

Assessment Procedures

Consortium	Northwest Service Cooperative ABE
Staff Contact	Kirsten Fuglseth, ABE Coordinator
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Introduction

These procedures detail the Northwest Service Cooperative ABE consortium’s testing procedures used at all sites. These procedures describe how the consortium is complying with the Minnesota ABE Assessment Policy.

Assessments Used By the Consortium and For Which Students

Describe the consortium use of approved assessments (CASAS, TABE and/or BEST Plus) and for which students they are used. Explain consortium use of different modes of testing, including paper-based testing, computer-based testing, and remote testing.

Northwest Service Cooperative ABE utilizes two of the three assessments that have been approved by the Minnesota Department of Education: CASAS (Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System) and TABE (Test of Adult Basic Education). These assessments help instructors identify the skills students have, the gaps in skills that they need to improve, and which classes are most appropriate for the students to enroll. Northwest Service Cooperative staff in all capacities (administrative, instructional and support) are trained to administer each of these assessments.

A more visual explanation of the assessments that are available to classroom locations including modes of testing and consortium testing protocols are included in the following graphics:

CASAS (Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System)

For Levels: **ESL 1-6**

Name/Series & Usage Dates	Content	Format	Forms/Levels	Testing Protocols
Beginning Literacy Now–June 30, 2024*	Reading	Computer-Based, Paper- Based, and Remote Testing	27 and 28	If a student scores 153-220, enter the score and begin ESL instruction. If a student scores 221 or higher, do not enter the score. Re-test using CASAS GOALS / GOALS 2 and move the student to the ABE track.
Life and Work Now–June 30, 2024*	Reading	Computer-Based, Paper- Based, and Remote Testing	● Level A: 81, 82, 81X, 82X ● Level B: 83, 84 ● Level C: 85, 86, 185, 186 ● Level D: 187, 188	
Life and Work Now–June 30, 2024*	Listening	Computer-Based, Paper- Based, and Remote Testing	981L–986L	
Listening STEPS Now–July 13, 2030	Listening	Computer-Based and Remote Testing	621L-630L	
Reading STEPS Now–July 13, 2030	Reading	Computer-Based and Remote Testing	621R-630R	

For Levels: **ABE 1-6**

Name/Series & Usage Dates	Content	Modes/s In Use	Forms/Levels	Testing Protocols
GOALS Now–February 5, 2025*	Reading	Computer-Based, Paper- Based, and Remote Testing	901R–908R	It is best practice to assess a learner in 2 subjects. Whenever possible, administer a combination of Reading, Math and Language in CASAS GOALS /GOALS 2 &/or TABE 11/12. ● Reading and Language if they are focusing on <u>Reading</u> skills ● Reading and Math if they are also focusing on <u>Math</u> skills If a student scores in a valid range, enter the score and begin ABE instruction. If the student “tests out” of CASAS Goals Reading (263+) or CASAS Goals Math (250+), do not enter the score. Re-test using TABE 11/12 Reading and/or Math and enter the score.
GOALS Now–June 30, 2024*	Math	Computer-Based, Paper- Based, and Remote Testing	900, 913, 914, 917, 918	
Math GOALS 2 Now–July 13, 2030	Math	Computer-Based and Remote Testing	921M-930M	

TABE (Test of Adult Basic Education)

For Levels: **ABE 1-6**

Name/Series & Usage Dates	Content	Modes/s In Use	Forms/Levels	Testing Protocols
11 and 12 Now–September 7, 2024*	• Reading • Math • Language	Computer-Based, Paper-Based, and Remote Testing	L (Literacy) E (Easy) M (Medium) D (Difficult) A (Advanced)	It is best practice to assess a learner in 2 subjects. Whenever possible, administer a combination of Reading, Math and Language in CASAS Goals &/or TABE 11/12: • Reading and Language if they are focusing on <u>Reading</u> skills • Reading and Math if they are also focusing on <u>Math</u> skills All three subject areas may be administered.

Informal Assessments

Throughout the consortium, several informal assessments are used to inform instruction but are not used to place students in NRS Educational Functioning Levels.

Examples include:

- Individual teacher-created assessments (to practice for driver’s license exam or U.S. Citizenship exam)
- Diagnostic Reading Assessments (to inform STAR and Evidence Based Reading Instruction)
- GED® Ready (to inform readiness for GED testing)
- Northstar Digital Literacy Assessments (to assess digital literacy skills)

Pre-Test Procedures and Guidelines

Explain when and how to conduct pre-testing to ensure all students have a valid pre-test within the first 12 contact hours, including how to ensure that the student does not already have a valid pre-test, and how the program handles invalid test results.

All students who enroll in ABE are initially assessed during the first 12 hours of instruction. Data from these assessments is used to place learners at appropriate levels of instruction, to diagnose learner strengths and weaknesses, and set educational goals.

Appraisals and Locators

Both TABE and CASAS test administration manuals include specific recommendations about which level of pre-test to administer, based on the appraisal and/or locator test score, and placement or locator tests are administered whenever feasible. These scores are not used to set EFL’s, but to determine which pre-test to administer.

Pre-tests

Pre-tests are administered as soon as possible once a student enrolls in the ABE program. Generally testing is conducted during the Intake and Orientation and always within the first 12 hours of instruction. When paper-based tests are administered, students are first given an appraisal or locator test, and the scores are used to consult suggested “next test” charts provided by TABE and CASAS to guide pre-test selection. When

computer-based testing or remote testing with computers is conducted, the locator or assessment test results immediately place students into the appropriate level pre-test. As a safeguard to ensure that all students are pre-tested within the first 12 hours of instruction, the SID database prevents a teacher from entering contact hours for the learner (beyond 11.75) until the pre-test has been administered and a valid assessment score has been entered.

All tests are administered under a proctored environment in an area (or modality) that will be the focus of instruction, Reading, Math, Language, Listening or some combination thereof. If a student has been assessed in more than one area, e.g. reading and math, the score for the area that corresponds to the lowest Educational Functioning Level is used to set the student's entry Educational Functioning Level, and progress will be determined by post-testing in that same testing area or modality.

Score Reporting

Upon completion of the pretest/s, the scores are tabulated and valid test scores (as outlined in the test administration manuals) are recorded and reported in the SID database as Standard Scores. Invalid scores require retesting in an alternate form of the test that will provide an accurate and valid score. Scores that fall below the valid range require the student to re-test in an alternate, easier version of the test. Scores that go above the valid range require the student to re-test in an alternate, more difficult version of the test.

In some cases, a student may achieve a pre-testing score that is well below the valid range on the easiest possible version of a test. In this case, when there is no alternate or lower version of the test available, the lowest valid score for that pre-test will be entered as the student's Educational Functioning Level. This is an example of a situation which happens quite regularly with New American and refugee learners who speak little to no English and cannot answer any of the questions on the CASAS Form 27 (Beginning Literacy) test. Rather than assigning them a zero "0" score, or leaving the score blank, they are assigned a score of 153, the lowest possible valid score in the range for the CASAS Form 27 test.

The SID database will automatically assign the students Entry EFL based on the assessment scores entered at the conclusion of pretesting.

Post-Test Procedures and Guidelines

Explain when and how to conduct post-testing, including how to ensure that the student is not post-tested before 40 contact hours, how the post-tests are administered, how the program handles invalid test forms and scores, how post-testing data is entered into SiD, and how the consortium works to maintain a 60% or greater post-testing rate for all participants within the program year.

Students may not be retested/post-tested until they have reached 40 instructional contact hours. ABE teachers may choose to wait longer than the suggested 40 hours but should always conduct follow up testing by no more than 60 hours of instruction. The Minnesota Department of Education requires that local ABE providers maintain an annual post-test rate of no less than 60 percent. The SID database provides 2 reports which provide up to date post-testing information - the Level Gains with Post-Test Rates report, and the Level Gains with Post-Test Rates for Distance Learning students. These reports are accessible to all ABE staff within the consortium and referred to regularly throughout the program year in assessing program and data quality.

Post-tests

An alternate test form within the same test series and content area is required for post-testing. Programs cannot use a reading pre-test and a math post-test to determine learner gains. As with pre-tests, all post-tests are administered under a proctored environment. Post-tests are administered using an alternate form of the prior assessment used to set their current EFL. This can become somewhat confusing, as the NRS level can change over the course of time, depending on which modality is being selected by the SID database to set the Current EFL. The SID database provides easily accessible reports, including the Assessment History report, which can highlight students and areas or modalities in need of retesting. In addition, the SID database has a wonderful feature that highlights areas in need of retesting by changing the font color of the last assessment on the student summary page from red to green when it is time for a new test to be administered in that area.

One caveat to the post testing protocol exists with learners who have pre-tested into the highest Educational Functioning Level, ABE Level 6. These students do not need to be post-tested, as there is no higher EFL to which they can advance.

Score Reporting

As with pre-tests, all post-test scores are tabulated and valid test scores (as outlined in the test administration manuals) are recorded and reported in the SID database as Standard Scores. Invalid scores require retesting in an alternate form of the test that will provide an accurate and valid score. Scores that fall below the valid range require the student to re-test in an alternate, easier version of the test. Scores that go above the valid range require the student to re-test in an alternate, more difficult version of the test.

Subsequent Testing

Students continue to be re-tested after every 40 hours of instruction, using the same protocols outlined above.

Assessment Training Requirements and Procedures

Describe the assessment training requirements are for initial testing certification, re-certification at least every five years, other ongoing training, and for which staff.

In keeping with state policy, all ABE staff who administer assessments must participate in assessment training, which is offered by ABE supplemental service providers at various events throughout the program year. New teachers are given initial assessment training locally through a “train the trainer” model. They are required to complete formal assessment training in both TABE and CASAS before administering assessments to students and they must submit evidence of that training to the ABE Office for archival.

All instructors administering tests must participate in ABE supplemental services-provided training for each test they administer at least once every 5 years. These Implementation Trainings are conducted by state Assessment Trainers through a support services grant held by Southwest ABE which contracts with Minnesota certified trainers to provide training to Adult Basic Education professionals in the proper administration of the assessments as well as appropriate use of the results in instructional planning. Training includes both virtual and in-person options. ABE teachers submit evidence of this training to the ABE Office for archival following the training.

Additional Procedures and Guidance

Describe what additional guidance and procedures the ABE consortium has for local staff regarding testing and assessment.

Assessment Scores falling Outside of the Federal “Lookback” Period

The “lookback” period for valid tests extends to July 1st of the previous Federal reporting year. Students who have test scores that fall beyond the lookback period have essentially “expired” assessment scores and must be re-tested using an alternate form of the last valid test. Students who return to adult education classes after an extended absence must enter using their most recent assessment results, provided that the last test administered does not exceed the same time frame. If it does, retesting will be required.

Accommodations for Learners with Disabilities or Other Special Needs

Occasionally adult learners who enroll in ABE will present documented, verifiable evidence of learning disabilities which demonstrate the need for Assessment Testing accommodations. When accommodations to testing are made, they are recorded on the student’s Personal Education Plan to ensure that the same accommodations are administered at pre-test as well as during all subsequent follow up testing. The type of accommodation allowed is provided by the test publishers, and can be found by referring to the Physical and Non Apparent Disability Assistance (PANDA) website - <http://mn.abedisabilities.org/>