test book is administered to a student, it should be maintained in the file, as it is a consumable. For computer-based tests (CASAS eTests), providers must maintain a printout of a score report that provides information on test scores, such as, but not limited to, the Individual Skills Profile or Student Test Summary. See the Monitoring of Testing and Related Activities section for more information.

ACT WorkKeys

OCTAE approved the ACT WorkKeys Applied Math and Workplace Documents assessments for use in the NRS for measuring EFL gains in adult education. If AEL providers choose to utilize the ACT WorkKeys permitted tests, the providers must follow all ACT test administration guidelines to ensure proper test administration and reporting. ACT WorkKeys tests offer only a computer-based option. See the for more information.

Technical Requirements

All requirements for online testing administration are addressed in the ACT WorkKeys Manual. If your administration is in a school or district office, only school- or district-owned (managed) devices may be used for testing. The school or district must own and have administrative rights to the device.

Administration Type
The ACT WorkKeys tests may be administered in either an individual or group setting. The administration time for each test type is 55 minutes. You may administer all the tests in one session with breaks between tests, administer each test separately on different days, or administer the tests in a combination of these two options. Be sure to allow students the appropriate amount of time to complete each test.

Locator Tests
There is not an appraisal or locator test with WorkKeys. ACT offers and prep packages, in addition to a [WorkKeys free practice test.](#) The QuickGuide is part of the WorkKeys curriculum, and WorkKeys placement quizzes can act as a locator test.

Parallel Forms
If a the last test taken by a student is less than 30 days, the system will select different a form. If the last test taken is more than 30 days, the test administrator will need to select an alternate form that has not been used in the last six months.

Training Requirements
To become an ACT WorkKeys test administrator, you must complete the TCALL-developed test administrator training. To review the requirements, see the WorkKeys Training website.

Reporting
Instructions are provided in the ACT WorkKeys Available Score Reports Online Reports Portal instructions to access the WorkKeys reports portal for individual and group scores.

WorkKeys Applied Math
WorkKeys Applied Math measures critical thinking, mathematical reasoning, and problem-solving techniques for situations that occur in today's workplace.

Test Forms
Forms 014, 015, 016, and 017 are approved for use in computer-based delivery format only.

WorkKeys Workplace Documents
WorkKeys Workplace Documents measure skills that individuals use when they read real workplace documents and use that information to make job-related decisions and solve problems. The test can be delivered through both online and paper-based versions.

Test Forms
Forms 018, 019, 020, and 021 are approved for use in computer-based delivery format only.

WorkKeys Test Times
The standard time for the Workplace Documents and Applied Math assessments given in English is 55 minutes. Each standard time WorkKeys assessment given in Spanish is 70 minutes.

Table 17: ACT WorkKeys Test Times

Test	Number of Test Items	English	Spanish	Recommended Hours Between Test
Applied Math	34	55 minutes	70 minutes	30 hours
Workplace Documents	35	55 minutes	70 minutes	30 hours

STAFF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS

Introduction

This section provides an overview of professional development requirements for staff members whose responsibilities relate to test administration. TWC's statewide professional development contractor, TCALL, provides the test training in Texas.

Required Program Staff Involved with Assessment and Testing

AEL statewide grants require programs to employ staff members who meet specific professional development requirements and minimum staff qualifications. Several required staff positions have specific duties related to testing and assessment:

- **Director of Instruction**—Staff member responsible for leading and coordinating program curriculum and instruction, including both face-to-face and remote learning. This person also coordinates or develops specialized curriculum for Career Pathway models, including coaching new and existing instructors and guiding overall service delivery like the implementation of the current and future Texas AEL Content Standards and guidance related to Career Pathways
- **Lead for Quality Assurance**—Staff member responsible for compliance with and adherence to grant and AEL policy and procedural guidance, SOPs including procedures for data collection and PII, and required performance documentation.
- **Lead for Performance Accountability**—Staff member responsible for models for program performance and data management, data collection and reporting, oversight of testing and assessment staff and functions, compliance to this guide, and other related TWC performance policy and guidance.
- **Professional Development Coordinator**—Staff member responsible for ensuring that staff meets professional development and training requirements, including testing and assessment training.
- **Lead for Distance Learning**—Staff member responsible for leading distance learning efforts in the AEL program and ensuring that distance learning participants are assessed in the same way as non-distance learning participants.

- **TEAMS Specialist**—Staff member responsible for serving as a subject matter expert on entering and tracking tests in the system and reporting if the system is experiencing issues. This person can also assist in determining if staff has the appropriate level of access to enter test data in the system.

Staff Qualifications and Definitions of Roles

Overall staff qualifications and training requirements are governed by TWC Chapter 805 Adult Education and Literacy rule §805.21, Staff Qualifications and Training. These are general requirements for staff who oversee program testing and assessment services and for test proctoring staff. These general requirements will be further defined by the requirements of the test publisher for each test type. Please see TCALL's Staff Qualifications and Development Requirements for role-based professional development expectations. Due to conflicts of interest, certain required staff positions such as "Lead for Quality Assurance" or "Lead for Performance Accountability" should not be part of the testing staff team.

Additionally, test administrators and certain key staff with duties related to distance learning have specific training requirements. See the State Guidance for Distance Education section for more information.

Under TWC rules, staff members who "oversee program assessment services" include test supervisors and test administrators, and "proctoring staff" includes test proctors.

Staff may have multiple roles in the testing and assessment process or other duties. For example, an instructor may also be a test administrator or a proctor. As outlined on TCALL's Staff Qualifications and Development page, staff members who "oversee program assessment services" include test supervisors and test administrators, and "proctoring staff" includes test proctors. These roles have different professional development requirements.

Table 18: Overview of Professional Development Requirements for Testing Staff lists professional development requirements by testing function. AEL staff members with overlapping duties are expected to complete the professional development hours of the position that requires the most hours and the professional development content areas required of all positions.

TWC-Approved Test Trainings

A list of TWC-approved trainings and training requirements for each of the approved tests is available online.

Table 18 provides an overview of the training requirements for testing supervisors and test administrators/proctors.

As required by 34 CFR §462.40 (12), TWC offers training for AEL staff charged with testing administration, data analysis, and data entry. The topics of test security and NRS test benchmarks are covered in the NRS test trainings and the Trainer of Trainer (TOT) events provided by TCALL. Technical assistance courses for TEAMS data entry and data collection as well as measuring educational outcomes are provided in the professional development portal.

Table 18: Overview of Professional Development Requirements for Testing Staff

Role and Duties	TABE, BEST, ACT WorkKeys and CASAS Tests Training Requirements
Test Supervisor: ● Serves as testing subject matter expert for the AEL program ● Attends initial TOT events to develop and implement procedures ● Trains staff assigned to testing duties in the AEL program or for the AEL consortium ● Works with professional development coordinator to ensure that program staff members are properly trained to administer test procedures ● Works with the lead for performance accountability to ensure test accuracy, scoring, and reporting into TEAMS ● May serve as the testing point of contact for the AEL consortium	Must complete the initial TWC-approved TOT for the tests to be used in the program.
Test Administrator/Proctor: ● Administers tests in compliance with local procedures and test publisher and TWC AEL guidelines, including following requirements for test security, training of staff, testing facility management, and more ● Complies with scoring and TEAMS reporting policies and guidelines	Test administrators/proctors new to a test must complete the TWC-approved training before administering the test; a refresher training must be taken every two years.

Ongoing Staff Training

Occasional modifications and enhancements to state and federal guidance related to performance accountability require program directors to ensure that all staff members associated with assessment, testing, and program performance duties attend PD training on these topics as necessary. Updates may include changes to eligibility and performance accountability, data collection processes, definitions of measures, and test administration procedures.

Programs should contact their TWC-assigned program support specialist or TCALL for current professional development training options.

STATE GUIDANCE FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION

Definitions

Distance learning is formal learning activity in which participants and instructors are separated by geography, time, or both for the majority of the instructional period. Distance learning materials come in a variety of media, including, but not limited to, web-based programs, print, audio recordings, videos, broadcasts, computer software, and other online technology. Instructors support distance participants using methods including, but not limited to, communication via mail, phone, email, online software, and through face-to-face instruction.

Distance education models are further defined in [Defining Distance Education in Texas AEL](#).

Distance Education Models: Texas Style

Texas has reviewed evidence-based learning models to construct a framework for how it defines Distance Learning activities. Texas understands that adult students need flexibility to connect to services, however, we also desire AEL providers across the state maintain the rigor and high-quality instruction adult students deserve and desire. As we worked through the many models of instruction, we landed on two distinct approaches:

- **Synchronous Learning:** Learning where instructors and students gather at the same time and (virtual or physical) place while interacting in "real-time". Synchronous learning results in direct hours. Examples of Synchronous Learning in Distance Education include video conferencing, WhatsApp, Facebook Group or Messenger, Texting (on the REMIND app or phone), and interactive webinars. (Stanford School of Education)

- **Asynchronous Learning:** Learning where students access materials at their own pace, time, and place while interacting with each other and their teacher over longer periods. Examples of Asynchronous Learning in Distance Education include studying approved distance learning software or printed materials, watching supplemental videos from home, and participating in online discussion boards. Asynchronous learning results in proxy hours when using an approved DL curriculum. (Stanford School of Education)

Distance Learning in the Classroom

There are several ways that a student can utilize both synchronous and asynchronous options to ensure their instructional goals are being met. They should be able to participate in a variety of ways in order to earn the

instructional time needed to make educational progress. We have research evidence-based practices across the country to codify some terms that we will use when identifying an instructional approach under Distance Education.

Blended Learning: A formal learning activity that involves a tight integration of synchronous instruction delivered online and in class. It combines in-class learning with online instruction as a collective whole. Blended Learning allows instructors to base in-class instruction on online observations and base online assignments on in-class observations (EdTech Center @ World Education, 2022)

Flex Learning: A formal learning activity that gives participants the choice of attending a synchronous class in person or virtually for direct class hours. Flex Learning allows instructors to include students to participate virtually or in-person. It allows students the flexibility to either attend face-to-face class or attend that same class virtually. (Christiansen Institute, 2022)

Hybrid Learning: A formal learning activity that involves synchronous face-to-face or remote class plus distance learning curriculum. The two components are NOT fully aligned, and students are NOT required to participate in both. Hybrid Learning allows students to not only participate in synchronous classes, but also gives them the option of working on distance learning curriculum outside of class time. (EdTech Center @ World Education, 2022)

Remote Learning: A formal learning activity that involves a group of participants engaging with an instructor at the same time. This is often referred to as synchronous learning. Remote Learning is delivered through the use of tools such as video conferencing, live chat, webinars, etc. (EdTech Center @ World Education, 2022)

Distance Learning Participant Descriptions for Federal Reporting

A "distance learner," for federal reporting purposes, is a participant, with at least 12 direct hours, in distance education who has more proxy contact hours than direct contact hours at the end of the PY. These participants are reported annually on relevant NRS reporting tables.

A "participant with proxy contact hours" is a participant who engages in distance learning and has completed at least one proxy contact hour. A participant with proxy contact hours will not be counted as a distance learner unless the total number of proxy contact hours exceeds the total number of direct contact hours.

A "nondistance learner" is a participant who has fewer proxy contact hours than direct contact hours or no proxy hours at all.

Testing Distance Learning Participants

Participants enrolled in distance learning classes must be tested according to the same policies and procedures as participants who are not enrolled in distance learning classes, as outlined in the Testing Guide. Tests for distance learning participants must be administered face-to-face or through virtual/remote proctored exams following the test publishers' guidelines, unless an Alternative Placement is being used.

NRS Posttesting

All participants engaged in distance learning courses who were pretested with an NRS-approved test will be posttested after the same amount of instructional time as other participants, as outlined in the Testing Guide. Both direct contact hours and proxy contact hours are counted to calculate the amount of instructional time required before posttesting.

AEL providers can administer pre-and posttests to measure MSG of distance education participants for NRS reporting in two ways: in person, at a secured, proctored program site that meets the requirements of this Testing Guide, or through virtual proctoring. Programs that choose to use virtual proctoring can use only NRS-approved tests for which the test publisher has established procedures for virtual administration of the test. The test publisher procedures on virtual proctoring will address such topics as the proper identification of the student, test security, training requirements for test proctors, technology requirements, and procedures for retesting should virtual administration of the test be interrupted.

Requirement for Direct Contact Hours

Participants in distance learning must have at least 12 hours of direct contact before they can be counted for federal reporting purposes. Direct contact hours involve interaction between the participant and program staff in real time. Direct contact hours can be a combination of direct face-to-face contact as well as contact through phone, video, teleconference, or online communication in which the identity of the participant and the amount of time expended on the activity can be verified. Live online discussions, telephone conference calls, and live video broadcasts to remote locations are examples of direct contact hours that are countable under this definition.

Proxy Contact Hours

In addition to direct contact hours, programs may also report proxy contact hours to track time participants spend in distance learning activities. Proxy contact hours differ from direct contact hours in that the identity of the participant and/or the exact amount of time spent on a learning activity cannot always be verified. Proxy contact hours are tied to an approved curriculum for distance learning and are entered into TEAMS separately from direct contact hours. All proxy contact hours must be documented using the method described by the approved distance learning curriculum.

Distance Learning Curriculum Models

To determine a participant's proxy contact hours, a program must use an approved distance learning curriculum that employs one of the following models:

1. **Clock Time Model**—Assigns proxy contact hours based on the time that a participant is connected to or engaged in an online or stand-alone software program that tracks time.

    Clock time model curricula electronically track the time the participant spends interacting with instructional material and stops counting idle time after a preset period of inactivity.

2. **Teacher Certification Model**—Assigns a predetermined number of proxy contact hours for each activity completed at an acceptable level of quality, as verified by the instructor.

    Proxy contact hours for teacher certification model curricula are awarded based on the teacher's certification of participant's completion of assignments. Teachers may award full proxy hour credit if the assignment is completed and demonstrates competence in the teacher's professional judgment. Teachers may award half of the full proxy hour credit if the assignment is only partially completed but still demonstrates competence in the teacher's professional judgment. Assignments that do not demonstrate competence must be resubmitted by the participants to be counted for proxy hour credit.

3. **Learner Mastery Model**—Assigns a predetermined number of proxy contact hours based on learner mastery of each lesson or unit in the distance curriculum.

    Proxy contact hours for learner mastery model curricula are awarded based on a passing score on a content test for a particular assignment, lesson, or unit. The passing rate is set at a minimum of 70 percent unless otherwise recommended during the curriculum approval process.

Distance Learning Provider Curriculum Approval Process

Each distance learning curriculum must be approved by TWC before implementation and before proxy contact hours can be reported. The list of distance learning curricula authorized to

enter proxy hours in TEAMS, with associated models used for calculating proxy contact hours, is posted on the TCALL website.

Provider curricula for which proxy contact hours are to be calculated must first meet criteria established by TWC. Curriculum providers must complete the Distance Learning Curriculum Survey. Curriculum providers must conduct a pilot for the distance learning curriculum approval committee. Once TWC accepts the pilot and survey, the distance learning curriculum is added to the list of distance learning curricula authorized to enter proxy hours in TEAMS.

Distance learning curricula that employ the clock time model must stop counting time after a specified number of idle minutes. TWC will approve the number of minutes that is allowed before the program stops counting time.

Approval for distance learning curricula that employ teacher certification and learner mastery models may require a pilot to determine recommendations for the number of proxy contact hours that can be awarded to distance learning participants.

Entering Distance Learning Classes and Hours in the Data Management System

All required NRS data elements must be recorded in TEAMS for distance learners and participants with proxy contact hours. For data to be reported on NRS federal reporting tables, 12 or more direct contact hours and a test are required.

When creating a distance learning class in TEAMS, it is necessary to identify the curriculum and the model used for calculating proxy contact hours. Once identified as a distance learning class in TEAMS, participants can be assigned, and both direct contact hours and proxy contact hours can be recorded.

If curricula following the teacher certification model or learner mastery model are deployed, direct contact hours may not be counted for lessons or activities taken directly from the content of the curriculum, since total proxy contact hours are preassigned for these lessons or activities. However, any direct contact hours for activities outside the curriculum may still be counted, including registration, posttesting, and face-to-face instruction that is supplemental to the distance learning curriculum.

Reporting Instructional Hours

Providers must report all instructional hours in TEAMS. Classes that have been identified as distance learning classes in TEAMS will permit programs to record proxy contact hours and direct contact hours separately.

Distance Learning Program Plan

All AEL providers offering distance learning classes must develop and maintain a distance learning plan, which must be available for review at TWC's request. Providers may have a single plan that includes subcontractors and partner agencies, or they may oversee multiple program plans that consortium members and subcontractors develop themselves.

The distance learning plan is first developed during participation in Module 3 of the Distance Learning Academy. Program leadership must maintain the plan, with revisions as necessary, to accommodate changes in the delivery of distance courses, including the addition of new distance learning curricula, new sites, new technology, and/or new distance learning providers.

A copy of the Distance Learning Plan can be found on the [TCALL website](#).

Grantees may serve individuals who reside outside of their service area if specifically identified in their Distance Education Plan and agreed upon through coordination with area Grantee(s) in which the student resides. Grantees must be advised that the funding provided in their grant is meant to support the outlined service delivery area or specified counties in the grant award and the instances of serving individuals who reside within other counties or areas should be limited and determined on a case-by-case basis to support the needs of the student and not as a strategy for enrollment. Duplication of services will be closely monitored by TWC.

Required Training for Distance Learning Staff

As part of the professional development requirements outlined in the [Staff Professional Development Requirements](#) section, Module 1 of the Distance Learning Academy is required for key administrative staff, teachers, and support staff members who are engaged in distance learning, including any instructor assigned to a class that reports proxy contact hours in TEAMS.

Module 1 is an introductory course that explains the state guidance for distance learning in Texas and how distance learning is tracked, documented, and entered into TEAMS. Module 1 must be completed before engaging in distance education.

Module 2 of the Distance Learning Academy is not required but is highly recommended before selecting an approved distance learning curriculum.

Module 3 covers best practices for developing and implementing a distance learning program that is specific to the needs of AEL customers. By the end of Module 3, participants will have completed either a detailed analysis of their current distance learning plan or a draft of a new plan. Module 3 is required for all Distance Learning Leads or others who develop, modify, or are otherwise responsible for the professional development plan.

Module 4 is recommended for all staff members who collect, enter, or use distance learning reports and remit proxy hours into TEAMS.

TWC also recommends taking the Professional Development Portal Training, AEL Fundamentals: Overview of Distance Learning in Texas, and TEAMS Overview.

DATA COLLECTION, POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES

Guidelines for Data Collection

Procedures Related to Data Collection, Personally Identifiable Information, and Data Management

As outlined in AEL statewide grants, AEL grantees must have and implement an SOP for customer-profiled data collection, PII, and data management. All documentation must be maintained in a participant's file for monitoring purposes.

AEL grantees must ensure that staff members who collect personal information on a customer are trained in obtaining, maintaining, and protecting PII and that safeguards and procedures are in place to protect PII as described in WD Letter 02-18, Change 1, issued March 18, 2024, and titled "Handling Sensitive Personal Information and Other Confidential Information—Update" and subsequent issuances. Collecting, managing, and using participant test and assessment information and associated data involves every staff member in a program; programs must provide staff development in the data management and documentation SOP to ensure that all staff members have an understanding of their related roles and responsibilities. Staff development should ensure that all staff members also have a clear understanding of what data is collected, how it is collected, how it is used, and how it must be secured and transported to comply with PII requirements.

Local SOPs should include a written, precise definition for each data item that is compatible with state definitions. More on data collection processes at federal, state, and local levels can be found in the NRS TA Guide's chapter on the data collection process.

Error Checking and Quality Control

Providers must have SOPs for checking data for completeness and accuracy following a prescribed schedule with clear deadlines and an appropriate number of staff members explicitly assigned to perform the data-checking functions. Staff members assigned to review data must review data in a timely manner for completeness and accuracy and obtain error reports from TEAMS to review immediately after data entry. To perform their jobs, staff members assigned to review data must have access to all staff—teachers, intake staff, data entry staff, and administrative staff—and the authority to obtain cooperation from these staff members, as well as access to test information and participant data.

Data Collection and Entry Requirements

Providers must ensure that the AEL program director validates data in TEAMS by the 15th of each month for activity that occurred in the previous month. For example, data for services that occur in May must be validated in TEAMS by June 15th.

AEL providers must adhere to the data collection and TEAMS data entry requirements and include these requirements in SOPs for data collection, PII, and data management. As tests are considered data for reporting purposes, providers must follow the data validation schedule (15th of each month for the previous month's activities), as outlined in Table 19: AEL Data Entry Due Dates (below), for entering test scores and related data into TEAMS.

- All test scores and contact hours must be entered into TEAMS no later than the 15th of the following month for data validation purposes.
- Documentation related to tests must be obtained and maintained in a participant's file.
- All test scores must be dated with the exact date the test was given.
- All contact hour data must be validated monthly. For a calendar of due dates, please see Table 19: AEL Data Entry Due Dates.

Data collection procedures should result in valid and reliable data if staff members understand and follow them. Therefore, part of providers' data management and documentation SOPs must be staff training on roles and responsibilities, as well as the importance of data collection. Instructors should also have a clear understanding of not just the instruction-related aspects of testing and assessment, but also of related data reporting, performance, and privacy protection requirements. Providers are responsible for providing basic TEAMS and data collection and security training for all staff.

Table 19: AEL Data Entry Due Dates

Item	Due Date
Director-Level Validation of Data in TEAMS	The 15th of Each Month
Quarter 1 Data Sign-Off	October 15
Quarter 2 Data Sign-Off	January 15
Quarter 3 Data Sign-Off	April 15
Quarter 4 and Final Data Sign-Off	July 15

Analysis of Data for Program Monitoring and Improvement

For program monitoring and improvement, program staff must look at participant outcomes and demographics with consideration of such variables as the number of instructional hours received, length of enrollment, the instructors and classes enrolled, and participant EFL. This type of analysis is available in TEAMS through a variety of reports.

Grant recipient directors must identify at least one individual who is responsible for reviewing monthly data to identify programmatic and performance issues. This individual should work with the grant recipient director and the professional development coordinator to develop strategies for addressing performance issues.

Access to State Data Management Information System

In Texas, grantees are required to track data, including test results, and enter this data into TEAMS.

To support program performance, program directors may assign read-only access to teachers and non data–entry staff in TEAMS. All teachers are required to have access to TEAMS or regular and direct access to TEAMS data.

Directors also must ensure the entire staff has initial and ongoing training to use TEAMS. All TEAMS users must have training before using the system.

Information on getting access to TEAMS can be found on the [TWC AEL web page](#).

Test Score Reports

Original score sheets from tests and/or electronic score reports with results of participants' pretest and posttest scores must be stored and/or backed up on appropriate media or printed out and filed in hard copy for local, state, and federal auditing purposes.

MONITORING OF TESTING AND RELATED ACTIVITIES

Providers are required to comply with guidance in the Testing Guide and must be aware that TWC's Subrecipient Monitoring (SRM) department may request SOPs related to assessment and testing and placement, documentation of tests provided to individuals, and interviews with staff members who administer tests.

SRM may review a provider's compliance with the following elements related to assessment and testing. While this is not an all-inclusive list of what SRM or other local, state, and federal auditing entities may review, the following summarizes the main elements outlined in the Testing Guide:

- Written SOPs related to comprehensive assessment, testing, and placement
- Written SOPs on customer profile data collection, PII, and data management
- Test score data and its entry into TEAMS within the monthly data validation window (that is, test score data entered into TEAMS no later than the 15th of the following month for data validation purposes)
- Completion of all required TWC training requirements and professional development qualifications by test administration staff
- General test administration requirements, including test security and scoring procedures, as required by the Testing Guide and the test publishers
- Distance Learning Plan
- Alternative Placement Policy
- Pretesting an individual for eligibility
- Posttesting a participant following the publisher's guidelines
- Adherence to the one content area test sequence requirements
- Documentation in the participant file, including the following, as applicable:
  - Original test locators, appraisals, and/or standardized literacy screening tools, as applicable, for paper-based administered tests
  - Paper-based score sheets for paper-based tests or a printout of score reports for computer-based tests
  - Documentation of test booklets, cover sheets, or answer sheets with the form number, test date, and participant name, as applicable for paper-based tests (See the [Documentation of TABE, Documentation of BEST, and Documentation of CASAS](#) sections.)
  - Justifications for early testing
  - Test scores and dates of each content area completed entered into TEAMS exactly as they occurred
- Hand-scoring of paper-based tests in ink and not pencil
- Usage of test administration materials as published by the test publisher, and not locally developed materials

ADDENDUM 1—BEST Tests Screening Tools

Sample 1— BEST Literacy

Providers should develop and have available during testing a standardized literacy screening tool using the following six sections:

1. Name
2. Address
3. Date of birth
4. Signature
5. Today's date
6. Tell us something about yourself.

The standardized screening tool is scored on a scale of one to six, one point for each section. If an individual correctly completes any of the first five questions on the tool but does not satisfactorily complete question six with one legible and understandable statement, they are not required to take the Best Literacy test.

Sample 2— BEST Literacy 2.0

Do you shop at Garage Sales?   YES   NO

What is for sale at the Garage Sale? _____

When is the Garage Sale? _____

Where is the Garage Sale? _____

What time is the Garage Sale? _____

How will people pay?_____

<div style="border:1px solid black; text-align:center;">

Garage Sale
Friday, March 1st & Saturday, March 2nd
8:00 a.m. − 4:00 p.m.
1401 Main Street
Clothes, Furniture, Toys, Tools and much more
Cash Only

</div>

Sample 3—BEST Literacy 2.0

ALLAN'S AUTOMOTIVE REPAIR SHOP

102 Main Street

(970) 456-0987

Please provide your information below for the mechanic.

Date: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

Phone: _____

Please describe the car repair needed:

_____

_____

_____