



Assessment Policy Guidelines

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Assessment Policy Guidelines

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I Setting the State Context

This document provides policy guidelines pertaining to standardized assessment practices in {Insert State} adult literacy programs. It also fulfills the mandate from the U.S. Department of Education: Division of Adult Education and Literacy (ED:DAEL) that each state receiving Workforce Investment Act Title II (WIA) funding develop, publish, and implement on an annual basis a written assessment policy (Federal Register January 14, 2008; and ED:DAEL December 2008 Checklist for Reviewing State Assessment Policies and Practices). The memorandum requires states to describe the assessments local programs are to use, when local programs are to administer pretests and post-tests, training requirements for assessments, and assessment administration and reporting requirements.

I.A. Overview State Policy

I.A.1 Overview of state policy

Standardized, ongoing assessment of learner progress is essential to ensure that all learners become proficient in literacy and language skills for adult learners. To ensure accuracy and consistency, {Name of State Agency} prescribes that adult education agencies use CASAS assessments with proven validity and reliability. CASAS test results align to the National Reporting System (NRS) levels and are able to document student learning achievement, i.e. advancing across educational functioning levels. The CASAS standardized assessment instruments are the only state-approved instruments used for state and federal reporting requirements. The use of common assessment instruments based on the same standard score scale provides the National Reporting System (NRS) standardized data and progress reports across all adult literacy providers in {Insert State}. CASAS assessment data are used to place learners at appropriate levels of instruction, to diagnose learner strengths and weaknesses, to monitor progress, and to certify learner mastery at specific levels of instruction or readiness to exit adult education.

I.A.2 Explain how results are used at the state level i.e. setting performance standards, performance-based funding

{Name of State Agency Insert how results are used at the state level in conjunction with NRS requirements and accountability issues}

I.B NRS requirements and accountability issues

I.B.1 Define validity and reliability

To ensure assessment accuracy and consistency, the {Insert State} Department of Education, Adult Education Office prescribes that WIA funded adult literacy providers use CASAS assessments with proven validity and reliability that correlate to the National Reporting System (NRS) for adult education. All CASAS assessment instruments undergo rigorous test development and validation procedures and meet the standards of the American Education Research Association (AERA), the National Council for Measurement in Education (NCME),

and the American Psychological Association (APA). The *CASAS Technical Manual, Third Edition, 2004 (CTM)* contains detailed information about test validity and reliability (see Appendix A for more information regarding CASAS assessment validity and reliability). **The Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing (1999)** states that **validity** refers to the appropriateness, meaningfulness, and usefulness of the specific inferences made from test scores. **Reliability** (test accuracy) has two major subcomponents — consistency and stability. A more extensive discussion on validity and reliability as they relate to CASAS assessments may be found in the Appendix A.

I.B.2 Uniform implementation and comparability across program

The {Insert State} Department of Education, in the interest of ensuring uniform implementation across the state and to allow comparability across programs requires all eligible adult literacy program providers to use the CASAS – Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems standardized assessment instruments, {OPTIONAL for states using TOPSpro: Tracking of Programs and Students (TOPSpro™) data collection and reporting software to report educational gain benchmarks by NRS educational functioning levels. } Adult literacy providers may use this document as the policy foundation, in conjunction with regional and online training workshops and the CASAS test administration manuals to provide a basis for development of local procedures, guidelines, and implementation practices.

CASAS test administration manuals for each test provide explicit guidelines for uniform implementation and interpretation of CASAS assessment information. Additionally, CASAS conducts studies to ensure test comparability across programs and states. Test comparability data are available in the *CASAS Technical Manual*.

I.B.3 Describe data findings or studies that affect state policies and procedures

The policies implemented by {insert name of state} are based on the results of data analysis over many years. Results of the research studies, including state-level data and evaluation of multi-year trend data, are posted at www.casas.org > research. Additional Appendix A provides a listing of relevant studies and data findings relative to CASAS assessments that affect state policies and procedures.

I.C Purposes and uses of Assessments

I.C.1 Purpose and uses of assessments for reporting and instructional purposes

{Name of State Agency} encourages local adult education agencies to use a variety of types of assessments. This includes both the standardized assessments required for NRS reporting purposes as well as instruction-based assessments. {Name of State Agency}'s assessment policy guidelines include the selection and use of appropriate learner assessment and procedures for:

1. Accurate learner placement into appropriate program and instructional level
2. Diagnostic information to inform instruction
3. Pre- and post-testing to monitor progress toward goals
4. Certification of level and program completion.

I.C.2 Supplement NRS assessment with instruction-based assessment

Both standardized and instruction-based assessment can be used to assist in informing instruction. Results from instruction-based assessments should complement and supplement results from the standardized assessment. The use of instruction-based assessments, including teacher-made tests, unit tests, portfolios, applied performance assessments, and learner observations should be encouraged to monitor learning and to inform instruction on a regular, ongoing basis. However, instruction-based assessments are not appropriate for NRS reporting purposes.

I.D Summary and additional information

These assessment policy guidelines specify which CASAS tests are allowable for use in (Name of State). Section II General Assessment Requirements provides assessment specifics to include the following:

- Specific tests allowable for use for NRS reporting
- Which learners to be assessed using which tests
- Assessments for Different Types of Learners
 - Subject matter (e.g., reading, listening, math)
 - Learner populations (e.g., ABE/ESL/ABE)
- Appraisal Tests: Initial Orientation and Placement into Program and Instructional Level
- Progress Testing: Pretest and Post-Test
- Using assessment results to place learners at the appropriate NRS level
- When learners should be assessed
- Uniform test administration times
- Continuing students and stop-out students
- Assessment exception policies
- Accommodations policies for special needs populations
- Testing for distance learning programs

I.D.2 Contact information

All requests for clarification and technical assistance should be directed to:

Name STATE ENTER Contact information

Title

Agency

Contact Info

II General Assessment Requirements

II.A.1 Minimum instruction for inclusion in NRS

Locally eligible WIA providers must assess all learners who have 12 or more hours of instruction, including distance learners, with a pretest using an NRS WIA-approved standardized assessment. These learners are eligible to be reported on the NRS Federal Tables. [Name of State] has authorized the CASAS standardized assessments presented in Table 1 *CASAS Series Approved for Use by WIA Funded Programs* for use in [Name of State].

CASAS assessment policy specifies that learners should take a pretest as soon as feasible upon entry into the program and before the occurrence of any substantial instructional intervention. All learners with 12 or more hours of instruction must be pretested in order to be included in the Federal Tables. Learners should be assessed in the areas that are the focus of instruction, using the appropriate CASAS standardized test in reading, math, listening comprehension, writing, or speaking.

II.B Learners to be assessed (pre- and post-testing)

II.B.1 Policy for using post-tests to measure learning gain and advance EFL

Federal NRS reporting is based on learning gains and achievement of learner goals within a program year.

CASAS provides post-tests that measure learning gains and advancement across test difficulty levels ranging from the lowest to the highest NRS Educational Functioning Levels (EFLs). Each test level has alternate test forms parallel in content and difficulty.

II.B.2 Exceptions or accommodations for special populations

There are no exceptions to the assessment policy. It is especially important to choose appropriate CASAS tests designed for learners with disabilities, language barriers, and limited literacy skills. Accommodations for special populations are discussed in further detail in Section II.F.

II.C Allowable assessments for NRS reporting

II.C.1 and II.C.2a List approved tests and skill areas

{Name of State agency} requires eligible providers to assess using the approved tests and skill areas as indicated in Table 1 below:

Table 1 CASAS Series Approved for NRS Reporting by Skill Area and Learner Population

CASAS ASSESSMENT Series								
Basic skills assessed in each series		Citizenship	Employability Competency System	Life and Work	Life Skills	POWER (for adults with developmental disabilities)	Secondary Assessment	Workforce Learning Systems (WLS)
Reading		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Math			✓	*	✓	✓	✓	<i>Standardized Multiple Choice</i>
Listening			✓	✓	✓		✓	
Writing			✓	✓	✓		✓	<i>Standardized Performance Based</i>
Speaking		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Programs that may use each series								
ESL		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
ABE			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
ASE			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓

* In development

II.C.2.b Standardized administration and scoring – specifying score ranges tied to EFL for placement and for reporting educational gains

The following Tables 2A and 2B show the relationship between NRS levels for ESL and ABE and ASE learners and CASAS levels and scale score ranges. The required CASAS training and the CASAS Test Administration Manuals provide detailed instructions for standardized administration and scoring. See section III.B.2 for more information.

Table 2A CASAS Scale Score Ranges Linked to NRS Educational Functioning Levels for Placement and Reporting Educational Gains (ABE and ASE)

	NRS Level	CASAS Level	Reading and Math Scale Score Ranges	Functional Writing Scale Score Ranges
1	Beginning ABE Literacy	A	200 and below	136* - 200
2	Beginning Basic Education	B	201-210	201 – 225
3	Low Intermediate Basic Education	B	211-220	226 - 242
4	High Intermediate Basic Education	C	221-235	243 - 260
5	Low Adult Secondary Education	D	236-245	261 - 270
6	High Adult Secondary Education	E	246 and above	271 and above

* Estimated score below the accurate range

Table 2B CASAS Scale Score Ranges Linked to NRS Educational Functioning Levels for Placement and Reporting Educational Gains (ESL)

	NRS Level	CASAS Level	Reading and Listening Scale Score Ranges	Functional Writing Scale Score Ranges
1	Beginning ESL Literacy	A	180 and below	N/A
2	Low Beginning ESL	A	181 - 190	136* - 146
3	High Beginning ESL	A	191 - 200	147 - 200
4	Low Intermediate ESL	B	201 - 210	201 - 225
5	High Intermediate ESL	B	211 - 220	226 - 242
6	Low Advanced ESL	C	221 - 235	243 – 260

* Estimated score below the accurate range

II.C.2.c Have and identify alternate and equivalent form for pre and post-testing

The following Tables 3A – 3F list alternate and equivalent test forms eligible providers must use for pre- and post-testing. Suggested Next Test Charts provided by CASAS or the TOPSpro Suggested Next Test Report by Learner and Class should be consulted to guide pre- and post-test selection. If programs use CASAS eTests, the pre- and post-test selection happens automatically. Post-testing will be at either the same level or a higher level, depending on the pretest score. An alternate test form within the same test series is recommended for post-testing. Additionally, the post-test must be in the same skills area as the pretest; that is, programs cannot use a reading pretest and a math post-test to determine learner gains.

Table 3A CASAS Alternate and Equivalent Test Forms by NRS Educational Functioning Levels for Reading for ESL

NRS EFLs for ESL	CASAS Level	Life & Work Series Form #	ECS Series Form #	WLS Series Form #	Citizenship Series Form #	Life Skills Series Form #
1-2	Beg. Literacy	27 28	27 28		27 28	27 28
1-3	A	81 82	11 12		951 952	31 32
2-4	AX	81 X 82 X			951 X 952 X	32 X
4-5	B	83 84	13 14 114	213 214		33 34
4-6	BX	83 X				34 X
5-6	C	85, 86* 185 186	15 16 116	215 216	Secondary Assessment Series Form #	35 36
	D	187 188	17 18	217 (id) 218 (id)	513 514	37 38

Appraisal	80, 120, 130, or eTest CAT	80 120, 130, or eTest CAT	220, 230, or eTest CAT
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20, 30, or eTest CAT

*workplace focused

Table 3B CASAS Alternate and Equivalent Test Forms by NRS Educational Functioning Levels for Reading (ABE and ASE)

NRS EFLs for ABE ASE	CASAS Level	Life & Work Series Form #	ECS Series Form #	WLS Series Form #		Life Skills Series Form #
1	Beg. Literacy	27 28	27 28			27 28
1	A	81 82	11 12			31 32
1-2	AX	81 X 82 X				32 X
2-3	B	83 84	13 14 114	213 214		33 34
2-4	BX	83 X				34 X
3-5	C	85, 86* 185 186	15 16 116	215 216	Secondary Assessment Series Form #	35 36
4-6	D	187 188	17 18	217 (id) 218 (id)	513 514	37 38
Appraisal		80, 120, 130, or eTest CAT	80 120, 130, or eTest CAT	220, 230, or eTest CAT		20, 30, or eTest CAT

*workplace focused

Table 3c CASAS Alternate and Equivalent Test Forms by NRS Educational Functioning Levels for Math (ABE and ASE)

NRS EFLs	CASAS Level	Life Skills Series Form #	ECS Series Form #	WLS Series Form #	Secondary Assessment Form #
1	A	31 32	11 12		
1-3	B	33 34	13 14	213 214	
2-4	C	35 36	15 16	215 216	
3-6	D	37 38	17 18	217 (id) 218 (id)	505 506

Appraisal	30, or eTests CAT	120, 130, or eTests CAT	220, 230, or eTest CAT	
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Table 3d CASAS Alternate and Equivalent Test Forms by NRS Educational Functioning Levels for Listening (ESL)

NRS EFLs	CASAS Level	Life and Work Series Form #	Life Skills Series Form #	ECS and WLS Series Form #
1-4	A	81 82	51 52	51 52
3-5	B	83 84	53 54	63 64
4-6	C	85 86	55 56	65 66

Appraisal	80 or eTests CAT	20, or eTests CAT	20, or eTests CAT
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Table 3e CASAS Alternate and Equivalent Test Forms by NRS Educational Functioning Levels for Writing (ESL, ABE and ASE)

NRS EFLs	Form #	Task	Notes
1-6	410 411	Form Form	Tests “filling out a form” (consumable)
1-6	460 461 462 463	Picture Prompts: Grocery Store (revised) Accident (revised) Department Store (revised) Street Scene (revised)	Tests “writing a narrative” Prompts are laminated and reusable
1-6	464 465 466	Workplace Picture Prompts: Restaurant Warehouse Hotel	Tests “writing a narrative” Prompts are laminated and reusable
1	430 431	Inventory Inventory	Tests “filling out a simple inventory form” (consumable)
1	440 441	Note Note	Tests “writing a short note” (consumable)
2-6	450	Letter	Write letter to a mayor

Table 3f CASAS Alternate and Equivalent Test Forms by NRS Educational Functioning Levels for Speaking (ESL)

NRS EFLs	Form #	Series	Content
1-6	973 974	Citizenship	Simulates USCIS oral citizenship interview
1-6	273 274	WLS	Assesses speaking ability in workplace contexts, including workplace safety and customer service

Table 3g CASAS Alternate and Equivalent Test Forms by NRS Educational Functioning Levels for Speaking (ESL)

NRS EFLs	Form #	Series	Content
4-6	963, 964 (through June 09 965, 966 (starting July 09)	Citizenship	Multiple-choice questions Tests knowledge of U.S. government and history

Table 3h CASAS Alternate and Equivalent Test Forms by NRS Educational Functioning Levels Special Needs (for learners with developmental disabilities); all within NRS EFL 1

Level	POWER Form #	Adult Life Skills (R) Form #
Beginning Literacy	306	
	307 (for Corrections only) Advanced Independent Living Skills	27 28
AA	305 Workplace and Employability Skills	312 313
AAA	303 Community Access	322 323
AAAA	302 Basic Living Skills	332 333
AAAAA		301 Independent Living
Appraisal		352

II.C.2.d Link to NRS EFLs

See Tables 2a, 2b, and Tables 3a – 3h

II.D. Pretest Guidelines

II.D.1 Uniform time for pretesting

Pretests should be administered as soon as feasible after enrollment into the program: either during the intake process after an appraisal is given, or after the learner is placed into the appropriate instructional level.

II.D.2 Time between pre- and post- testing long enough to measure gains “according to the test publisher”

Agencies should administer post-tests, using specified alternate forms, at the end of a semester, term, quarter, or other substantial block of instruction to document learning gains. CASAS recommends assessing after approximately 70-100 hours of instruction. For exceptions to this policy see II.E.1.

II.D.3 Use a locator to determine appropriate pre-test

The majority of CASAS assessments have appraisal tests, and CASAS prescribes that learners should take an appropriate appraisal test prior to taking a pretest. Appraisal tests indicate the appropriate level for instruction, as well as which pretest form agencies should administer.

II.D.4 Entry EFL based on scores (and what to do when two skill area scores fall into different EFLs, i.e. reading and math; or reading and listening)

For NRS reporting purposes, learners who have been tested in two skill areas will be placed in the Federal Tables based on their lowest accurate pretest score (e.g., reading or math, reading or listening)

Post-testing policies and procedures are covered at greater length in a later section of this document.

II.D.5 Reasonable time for administering a new pretest for “stop outs”

Post-test scores obtained at the end of a semester or other reporting period may serve as a pretest for the next semester or reporting period, provided that the interim does not exceed more than four months. Similarly, the most recent assessment results for “stop outs” returning to adult education classes may be used, provided that the last test administered does not exceed the same four month window. This policy is designed to reduce or eliminate unnecessary testing.

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

II.E Post Test Guidelines

II.E.1 Designates uniform time when post testing should occur “based on test publisher guidelines” (Lists exceptions to test interval recommendations)

Agencies should administer post-tests, using specified alternate forms, at the end of a semester, term, quarter, or other substantial block of instruction to document learning gains. CASAS recommends assessing after approximately 70-100 hours of instruction.

Exceptions to Standard Post-Test Guidelines

- Programs offering **high** intensity courses (for example, a class meets 6 or more hours per week) may choose to test at the end of a semester, term, quarter, or other substantial block of instruction, even though the instructional intervention is more than 70 to 100 hours of instruction.
- Programs offering **low** intensity courses with fewer than 6 hours per week in a semester, quarter, term, or other substantial block of instruction, may choose to administer a post-test at the end of the instructional period.
- Programs may assess learners who indicate they are leaving the program before the scheduled post-test time to maximize collection of paired test data. Testing students with less than 40 hours of instruction should be reviewed and considered on a case-by-case basis and should not exceed **xx (State agency to determine %)** percent of the post-test data of students being tested in a particular program area — ABE, ASE, or ESL.

Factors that affect learning gains include intensity and duration of instruction, motivation of learners, competence of instruction, the link between learner goals and instruction, and other instructional factors.

II.E.2 Describes appropriate test form for post-testing based on learner’s level and the test form used for pretesting

See section II.C.2.c for discussion of alternate and equivalent forms for pre- and post-testing

II.E.3 “Rolling” scores over program years for “stop-out” or continuing students

Post-test scores obtained at the end of a semester or other reporting period may serve as a pretest for the next semester or reporting period, provided that the interim does not exceed four months for continuing students. See section II.D.5 for additional information regarding “stop outs.”

II.E.4 Performance standard for pre- and post-test match

[Name of State Agency] requires that local adult education providers have a pre-post match of no less than _____ percent. These percentages are based agency past performance on (State Agency to Complete) ___ years of state performance data.

II.F Accommodations for Students with Disabilities or other Special Needs

II.F.1 Administration procedures and accommodations for students with disabilities

Accommodations in testing alter the conditions for administering a test or change the nature of an assessment instrument, allowing test takers with disabilities to demonstrate their skills and abilities more accurately. Proper accommodations meet the needs of examinees without changing what a test is intended to measure.

Local test administrators may provide or allow some accommodations in test administration procedures or environment for documented disabilities without contacting CASAS. **(III.A.2.d)**

Accommodations procedures are applicable to all CASAS tests and include:

- accommodations in test time
- giving supervised breaks
- or providing a sign language interpreter for test administration directions only
- testing in an alternate room
- using a colored overlay
- large print test booklets and answer sheets
- allowing extended time

Additionally, CASAS test forms that may be appropriate for learners with a disability include CASAS eTests, computer-adapted and computer-based tests, and large-print tests. CASAS large-print tests include Beginning Literacy Reading Assessment, ECS test booklets, Life and Work test booklets, and Secondary Level Assessment test booklets in math. Large-print answer sheets are also available. A Life and Work test form in Braille format measures basic literacy skills for learners who are blind or have a visual impairment.

It is not an appropriate accommodation in test administration procedures to read a CASAS reading test to a learner with low literacy skills or blindness.

The paper *Guidelines for Providing Accommodations Using CASAS Assessment for Learners with Disabilities* provides more detailed information on providing accommodations. This document is available at <www.casas.org>.

II.F.2 Procedures for identifying students who require accommodations and how to administer assessments to them

{Name of State Agency} has developed the following procedures for identifying and assessing students who require accommodations: (indicate procedures)

II.F.3 Describes documentation local program staff must use to identify learner requiring accommodations

Local agencies are responsible for providing fully accessible services and for ensuring that these services meet reasonable criteria. Adult learners with disabilities are responsible for requesting accommodations and for submitting documentation of their disability at the time of registration, program entry, or after diagnosis. The need to use an accommodation should be documented in official learner records, such as the Individual Program Education Plan (IPP) or Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). The documentation must show that the disability interferes with the learner's ability to demonstrate performance on the test. The information can come from a doctor's report, a diagnostic assessment from a certified professional, and other clinical records. Agencies often can contact the local division of vocational rehabilitation or a secondary school to request documentation of a disability

III Requirements for Administering Each Assessment

III.A Selecting appropriate assessments

III.A.1 Describes students for whom each assessment is appropriate

See Tables 3A-3G

III.A.2 Describes the following for each test

- Subject/skill — see Tables 3A – 3G
- Types of learners — see Tables 3A – 3G
- Appropriate subtests — The requirement to specify appropriate subtests for different populations and procedures to determine which subtest to administer for NRS educational functioning level placement purposes does not apply to CASAS tests.
- Specify accommodations — see Section II.F.

III.B Training for Administering Assessments

III.B.1 Identifies the state agency responsible for providing pre and in-service training

{Name of State Agency} requires all local agencies to comply with the CASAS training policy. {Name of State Agency} provides pre-service and in-service assessment training in the following areas: List trainings provided.

III.B.2 Describes training policies for each assessment used in the state

[List policies in your state regarding state and local trainers, specifics on accessing trainings, contacts, etc].

Training is essential to a quality CASAS implementation. CASAS assessments cannot be used by agencies that have not completed CASAS training by certified personnel.

Training in CASAS assessment is required to ensure accurate use of tests, appropriate interpretation of learner results, and to maintain the integrity and quality of the assessment process. CASAS requires that minimally one person from each agency using the CASAS system successfully complete CASAS Implementation Training. Once trained, this individual can train others within his or her respective agency but may not train outside that agency.

Separate CASAS Implementation Trainings have been developed for ABE, ASE, and ESL. These trainings focus on teaching participants to administer, score, and interpret CASAS reading, listening, and math assessments. Implementation Trainings also address how to use the CASAS competency system as well as how to use CASAS resources, such as Quick Search Online, to facilitate instruction. Separate trainings are available for CASAS Functional Writing Assessment, POWER (for developmentally disabled adults), Citizenship, and Workplace Speaking, among others.

[Name of State Agency] requires that local adult education programs follow the test administration guidelines in each test administration manual (TAM) published by CASAS for each test series used. All local adult education agencies must maintain copies of TAMs on site for all assessments used. Test administration manuals provide quality control guidelines

to ensure proper test use, administration, scoring, and interpretation of results. These manuals contain information about the following:

- The CASAS Assessment System
- Overview of CASAS Progress Testing
- Description of Tests
- Determining Pre- and Post-test Level
- Test Security (See Section 3.F below)
- Instructions for Administering Tests
- Scoring
- Data Collection
- Interpretation of Results
- Curriculum Planning, Instruction, and Assessment
- Resources
- Testing Accommodations
- Skill Level Descriptors
- Suggested Next Test Charts
- Answer Keys and Score Conversion Charts (for converting raw scores to scale scores)
- Learner Profile Sheets
- Learner Performance by Competency
- Class Profile by Competency

III.B.3 Describes the pre-service and in-service staff training provided

{Name of state agency} requires individuals who administer or score each test to measure educational gain to undergo [Describe training specifics]

{Name of state agency} requires teachers and other local staff involved in gathering, analyzing, compiling and reporting data for the NRS to undergo [Describe training specifics]

III.B.4 Training includes the following topics

{Name of state agency} provides training on the following topics as indicated in Table 4.

Table 4 Training Topics

Training Topics	Training for test administrators/ and test scorers	Training for teachers and other local staff involved in gathering, analyzing, compiling, and reporting data for the NRS
NRS policy, Accountability Policies, Data Collection Process*	√	√
Definitions of Measures*	√	√
Conducting Assessments*	√	√

III.B.5 Describes requirements for recording all persons trained for each assessment and who conducted each training

[Name of State Agency] has the following assessment training procedures in place (state procedure for maintaining records of all persons trained for each assessment and who conducted the training). Additionally, CASAS maintains a database of all individuals currently trained in using CASAS assessments.

III.B.6 Procedures and timelines for training

[Name of State Agency] has procedures for training new staff [State procedure and include timelines]

[Name of State Agency] requires all local agencies to comply with the following recertification activity to ensure that local personnel are current relative to assessment and product developments, are familiar with the most current state agency policies, guidelines and procedures and other relevant assessment and accountability issues: [Selected examples of recertification activities; state agencies should insert their specific requirements below:

- Attendance at an annual or bi-annual state-sponsored professional development meeting which provides a refresher training in CASAS assessment and the most recent products and services developed to improve instructional delivery
- Attendance annually or bi-annually at the CASAS National Summer Institute
- Participation annually or bi-annually by a representative from a local agency in a Beyond Implementation (recertification) Training (BIT) conducted by a state- or national-level CASAS trainer, and/or
- Participation in an annual CASAS-sponsored inter-rater reliability workshop to ensure scoring consistency as well as precision (CASAS writing and speaking)

[Name of State Agency] has procedures for providing training when new test forms or instruments are added to the acceptable assessment list [State procedure and include timelines]

III.B.7 Describes qualifications/certifications for staff to train local test administrator

[Name of State Agency] adheres to CASAS guidelines for certifying state-level trainers who train local staff. To train local agencies within a state, individuals must to be certified as CASAS state-level trainers. Only CASAS state-level trainers are authorized to train representatives from local agencies. Trained local representatives may prepare other professionals in their agencies to administer, score and interpret CASAS tests.

III.B.8 Specifies number of local staff to be trained as testers

[Name of State Agency] requires that a minimum of [specify number] state-level trainers be maintained to train local test administrators.

III.C Describing Quality Control Procedures

III.C.1 Time when testing data should be entered in database

[Name of State Agency] requires that assessment data be entered into the [name of database]. [State frequency and other conditions] Data should be added as soon as possible so testing results can be returned to teachers and learners so instruction can be targeted. Minimally, data should be entered on a quarterly basis.

III.C.2 Process and procedures to allow verification that correct procedures have been followed

[Name of State Agency] has the following quality control procedures in place to ensure that appropriate assessment procedures have been followed:

[examples: data integrity checks; system logic to prevent inappropriate assessments being entered, incorrect scale score gains, data verification procedures, etc.]

See Appendix B for Additional Quality Control Procedures including improper use of tests and test security.

III.D Purchasing Information and procedures

Purchasing Procedures for Each Assessment: [Name of State Agency] requires local agencies to order CASAS assessments authorized for use in [Name of State] directly from CASAS.

[Name of State Agency] provides CASAS with a list of approved assessments to ensure that local adult education agencies order appropriate materials.

IV. Distance Education-Specific Assessment Policy

IV.1 Definition of distance education (consistent with NRS guidelines)

[Name of State Agency] defines their distance education policy

IV.2 Only learners with 12 hours+ contact time to be reported in NRS

[Name of State Agency] applies all components of NRS testing policies to distance education

IV.3 All testing for NRS purposes at a proctored site within state

Learners in distance learning settings must fulfill the same assessment requirements as all other learners. Agencies must require distance learners to complete appraisals and pre- and post-tests at the adult education site or at other proctored and secure locations.

IV.4 Post-testing guidelines same as other students

[Name of State Agency] applies all components of NRS testing policies to distance education

IV.5 Specifies curricula that can be used to provide distance education

[Name of State Agency] defines their specific curricula

IV.6 Written definition for proxy hours

[Name of State Agency] defines their proxy hours

IV.7 Policies on the use of proxy hours models to assign proxy hours for distance education learners are described

[Name of State Agency] defines their proxy hour model

IV.8 How state provides local programs with guidelines for recording actual and, if applicable, proxy contact hours that conform to NRS requirements

[Name of State Agency] provides guidelines

Appendix A Validity and Reliability

Validity

The Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing (1999) state that validity refers to the appropriateness, meaningfulness, and usefulness of the specific inferences made from test scores. There are various evidences of validity with construct validity encompassing the overriding issue of proper use and construction of test items, and with content-related and criterion-related validity as subcomponents. Item content evidence is a measure of the extent to which test items measure what they are intended to measure. For a detailed discussion of CASAS content validity evidence, see the *CASAS Technical Manual*.

Criterion-related validity, which is sometimes referred to as predictive validity, assesses the ability or effectiveness of an instrument in predicting something it should theoretically be able to predict. CASAS created ABE Skill Level Descriptors (reading, math, and writing skills) to show a continuum of skills from beginning ABE through advanced adult secondary levels; CASAS also created ESL Skill Level Descriptors (listening, reading, writing, and speaking skills) for ESL from beginning literacy/pre-beginning ESL through proficient skills. Skill Level Descriptors provide general content information on how an adult learner’s numerical scale score on a CASAS test in a specific skill area corresponds to the job-related and life skills tasks that a person can generally accomplish.

A common numerical scale reports results from most CASAS tests. CASAS has successfully used this scale with more than three million adult and youth learners. Five broad levels divide the CASAS scale: A (beginning literacy) to E (advanced secondary), each encompassing a range of scores. CASAS further subdivides levels A and B to guide instructional placement and to monitor learner progress. CASAS defines each level scale score range with corresponding competency descriptors of performance in employment and adult life skills contexts.

Expert teachers, members of the CASAS National Consortium, as well as external validation studies have validated the CASAS Skill Level Descriptors. See the *CASAS Technical Manual*, pages 57–70. During the late 1990s, staff from the Center for Applied Linguistics and CASAS worked together to review and update the correlation between Student Performance Levels (SPLs) and CASAS levels to ensure that the NRS Skill Level Descriptors used for reporting learner gains were consistent with research already done in the field. Large-scale CASAS implementing states such as California, Connecticut, and Oregon participated in a national-level NRS advisory committee and provided guidance in the initial development and implementation of the NRS.

Once the NRS finalized the educational functioning levels, CASAS conducted a review and confirmed that the CASAS Skill Level Descriptors align with the skill levels of the NRS. Table 5 presents the relationship among CASAS levels and score ranges and NRS Performance Levels. This table also shows how CASAS, the National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS), SPLs, and years of schooling completed.

Table 5- Relationship Among CASAS, National Reporting System, National Adult Literacy Survey, Student Performance Levels, and Years of Schooling Completed

CASAS Levels	CASAS Score Ranges	NRS Levels and Names for ABE	NRS Levels and Names for ESL	NALS Levels	SPL Levels	Years of School Completed
A	180 and below	1 Beginning ABE Literacy	1 Beginning ESL Literacy	1	1	1 to 2
A	181 – 190	1 Beginning ABE Literacy	2 Low Beginning ESL	1	2	1 to 2
A	191 – 200	1 Beginning ABE Literacy	3 High Beginning ESL	1	3	1 to 2
B	201 – 210	2 Beginning Basic Education	4 Low Intermediate ESL	1	4	3 to 5
B	211 – 220	3 Low Intermediate Basic Education	5 High Intermediate ESL	1	5	6 to 7
C	221 – 235	4 High Intermediate Basic Education	6 Advanced ESL	2	6	8 to 10
D	236 – 245	5 Low Adult Secondary Education		2/3	7	11 to 12
E	246 and above	6 High Adult Secondary Education		3		13+

Reliability

The *CASAS Technical Manual* provides data on the reliability of the item bank (Chapter 3) and specific test series (Chapters 4 and 5). The test administration manuals for each test series also contain information about reliability.

Reliability (test accuracy) has two major subcomponents — consistency and stability. For each scale score attained on a CASAS test, a standard error of measurement (SEM) is given. In addition to reporting a scale score for raw scores attained on a test, CASAS established a range of accuracy for each test form. For every score in the accurate range, a SEM for each scale score is given. For scale scores exceeding the accurate range, CASAS provides a usable, conservative scale score estimate. However, test administrators are encouraged to administer a test at the next more difficult test level to obtain a more accurate scale score estimate. CASAS does not report scale scores for raw scores falling below the accurate range.

Each of the test forms in Chapters 4 and 5 of the *CASAS Technical Manual, Third Edition*, in addition to the SEMs, displays the Test Information Function.

CASAS uses the most currently researched and recommended methodology in educational measurement practice — Item Response Theory (IRT) — to establish indexes of item bank, test, and test score reliability. For indexes of consistency, CASAS tests for the unidimensionality of the item bank ensuring items all measure the same underlying construct. See pages 29 through 50 of the *CASAS Technical Manual* for results of these analyses. The *CASAS Technical Manual* presents traditional item statistics, including item point biserial correlations and their p-values, for all the test series.

The test for item stability is found under “parameter invariance” (pages 51–52) and “differential item functioning” (pages 52–56). Parameter invariance analyses test whether the item difficulties have changed over time. The 2002 findings show that the item difficulties have maintained their relative difficulties since their original calibrations in the 1980s. Differential item functioning (DIF) tests whether the item difficulties change in the measurement of different kinds of learners, such as learners of different gender and different ethnicity. The findings show that the item difficulties have remained stable, regardless of gender or ethnicity.

Studies Conducted

The Program Effectiveness Panel of the U.S. Department of Education (1993) evaluated and upheld three claims of CASAS implementation of effective educational programs. Each claim centered on adult learners in adult and alternative education programs. The adoption of key elements of the CASAS system determined the degree of program implementation. These key elements include identifying CASAS Competencies necessary for learners to meet their goals, linking these competencies to instructional materials using the CASAS Quick Search Online, and linking these competencies to appropriate CASAS assessment tools. Learners within education programs that adopted the key elements demonstrated:

- Significant learning gains
- Increased hours of participation
- Achievement of higher goal attainment compared to programs that have not adopted the key elements

Numerous studies such as the National Evaluation of Adult Education Programs (1991) have repeatedly confirmed this claim. In addition, two California studies, an Oregon study as well as a North Carolina study, among others, confirm these three claims (for a detailed literature review, refer to the *CASAS Technical Manual, Third Edition*).

Another important study examined the relationship of CASAS to the 2002 version of the GED. This study used data from California, Iowa, Oregon, Kansas, and Hawaii (total number of participants = 4801). The study found a clear monotonic increasing relationship between CASAS reading scores and GED reading scores and CASAS math scores and GED math scores.

Moreover, the study found a similar relationship between CASAS reading and overall GED results averaged across the five test content areas. (See the *CASAS Technical Manual*, pages 63–65.)

There have been a number of recent studies conducted across the United States to reaffirm that the content and competencies addressed in the initial development of the item banks are still valid and relevant to the current needs of learners, instructors, administrators, employers, and social service agencies:

- Revalidation of the CASAS Competencies 2008
- CASAS National Consortium Content Standards 2007
- CABSS Report: California Adult Basic Skills Survey, 1999
- Targeting Education: The Connecticut Basic Skills Survey, 1997
- Validation of Foundation Skills (Indiana Department of Education), 1996
- The Iowa Basic Skills Survey (IABSS), 1995

For more detailed information and complete copies of these validation studies go to www.casas.org.

CASAS undertook the development of a content standards framework on behalf of CASAS National Consortium states. The project used the expertise of adult education professionals across the country to determine the essential content standards in reading and math for ABE and ASE and in reading and listening for ESL. The project identified the basic skills content standards at each NRS level and specific links to CASAS assessments.

Appendix B – Additional Quality Control Procedures

Improper use of CASAS Tests

With an increased emphasis on accountability, standardized testing used to make important decisions in high stakes situations can encourage questionable and unethical assessment practices. CASAS proposes that states include the following in their assessment training to identify explicit examples of testing misuse

- Teaching to the actual CASAS test item
- Copying and distributing a CASAS test item or CASAS test booklet to unauthorized personnel or learners prior to or after test administration as a study guide
- Administering a lower level test to artificially increase the learning gain between pre- and post-tests
- Reducing the amount of time given on a pretest (e.g., less than 20 minutes) while increasing the amount of time on a post-test (e.g., 40–60 minutes)
- Deleting test answers on the pretest to lower the test score
- Deleting accurate tests to manipulate the learning gains
- Duplicating or copying the test of one learner and replacing the identification number of another learner
- Altering test items or test score information
- Providing the answers to test questions
- Translating test items and answers into another language
- Administering tests in quick succession without sufficient time for instructional intervention (every 3 weeks) to maximize gains
- Failing to administer tests at specific agency sites or in certain program areas
- Excluding certain individuals or groups who have attended 12 hours or more from pre- to post testing.

Test Security Agreements

(Name of State Agency) requires that all programs it funds sign an annual test security agreement and include this as part of local training. This agreement includes the following stipulations:

- The local adult education program director assumes responsibility for safeguarding all CASAS-developed paper-based and computer-based assessment materials, including test administration manuals, and answer sheets (which contain marks or responses).
- All CASAS materials should be stored in a locked, preferably fireproof, file cabinet accessible to the program director or the director's designee(s).
- Staff who administer assessments should return all materials immediately after use to the program director or the director's designees.
- All answer sheets and writing samples are treated as confidential until destroyed.
- No duplication of any test form or any portion of any test form is permitted for any reason.

- Inventory information concerning CASAS materials will be supplied to (Name of State Agency) when requested.
- Defaced materials may not be destroyed unless authorized by (Name of State Agency).
- Agencies may not use displays, questions, or answers that appear on any CASAS test to create materials designed to teach or prepare learners to answer CASAS test items. Instead, programs should use instructional resources provided by CASAS, Quick Search Online and other support materials, to link curriculum, assessment and instruction.

It is critical that states have a formalized CASAS recertification policy in place to ensure that local adult education agency personnel are current relative to accountability and assessment issues. CASAS proposes that states formalize these recertification requirements in their assessment policy. Some suggested activities are provided below to assist states in developing or refining a state-level recertification process.