Welcome to TOPSpro™! This powerful computerized database system helps students, teachers, and program administrators in adult education. TOPSpro, a CASAS software program, provides the following benefits:

- Scores CASAS tests
- Tracks student and program outcomes and progress
- Generates reports for students, teachers, and program administrators
- Provides individual and class profiles of skills
- Collects student demographics
- Manages data for state and federal accountability

In this Tutorial, you will learn how TOPSpro works by experiencing first hand how the features operate.

Purpose
The Quick Start Tutorial (QST) jump-starts your familiarity and use of TOPSpro. QST will quickly teach you the essentials of the software in sixteen easy lessons. It is a hands-on, user-friendly, self-paced tutorial that will take you approximately 3-4 hours to complete. You can “digest” the Tutorial all at once, or complete one lesson at a time.

The Tutorial contains a sample set of student records. Some records already exist in a pre-prepared database. You will also enter records into the software during the QST exercises – some you will enter manually, some using simulated scanning, and some using an actual scanner (for those of you who use an opti-mark reader to scan data into the system.) In some cases we intentionally embedded errors in the records to create opportunities for learning different aspects of the software.
Installing the Quick Start Tutorial

See the TOPSpro Installation and Setup Guide to install a Quick Start Tutorial installation of TOPSpro. To access this guide, on the Help menu, click Installation and Setup.

When the folder opens, select the file titled Tutorial Installation of TOPSpro. You can open a Word or Adobe document that contains these instructions.

What you need to do to get started

- If you are a new user, obtain a license number. To obtain this number, fax the user registration form to CASAS.
- Install a directory for the Tutorial version of TOPSpro (you can identify this by the icon labeled “Visual TOPSpro – Tutorial”) that is separate from your actual TOPSpro database (called a Production installation, labeled “Visual TOPSpro – Production”). Follow the directions in Installation and Setup.
- Print a copy of this manual. Most likely, if you are reading this, then you already printed a copy! If you have not, then on the Help menu, click Quick Start Tutorial.
When the folder opens, you can open (and print) the material. There are separate documents (a Microsoft Word and Adobe pdf version) for each individual lesson. It will be much easier to follow the QST if you work from a printed copy of the manual.

- Allot yourself some time! We have designed QST to be easy for the user to follow, but there are sixteen full lessons. You will need to spend some time with this Tutorial in order to fully benefit.

**Features**

The Tutorial allows you to “digest” the information in small “portions.” Within each of the 16 lessons are objectives that reflect the most important points of the lesson. Each contains around 4-5 objectives and focuses on these critical concepts. There are also exercises that enable you to immediately check your understanding of the material. Each lesson contains around 2-4 exercises (or about one exercise for every 10-20 steps of the QST.)

As we mentioned, there are 16 lessons. The titles of each lesson and specific objectives addressed are:

1. **Navigation**
   - Open TOPSpro
   - Explore the menus, submenus, and icon bar
   - Explore the relationships of records and database hierarchy

2. **Finding & Editing Data**
   - Use the listers to find records
   - Explore Student Records
   - Edit data in Student Records using the listers
   - Understand the relationship of records in TOPSpro
   - Explore all listers

3. **Using Help**
   - Locate Help in the TOPSpro menu
   - Retrieve information using the Contents and Index tabs
   - Obtain information on selected topics using the Search tab and Search menu
   - Use other Help features

4. **Set Up Modifications, Part I**
   - Locate and identify the purpose of features in the Options window
   - Assign settings featured in the Defaults tab
5. Creating New Records Manually
   • Create records for a new Student
   • Create records for an existing Student
   • Create new “Containers” for records
   • Enter data using the Manual Entry Wizard

6. Creating New Records by Scanning
   • Prepare and modify scanner settings
   • Enter information using Override Scanning features
   • Scan records using Simulated Scanning
   • Verify scanning activities using a Scan Summary Report
   • Scan records using an Optimark Reader Scanner

7. Repairing Records
   • Identify records in Batch Repair that need modification
   • Use Batch Repair to fix scanned Records
   • Enter student names using Batch Name Entry

8. Valid and Complete Records
   • Identify incomplete and invalid records in TOPSpro
   • Assign Required Fields
   • Locate the Revalidate the Database feature

9. Generating Reports
   • What is the purpose of TOPSpro reports?
   • Locate selected reports using the TOPSpro menu
   • Generate reports using the New Report Setup window

10. Interpreting Reports
    • Display, print, and navigate through TOPSpro reports
    • Select default settings for TOPSpro reports
    • Analyze data using information from TOPSpro reports

11. Maintaining Your Database
    • Assign Settings Featured in the Edit Options Tab
    • Use the Revalidate the Database Feature
    • Use the Pack and Reindex Feature
    • Use Database Logical Repack

12. Database Management, Part I
    • Backup data using Backup/Restore
    • Restore data using Backup/Restore
    • Consolidate duplicated student records
13. Database Management, Part II
   • Complete a TOPSpro to TOPSpro Export
   • Import TOPSpro Data from another TOPSpro Installation
   • Import data from a 3rd party attendance system
   • Use the Export and Remove option

14. Advanced TOPSpro Tools
   • Locate the User Properties window
   • Assign settings in the Sort Orders tab
   • Explore other features in User Properties
   • Set Access Level Using Login and User Properties
   • Use the TOPSpro Scheduler and User Activity window

15. Advanced Report Features
   • Review the New Report Setup window
   • Locate and use report features in the Options tab
   • Locate and use report features in the Entry Filter and Drop Reasons tabs
   • Display TOPSpro reports as charts and graphs using Excel

16. Meeting Reporting Requirements
   • Use the Proxy Wizard
   • Use the Data Validation Wizard
   • Explore TOPSpro reports that assist with mandatory State and Federal reporting

As you proceed through the Tutorial, you will constantly add data to your database as you learn how to enter and modify data. As a result, your data totals will change, which will affect your answers to exercise questions, and responses to specific steps. We recommend the following:
   • Complete the QST in the order presented in the manual. If you prefer to skip a lesson, or only complete 1-2 lessons in the QST, that is fine. But if you do that, you will need to keep in mind that some of your actions may interfere with what is expected, and your answers to the exercises may conflict with the answer key.
   • If there are two or more individuals in your agency using the QST, then ensure each person uses a separate installation. That way, each person can work at his/her own pace, and will not interfere with another’s work.
   • If you lose your place in the QST, or start a Tutorial that someone else has already used, simply reinstall the TOPSpro Tutorial. When you reinstall, the program will stay in the same directory, and the dataset will restore to its original configuration. In summary, reinstall the Tutorial anytime you need to restore your original dataset.
The remaining pages of this document detail some key introductory concepts in TOPSpro that will help you understand the basics before proceeding with the lessons in the QST. If you are not familiar with these concepts, we recommend you review them before starting the Tutorial.

How TOPSpro Works

This graphic demonstrates how TOPSpro receives, interprets, and displays information. All data inside TOPSpro exists because you (or another user at your agency) enter it into the database. TOPSpro collects this information in two ways:

1) Manually enter the data. You can simply type data directly into the software. Many agencies do not like this method because it is often time consuming. However, this method is usually preferred by small agencies, and by larger agencies when they only need to input a few records.

2) Scan answer sheets into TOPSpro using a scanner (optical-mark reader). With this method, users record data on designated TOPSpro answer sheets, and then scan the answer sheets into the software. This technique is quick and generally preferred by most users.
TOPSpro has ten different scannable records you can use to collect different categories of information. Each record has different data elements that pertain to an individual. The records are:

- **Entry Record.** Collects demographic and entry-level information for a program
- **Update Record.** Updates student progress within a program
- **Test Record.** Records test information
- **Workforce Entry Record.** Provides demographic and entry-level information specific to an individual's job
- **Workforce Update Record.** Updates an individual's progress on the job
- **Name Record.** Records the individual’s first and last name
- **Address Record.** Documents the individual’s address
- **Observation Record.** Records information about an individual's performance on the POWER assessment
- **Consumer Profile Record.** Collects demographic and employment information for individuals using the POWER assessment
- **Appraisal Record.** Records assessment information from specific CASAS appraisals
Once you input your data into TOPSpro, the software scores tests, summarizes demographic information, and creates numerous reports that you can print and distribute throughout your agency to serve a variety of program needs.

TOPSpro Relationships

The Tutorial will explore in greater detail, but it is important that you gain a fundamental understanding of the theoretical basis for TOPSpro before examining specific applications of the software.

First, TOPSpro is a database that is a collection of interrelated records. It is a special database known as a relational database, which stores information and relates records by a common element. In TOPSpro, that common element is the student identification field, which contains a number (the Student ID number) unique to each learner that links all records related to the learner.

The Student Identification (ID) provides the minimum information for TOPSpro to create a Student Record. The Student Record is the "parent" record for all other learner-related records, such as Entry, Test, and Update Records. The other records that contribute additional information to the Student Record are the “child” records in the database. TOPSpro connects the parent and child records by ensuring that they all include one common variable – the Student Identification number. The graphic on the next page presents this concept.
Every time you add another record, TOPSpro links the ID number to the appropriate Student Record, and creates a new “child” record.

Now that we identified Student Records and how TOPSpro organizes this information, let’s look at how the software arranges Student Records at a “macro” level. To successfully manage your data and take full advantage of TOPSpro’s reporting capabilities, you need to effectively set up your numbering system. The graphic below demonstrates the numbering system inside this Tutorial’s database.

- **Agency** is the top level of the reporting hierarchy. TOPSpro collects all data linked to an agency number and produces reports that reflect the performance of the organization as a whole.
- **Site** is a physical location where the agency offers instruction. Site numbers can represent each individual teaching location or a cluster.
of teaching locations. Because TOPSpro allows you to filter reports by site, you should set up your site numbers to reflect how you would like to generate site reports. Each agency must have at least one site defined. You must number all sites uniquely (no two sites can have the same number).

- **Class** numbers can be set up several different ways. Because TOPSpro allows you to filter reports by class, you can use class numbers to give you additional reporting levels. Class numbers can be reused across Sites. Some agencies number classes according to physical location or program type. Class numbers can include up to eight digits.

- Each Agency, Site, and Class contains Student Records. When you enter the student’s information, you assign that student to a particular Agency, Site, and Class.

**Resources**

As you probably already know, there are many resources available where you can obtain more information about TOPSpro. Some of these resources include:

- The TOPSpro Help feature. On the TOPSpro menu, click Help – Contents. The QST has more detailed information about Help in Lesson 3, and references Help throughout the manual.

- CASAS Technical Support. Call Technical Support at 1-800-255-1036. They can help you with issues involving this Tutorial or with other aspects of TOPSpro.

- CASAS Web site. Click [www.casas.org](http://www.casas.org) to access the CASAS Web site. You will find information about software updates, and can obtain additional assistance by accessing the TOPSpro Forum and Download Center. You will need to obtain membership to access either of these two areas, but it easy to do by following the steps on the Web site.

- TOPSpro Web-based training. The CASAS Web site also has a Web-based training module for TOPSpro Basics. From the Web site home page, click TOPSpro from the menu on the left hand side, and then click “TOPSpro Basics Tutorial.”