

**Workforce Investment Act, Title II:  
Adult Education and Family Literacy Act**

# **Assessment Policy Guidelines**

**July 2014–June 2015**



**California Department of Education**

## Table of Contents

<b>Tables and Figures.....</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>Acknowledgements.....</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>Section 1: Introduction and Context.....</b>	<b>1</b>
A. Need and Importance for Assessment Policy.....	1
B. Purpose and Use of Standardized Assessments .....	1
C. Summary and Overview of Standardized Assessments .....	2
D. Resources for Information and Assistance .....	6
<b>Section 2: General Assessment Requirements.....</b>	<b>7</b>
A. Authorized Assessments.....	7
B. Uniform Test Administration Times .....	7
C. Testing for Distance Learning Programs.....	8
D. Testing for Citizenship Certification.....	8
E. Accommodations for Learners with Disabilities or Other Special Needs..	9
<b>Section 3: Guidelines for Each Assessment .....</b>	<b>10</b>
A. Test Administration Manuals .....	10
B. Information Included for Each Assessment .....	11
C. Training Requirements for Administering Standardized Assessments...	16
D. Raw Score Conversion and Using Scale Scores to Place Learners into National Reporting System Levels .....	17
E. Test Security Policy.....	17
F. Quality Control Procedures .....	19
<b>Appendix A .....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Appendix B .....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Appendix C .....</b>	<b>30</b>

## Tables and Figures

Table 1A: Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems Appraisal Tests for Adult Basic Education /Adult Secondary Education .....	3
Table 1B: Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems Appraisal Tests for English as a Second Language.....	3
Table 2: Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems Series Approved for Use by Workforce Investment Act Funded Literacy Providers .....	5
Table 3A: Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems Relationship to National Reporting System Levels for Adult Basic Education and Adult Secondary Education .....	6
Table 3B: Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems Relationship to National Reporting System Levels for English as a Second Language.....	6
Table 4A: Reading for Adult Basic Education/Adult Secondary Education/ English as a Second Language .....	12
Table 4B: Math for Adult Basic Education/Adult Secondary Education .....	13
Table 4C: Listening for English as a Second Language.....	13
Table 4D: Speaking for English as a Second Language .....	14
Table 4E: Government and History for English Literacy and Civics Education, Citizenship Preparation, English as a Second Language.....	14
Table 4F: Literacy for Special Needs (for learners with developmental or intellectual disabilities) .....	15
Table 5: Relationship Among Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems, National Reporting System, National Adult Literacy Survey, Student Performance Levels, and Years of Schooling Completed .....	22

## Preface

This document provides policy guidelines pertaining to standardized assessment practices in California's adult literacy programs. It also fulfills the mandate from the U.S. Department of Education (ED): Division of Adult Education and Literacy (DAEL) that each state receiving Workforce Investment Act, Title II (WIA): Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) 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). These regulations require states to describe the assessments local programs are to use, when local programs are to administer pre-tests and post-tests, training requirements for assessments, and assessment administration and reporting requirements.

The California Department of Education (CDE), requires all eligible adult literacy program providers to use the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems (CASAS) standardized assessment instruments, and TOPSpro<sup>®</sup> Enterprise data collection and reporting software to report educational gain benchmarks by 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 of California's adult literacy providers. All learners<sup>1</sup>, including distance learners, who receive 12 or more hours of instruction, must have a valid CASAS pre-test score to be entered into the NRS Federal Report Tables.

The CDE Adult Education Office (AEO) depends on accurate reporting of local student achievement data to negotiate performance standards with the federal government as well as to budget and allocate current and future fiscal resources to maintain a quality adult education and literacy delivery system. The data is also used to report adult learner outcome, including workforce related outcomes to the California Legislature.

Adult literacy providers should use this document as the policy foundation, in conjunction with Test Administration Manuals, *Assessment and Accountability Administration Manual for California*, and regional training workshops to provide a basis for development of local procedures, guidelines, and implementation practices.

---

<sup>1</sup> The term **adult learner** means learners who have attained 16 years of age; are not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under state law; lack sufficient mastery of basic educational skills to enable them to function effectively in society; do not have a secondary school diploma or a recognized equivalent and have not achieved an equivalent level of education; or are unable to speak, read, or write the English language.

## **Acknowledgements**

The CDE recognizes the CASAS team for its efforts in creating a template by which California can develop its own assessment policy guidelines. Pat Rickard, CASAS Executive Director, Jim Harrison, Senior Research Associate, Linda Taylor, Director of Test Development, and Jane Egüez, Director of Program Development, worked collaboratively to develop the assessment template based on the outline furnished by the ED:DAEL.

The original template was developed by the CASAS National Policy Council, comprised of State Directors of Adult Education from: (1) California, (2) Oregon, (3) Washington, (4) Kansas, (5) Minnesota, (6) Indiana, (7) Connecticut, and (8) Iowa.

## **SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT**

### **A. Need and Importance for Assessment Policy**

Standardized, ongoing assessment of learner progress is essential to ensure that all learners become proficient in literacy and language skills. In California, adult literacy providers use CASAS-assessment data 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. To ensure assessment accuracy and consistency, the CDE prescribes that AEFLA 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* contains detailed information about test validity and reliability (see Appendix A for more information regarding CASAS assessment validity and reliability).

### **B. Purpose and Use of Standardized Assessments**

Subsequent sections of this document provide a more detailed discussion of the purposes, descriptions, policies, and test administration procedures of CASAS standardized assessments. In general, CASAS assessments are used to ensure accuracy in adult learner placement (appraisal tests), to diagnose learner strengths and weaknesses, to inform instruction (pretests), to monitor progress (post-tests), and to certify learner mastery (certification tests). Standardized administration of tests and assessment results provide the basis for state and federal accountability reporting. The directions in each *Test Administration Manual* (TAM) must be carefully followed in the selection, administration, use, reporting and security of the pre and post-tests to ensure the accurate alignment of testing results to NRS Educational Functional Levels (EFL) and for documenting student achievement.

#### **Use of Informal Assessments**

In addition to CASAS standardized assessments, the CDE encourages local adult literacy providers to use a variety of informal assessments to monitor learning and inform instruction on a regular, ongoing basis, including the use of teacher developed formative tests, unit tests, portfolios, applied performance assessments, and learner observations. These informal tests are not utilized for the federal NRS reporting requirements.

## **C. Summary and Overview of Standardized Assessments**

This document defines the CDE assessment policy for the following WIA, Title II: AEFLA funded programs: Adult Basic Education (ABE), Adult Secondary Education (ASE) including General Educational Development (GED), and English as a Second Language (ESL). This policy is applicable for classroom-based instruction as well as distance learning. This document identifies key assessment policies that support:

1. Selection and use of appropriate assessment instruments
2. Accurate learner placement into appropriate instructional levels
3. Appropriate test administration, scoring, and reporting of test scores
4. Appropriate use of test results to inform instruction and improve programs
5. Pretesting and post-testing to monitor learner progress
6. Certification of level and program completion
7. Reporting valid and reliable assessment results and related information for accountability to local, state, and federal funding sources and policymakers.

The CDE assessment policy also includes staff training and test security requirements for all local staff that administer and use the results of CASAS standardized assessments, including paper-based and computer-based assessments.

### **Appraisal Tests: Initial Orientation and Placement into Program and Instructional Level**

Initial placement with an appraisal test gauges a learner's reading, math, listening comprehension, writing, and speaking skills. The CDE strongly encourages local agencies to use appraisals whenever feasible to ensure appropriate decisions regarding:

1. Appropriate educational placements
2. Administration of appropriate pre-tests
3. Selection of short- and long-term instructional goals

Placing learners in instructional levels that are not at their ability levels may lead to frustration or boredom, causing learners to leave the program. Learners who take inappropriate level pretests may **top out** or score below the accurate range of the test level, and adult literacy providers will not have accurate baseline (pretest)

information to inform instruction and monitor progress. Use of appraisals and appropriate pretests assist learners and teachers in establishing appropriate learner short-term goals. Appropriate short-term goals enable learners to document successes leading to long-term goals. Learning gains and achievement of learner outcomes within a program year form the basis for the state's required annual NRS report to the DAEL.

Adult literacy providers may not use appraisals as pretests to measure learner progress. Each CASAS TAM includes specific recommendations regarding which level of pretest to administer, based on the appraisal test score. CASAS provides appraisals for reading, math, listening comprehension, speaking, and writing. Adult literacy providers should administer CASAS appraisal tests as follows:

**Table 1A: Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems Appraisal Tests for Adult Basic Education /Adult Secondary Education**

Skills Areas	Form 80	Life Skills Form 30	eTest Appraisal
Reading	✓		✓
Math		✓	✓

**Table 1B: Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems Appraisal Tests for English as a Second Language**

Skills Areas	Form 80	eTest Appraisal
Reading	✓	✓
Listening	✓	✓
Writing	✓	
Speaking	✓	

## **Progress Testing: Pretest and Post-Test**

CASAS designed standardized progress tests to assess learning along a continuum, from beginning literacy and English language acquisition through the completion of secondary level skills. Several test series monitor learning progress, with test difficulty levels ranging from below Level A through Level D. Each test level has alternate test forms parallel in content and difficulty. The test series differ primarily in contextual focus (for example, employability versus general life skills and work skills).


Selection of the appropriate test series is based on a learner's goals and the instructional focus of the program (general life and work skills, employability, and workplace). The pretest is administered to the learner as soon as feasible after enrollment into the program: either during the intake process after an appraisal is given, or after placing the learner into the appropriate instructional level. All learners, including distance learners, with 12 or more hours of instruction must have a valid CASAS pretest for placement into the NRS Federal Tables. Adult literacy providers may find guidance for pretest and post-test selection in the Next Assigned Test Charts provided by CASAS in the TAM or in the TOPSpro<sup>®</sup> Enterprise Next Assigned Test Report. If using eTests, the pre- and post-test selection happens automatically. Learner post-tests are administered at the same level or a higher level, depending on the learners' pretest score. CASAS and TOPSpro<sup>®</sup> Enterprise recommend an alternate test form within the same test series for post-testing. Additionally, the post-test must be in the same skill area as the pretest, that is, programs cannot use a reading pretest and a math post-test to determine learner gains. Learners are placed into the NRS Federal Reporting Tables based on their lowest accurate pretest score when scaled pretest scores from two different modalities fall into different Educational Functioning Levels (EFL). The skill area with the lowest first accurate pretest matched to the highest accurate post-test measuring the same skill area is used for reporting learner gains for NRS Federal tables.

The CDE has established a statewide performance goal of at least 50 percent paired test scores. Other sections of this document cover post-testing policies and procedures in more detail.

## Appropriate Administration of CASAS Assessments

The appropriate use of CASAS assessments is as follows:

**Table 2: Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems Series Approved for Use by Workforce Investment Act Funded Literacy Providers**

<div>  </div>						
Basic skills assessed in each series		Citizenship	Life and Work	Life Skills	POWER*	Secondary Assessment
Reading		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Math				✓		✓
Listening			✓			
						Standardized Multiple Choice

Programs that may use each series						
ESL		✓	✓	✓		✓
ABE			✓	✓	✓	✓
ASE			✓	✓		✓

\* POWER Assessments can be used as an accommodation for adults who have developmental and intellectual disabilities. This assessment is not approved to measure NRS level gains.

## Scoring and Alignment of CASAS with NRS Levels

Tables 3A and 3B show the relationship between CASAS test levels, scale score ranges, and NRS levels for ABE, ASE, and ESL learners.

**Table 3A: Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems Relationship to National Reporting System Levels for Adult Basic Education and Adult Secondary Education**

	NRS Level	CASAS Level	Reading and Math Scale Score Ranges
1	Beginning ABE Literacy	<b>A</b>	200 and below
2	Beginning Basic Education	<b>B</b>	201-210
3	Low Intermediate Basic Education	<b>B</b>	211-220
4	High Intermediate Basic Education	<b>C</b>	221-235
5	Low ASE	<b>D</b>	236-245
6	High ASE	<b>E</b>	246 and above

**Table 3B: Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems Relationship to National Reporting System Levels for English as a Second Language**

	NRS Level	CASAS Level	Reading and Listening Scale Score Ranges
1	Beginning ESL Literacy	<b>A</b>	180 and below
2	Low Beginning ESL	<b>A</b>	181-190
3	High Beginning ESL	<b>A</b>	191-200
4	Low Intermediate ESL	<b>B</b>	201-210
5	High Intermediate ESL	<b>B</b>	211-220
6	Advanced ESL	<b>C</b>	221-235

## D. Resources for Information and Assistance

For specific information about CASAS assessments, contact Linda Taylor, Director of Assessment Development, at CASAS by telephone at 1-800-255-1036, ext. 186, or e-mail at [ltaylor@casas.org](mailto:ltaylor@casas.org).

## SECTION 2: GENERAL ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS

### A. Authorized Assessments

All learners, including distance learners, must be assessed using authorized standardized assessments. See assessments listed in Table 2 that meet NRS requirements rules for reporting. Additionally, CASAS assessments:

- Are appropriate for measuring literacy and language development of adult learners.
- Have standardized administration and scoring procedures.
- Have alternate, equivalent forms for pretest and post-testing.
- Have evidence linking them to the NRS Educational Functioning Levels.

For more information on authorized assessments, refer to Section 3, Guidelines for Each Assessment.

### B. Uniform Test Administration Times

The majority of CASAS assessments have appraisal tests for learners to take prior to taking a pretest. Appraisal test results indicate the appropriate level for instruction, as well as which pretest form adult literacy providers are to administer. To optimize assessment results, pretest learners as soon as possible upon entry into the program and before the occurrence of any substantial instructional intervention. Pretest learners in the areas that are the focus of instruction, using the appropriate CASAS standardized test in reading, math, or listening comprehension.

Post-test learners using an alternate form occurs at the end of a semester, term, quarter, or other substantial block of instruction to document learning gains.

**Adult literacy providers are to ensure that testing times and conditions are uniform for both pretests and post-tests.**

CASAS designed pretests and post-tests so that most students are able to complete a test in one hour or less. CASAS recommends assessing after approximately 70-100 hours of instruction, with the following exceptions:

- Programs offering high intensity courses (for example, a class meets more than 15 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 100 hours of instruction.

- Programs offering low intensity courses with fewer than 70 hours 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 individual learners who indicate they are leaving the program before the scheduled post-test time to maximize collection of paired test data. However, testing should not occur before at least 40 hours of instruction. The testing of students that have fewer than 40 hours of instruction must be reviewed and approved by local authorized personnel (principal, vice principal, coordinator) and these approvals must be kept at the local agencies and made available for review by the CDE.

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.

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, if the interim does not exceed more than four months. Similarly, adult literacy providers may use the most recent assessment results for “stop-outs” returning to adult education classes, if the last test administered does not exceed the same four month time period. This policy is designed to reduce or eliminate unnecessary testing of learners.

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

### **C. Testing for Distance Learning Programs**

Learners in distance learning settings must fulfill the same assessment requirements as all other learners. Agencies must assess distance learners in a secure proctored environment, either at the adult education site or other proctored and secure location with staff trained to administer the assessment.

### **D. Testing for Citizenship Certification**

To administer the *Citizenship Interview Test* for certification in the English Literacy and Civics Education, Citizenship Preparation program, adult literacy providers must complete certification training online for the CASAS *Citizenship Interview Test*. If retesting of a learner is necessary, a significant amount of intervening instructional hours must occur before retesting.

## **E. Accommodations for Learners with Disabilities or Other Special Needs**

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 the test measures.

Adult literacy providers 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. Adult literacy providers must document the need for learner accommodations in official learner records, such as the Individual Program Education Plan (IPEP) 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 may be obtained from a doctor's report, a diagnostic assessment from a certified professional, or other clinical records. Adult literacy providers often can contact the local division of vocational rehabilitation or a secondary school to request documentation of a disability.

### **Accommodations in Test Administration Procedures**

Local test administrators may provide or allow certain accommodations in test administration procedures or environment for documented disabilities without contacting CASAS. Examples include accommodations in test time, giving supervised breaks, or providing a sign language interpreter for test administration directions only. 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.

### **Use of Appropriate CASAS Test Forms**

CASAS test forms that are appropriate for learners with a disability include computer-based tests and large-print tests, such as the *Life and Work* reading pretest and post-tests, and tests with enhanced print such as the *Life Skills Beginning Literacy Reading* assessment and *Reading for Citizenship* test forms. CASAS functional reading tests in a Braille format are now available. They measure basic literacy skills for learners who have visual impairment.

Detailed information on providing accommodations can be found in *Guidelines for Providing Accommodations Using CASAS Assessment for Learners with Disabilities* available at <http://www.casas.org>.

## **SECTION 3: GUIDELINES FOR EACH ASSESSMENT**

### **A. Test Administration Manuals**

The CDE-AEO requires that local adult literacy providers follow the test administration guidelines in each *TAM* published by CASAS for each test series used. It is essential that the directions for the test administration be followed uniformly across the ABE, ASE, and ESL programs offered. All local adult literacy providers must maintain copies of *TAMs* onsite for all assessments used by the provider. *TAMs* provide quality control guidelines to ensure proper test use, administration, scoring, and interpretation of results. These manuals typically contain information on the following topics:

- The CASAS Assessment System
- Overview of CASAS Progress Testing
- Description of Tests
- Determining Pretest and Post-Test Level
- Test Security (see Section F)
- Instructions for Administering Tests
- Scoring
- Data Collection
- Interpretation of Results
- Curriculum Planning, Instruction, and Assessment
- Resources
- Testing Accommodations
- Skill Level Descriptors
- Next Assigned 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

## **B. Information Included for Each Assessment**

Table 2 in Section 1, CASAS Series Approved for Use by WIA Funded Programs, provides information about which assessments are appropriate for which learner populations. Tables 4A through 4F provide information about CASAS Test Forms by Skill Areas, Levels, and Series. The tables list multiple forms at each level; these are alternate forms for post-testing. In some instances, an “X” follows a test form number (e.g., 82X). These tests are extended range tests and may be used as an additional post-test within that specified level (for example, 82 and 82X are alternative forms for 81, all at level A). The tables also list the appropriate appraisal test(s) to accompany different CASAS test series.

**Tables 4A–4F: Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems Test Forms  
by Skill Areas, Levels, and Series**

**Table 4A: Reading for Adult Basic Education/Adult Secondary Education/ English  
as a Second Language**

<b>NRS EFLs for ABE ASE</b>	<b>NRS EFLs for ESL</b>	<b>CASAS Level</b>	<b>Life &amp; Work Series Form Numbers</b>	<b>Citizenship Series Form Numbers</b>
1	1-2	Beg. Literacy	27 28	27 28
1	1-3	A	81 82	951 952
1-2	2-4	AX	81 X 82 X	951 X 952 X
2-3	4-5	B	83 84	
3-5	5-6	C	85, 86* 185 186	<b>Secondary Assessment Series Form Numbers</b>
4-6		D	187 188	513 514

Appraisal	80, or eTest
-----------	--------------

\*workplace focused

**Table 4B: Math for Adult Basic Education/Adult Secondary Education**

<b>NRS EFLs</b>	<b>CASAS Levels</b>	<b>Life Skills Series Form Numbers</b>	<b>Secondary Assessment Form Numbers</b>
1	A	31 32	
1-3	B	33 34	
2-4	C	35 36	
3-6	D	37 38	505 506

Appraisal	30, or eTests
-----------	------------------

**Table 4C: Listening for English as a Second Language**

<b>NRS EFLs</b>	<b>CASAS Levels</b>	<b>Life and Work Series Form Numbers</b>
1-4	A	981 982
3-5	B	983 984
4-6	C	985 986

Appraisal	80 or eTests
-----------	-----------------

**Table 4D: Speaking for English as a Second Language** (May be used for EL Civics)

<b>NRS EFLs</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Form Numbers</b>	<b>Series</b>	<b>Content</b>
1-6	A - D	973 974	Citizenship (Citizenship Preparation)	Simulates United States Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS, formerly INS) oral citizenship interview

**Table 4E: Government and History for English Literacy and Civics Education, Citizenship Preparation, English as a Second Language**

<b>NRS EFLs</b>		<b>Level</b>	<b>Form Numbers</b>	<b>Series</b>	<b>Content</b>
4-6		B - C	965, 966	Citizenship	Multiple-choice questions Tests knowledge of U.S. government and history

**Table 4F: Literacy for Special Needs (for learners with developmental or intellectual disabilities)**

<b>NRS EFLs</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>POWER Series Form Numbers</b>	<b>Adult Life Skills (R) Form Numbers</b>
1,2	Beginning Literacy	307* (for Corrections only) 306* 305*	27 28
1,2	Beginning Literacy		312* 313*
1,2	Beginning Literacy	303, 304*	
1,2	Beginning Literacy	301,302*	
	Appraisal	352	

\*These Assessments are not approved to measure NRS level gains.

## C. Training Requirements for Administering Standardized Assessments

The CDE contracts with CASAS to provide California Accountability training regionally and online, which provides guidance on specific state data and accountability requirements and timelines. The regional face to face training sessions are provided in the late summer/fall, and spring each year. Online training is available throughout the year. Specific training sessions are designed for both new and experienced staff. Registration for all training is posted online on the CASAS Web site. All staff completing training are entered into a training database, which is reviewed quarterly to ensure that all agencies have participated in required training. The CDE requires each agency to participate in this training annually.

The CDE requires all AEFLA funded agencies to be trained in California Accountability and CASAS(agreements) Implementation. Reimbursements are withheld when agencies are not in compliance. The CDE requires all adult literacy providers to train teachers and other local staff in gathering, analyzing, compiling and reporting data for the NRS. This includes training for newly hired staff and refresher training for existing staff. This training includes the following topics:

- NRS policy, accountability policies, and data collection process
- Definitions of measures
- Conducting assessments

The CDE requires that at a minimum, one person from each agency using the CASAS system successfully complete CASAS Implementation Training. CASAS has a defined training policy that details how local education agencies must conduct assessments. Training of adult literacy provider personnel is essential to a quality CASAS implementation. Only adult literacy provider personnel that have completed training by CASAS certified personnel may use CASAS assessments. Once trained, this individual can train others within his or her respective agency but may not train outside that agency. For local training purposes, instructors may examine CASAS tests for review purposes only. It is essential that this occur in a controlled, supervised environment with test security safeguards in place. Adult literacy providers are to take special care to ensure the collection of all test booklets at the completion of training.

CASAS staff and certified trainers provide separate implementation training sessions for ABE/ASE, ESL, and Employability Skills. These training sessions teach participants to administer, score, and interpret CASAS reading, listening, and math assessments. Implementation training also addresses how to use the CASAS competency system and CASAS resources, such as *Quick Search*, to facilitate instruction. Separate training sessions are available for CASAS *Functional Writing*, *Citizenship Interview*, and *Workplace Speaking*, among others.

## **D. Raw Score Conversion and Using Scale Scores to Place Learners into National Reporting System Levels**

Each CASAS *Test Administration Manual* provides charts and guidelines for converting raw scores to scale scores. The CDE requires adult literacy providers to use these as reference points. CASAS subdivided scale score ranges to correspond to the NRS levels.

NRS guidelines require appropriate placement of learners in instructional areas. Adult literacy providers use the skill area (for example, reading and math) with the lower pretest score to place learners, if the learner is to receive instruction in the skill related to the lower instructional level. Placement at the lower instructional level is the basis of determining which pretest to administer. Learners are placed into the NRS Federal Reporting Tables based on their lowest accurate pre-test score when scaled pre-test scores on two different modalities fall into different EFLs.

## **E. Test Security Policy**

The CDE requires that all AEFLA funded adult literacy providers sign an annual test security agreement and develop local guidelines for implementing state assessment policy that reflects the test security agreement (See Appendix B).

CASAS publishes this test security policy to maintain the integrity of each of its assessments and to assist with the implementation of and adherence to the test security practices contained in this document. Administrators and testing personnel are responsible for following these practices and ensuring that agency staff follow said practices.

It is the legal responsibility of the agency director, principal, or other primary administrator to enforce securing testing materials upon taking delivery of materials and at all times afterward. Only testing personnel and others qualified as part of the testing process may have access to any testing materials.

### **Security of Testing Materials**

All testing materials online or on paper, including but not limited to CASAS eTests, (online or desktop), test booklets, CDs, answer sheets, and answer keys, must be kept secure.

No unauthorized personnel should be allowed access to CASAS eTests or to paper test booklets. Security procedures for computerized testing and paper test booklets must be held to the same standard.

### **Test Administration**

Testing personnel must remain in the testing room throughout each entire test session to ensure that students follow all testing rules. Examinees must sit three to

five feet apart and refrain from talking during the testing session or seeking help from others in any way, including use of electronic devices.

Testing personnel must ensure that they follow all test administration directions and language as stipulated in the appropriate CASAS Test Administration Manual. Paper test booklets and related test support materials should be kept in locked storage at all times when not in use. Prior to distribution of test booklets, the test administrator must number each test booklet for tracking purposes. As examinees finish the test, they must put their answer sheet inside their test booklet and wait until the conclusion of the testing session. The administrator must ensure that each test booklet is returned before anyone leaves the testing facility.

### **Confidentiality of Tests and Test Items**

No agency, school, or other entity may use any CASAS test or test item – published or unpublished – as a tool to prepare examinees for the testing process. CASAS tests may never serve as practice tests in any capacity or for any purpose. Test items may not be reviewed, discussed, or explained to anyone at any time.

If paper test booklets have been marked in or torn, agencies should shred these test booklets. If an agency is transitioning to a new test series, agencies should shred old test booklets and destroy related testing materials including CDs. It is never appropriate to retain test materials for use as a practice test or for instructional purposes.

No agency, school, or other testing entity may share or provide any testing materials to another agency or school. Agencies that make such requests should be advised to contact CASAS directly. Testing materials must remain at the testing site at all times.

### **Copyright Infringement**

No test materials may be duplicated, photocopied, or reproduced in any manner. Federal copyright law prohibits unauthorized reproduction and use of copyrighted test materials. Reproducing test materials is a violation of federal copyright law.

### **Test Security Policy Agreement**

Agency directors, principals, and other primary administrators need to maintain a specific test security policy that cover the proper handling and use of test materials.

All testing personnel must follow the Local Test Security Policy in agreeing to uphold the security policies of the agency, school, or testing entity.

Should any agency, school, or other testing entity has violated any provision of this test security policy or should testing materials have been compromised in any manner, purposely or otherwise, CASAS reserves the right to take appropriate action to rectify the violation of its test security policy.

## **F. Quality Control Procedures**

**Entry of Assessment Data:** The CDE requires adult literacy providers to enter assessment data into the TOPSpro<sup>®</sup> Enterprise database minimally on a quarterly basis for all learners assessed during that quarter.

**Quality Control Procedures:** The CDE uses the TOPSpro<sup>®</sup> Enterprise to ensure that quality control checks are in place for all assessment data collection and reporting.

- Local TOPSpro<sup>®</sup> Enterprise Data Integrity Reports assist adult literacy providers to conduct data integrity checks to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the data submitted. TOPSpro<sup>®</sup> Enterprise logic prevents inappropriate assessments from being scored and reported (i.e. administering the same form for pretesting and post-testing).
- Statewide quarterly reporting of data assists CDE in monitoring the data collecting and reporting process and in identifying data collection and assessment issues that may need to be addressed through targeted training and technical assistance. Monitoring of funded agencies also include onsite verification that local providers have policies and procedures in place to ensure accurate and complete data collection and to ensure the appropriate administration, scoring and reporting of assessment results.

### **Improper use of CASAS Tests include activities such as:**

- 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 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-post testing.

**Purchasing Procedures for Each Assessment:** The CDE requires programs to order CASAS assessments authorized for use in California directly from CASAS. The CDE provides CASAS with a list of approved assessments to ensure that local adult education programs order appropriate materials.

## Appendix A

### Validity and Reliability

#### Validity

*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. 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*. 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 Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems, 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+

The National Governors Association Center for Best Practices together with the Council of Chief State School Officers developed and published a set of Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in 2010.

At the request of the CASAS National Consortium, an alignment study between the CCSS and the CASAS Content Standards for Reading and Mathematics was completed in 2010 by an independent third party. The resulting report – *CASAS Content Standards and Common Core Standards: A Comparative Analysis* – is posted on the CASAS website at <http://www.casas.org/product-overviews/curriculum-management-instruction/CCCS>.

Subsequently, the Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE) commissioned a study to answer the following questions on how Common Core State Standards (CCSS) relate to Adult Education:

1. What content in the areas of English language arts and literacy (ELA/literacy) and mathematics is most relevant to preparing adult students for success in higher education and training programs?
2. What content in the areas of English language arts and literacy (ELA/literacy) and mathematics of is most relevant to preparing adult students for success in higher education and training programs?
3. Which standards in each content area are most important for adult students?

The resulting report is titled *Promoting College and Career Ready Standards in Adult Basic Education* (Pimental 2013)

Again, at the request of the CASAS National Consortium, CASAS requested a review of the original comparative analysis in light of the results of the study commissioned by OVAE. The study shows the relationship between the Common Core State Standards for Reading and CASAS Content Standards for Reading as well as the CCSS deemed priority for Adult Education.

## **Reliability**

The *CASAS Technical Manual* provides data on the reliability of the item bank (Section G). 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. Information on test forms including SEMs, Test Information Function, correlation and classification consistency are published in the *CASAS Technical Manual*.

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 *CASAS Technical Manual* for results of these analyses. The *CASAS Technical Manual* presents classical 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” and “differential item functioning”. 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 Instructional Materials Quick Search, and linking these competencies to appropriate CASAS assessment tools. Learners within education programs that adopted the key elements demonstrated:

1. Significant learning gains
2. Increased hours of participation
3. 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*).

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*.)

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:

- The Iowa Basic Skills Survey (IABSS), 1995
- Validation of Foundation Skills (Indiana Department of Education), 1996
- Targeting Education: The Connecticut Basic Skills Survey, 1997
- CABSS Report: California Adult Basic Skills Survey, 1999

For more detailed information about these validation studies refer to the *CASAS Technical Manual*.

Please refer to the CASAS Web site at <http://www.casas.org> to access each of the research reports above. All reports can be accessed on the left side bar of the CASAS home page under Research and Reports.

CASAS has undertaken the development of a content standards framework on behalf of CASAS National Consortium states. The project uses 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 identifies the basic skills content standards at each NRS level embedded in CASAS Competencies and links them to appropriate CASAS assessments.

## Appendix B

### **[Local Agency Name] Workforce Investment Act, Title II: Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Local Guidelines for Implementing State Assessment Policy Program Year [2014-2015]**

*[Local agency name] developed and implemented the following local procedures for assessment and data collection consistent with the California Department of Education's (CDE) Workforce Investment Act, Title II: Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, Assessment Policy Guidelines.*

#### **I. Training and Dissemination of Local Guidelines for Implementing the California Assessment Policy**

The CDE requires annual training of local agency staff and dissemination of the agency's assessment guidelines. Please refer to the CASAS website [https://www.casas.org/online\\_registration/](https://www.casas.org/online_registration/) for the list of regional and online trainings.

*[Instructions for local agencies: Provide a description of the local agency's guidelines to provide training to agency staff and disseminate local assessment guidelines, e.g., who will be trained and frequency of training and timeline. Training of staff may include any of the following: individual, group, electronic, bound paper format, PowerPoint, video, or other means of conveying appropriate assessment and data collection procedures. Use a sign-in sheet to document staff participation.]*

#### **II. Initial Orientation and Placement into Program and Instructional Level**

The CDE strongly encourages the use of appraisal tests for newly enrolled adult learners whenever feasible to ensure appropriate educational placement, appropriate administration of pretest forms, and appropriate selection of short- and long-term instructional goals.

*[Instructions for local agencies: Provide the following: (1) a description of the local agency's initial class and level placement process for Adult Basic Education (ABE), English as a Second Language (ESL), and Adult Secondary Education (ASE), and (2) the names and/or titles of the person or persons responsible for student orientation, initial appraisal, and placement.]*

### III. Progress Testing: Pretest and Post-Test

Adult education local agency staff must administer pretests for learners as soon as feasible after enrollment but no later than two weeks after enrollment into the program: either during the intake process after an appraisal is given or after placing the learner into the appropriate instructional level.

- *Instructions for local agencies: Provide a description of the following: (1) how the local agency administers a pretest as soon as feasible after enrollment into the program, and (2) the local agency testing schedule for pretesting and post-testing, including the number of hours between pretesting and post-testing.*

### IV. Use of Test Administration Manuals

The CDE requires that local adult literacy providers follow the test administration guidelines in each Test Administration Manual (TAM) published by CASAS for each **test series** used. All local adult literacy providers must maintain copies of TAMs onsite for all assessments used. TAMs provide quality control guidelines to ensure proper test use, administration, scoring, and interpretation of results.

*[Instructions for local agencies: Provide the following: (1) a description of how the local agency follows the test administration guidelines in each TAM, (2) a copy of TAM inventory, and (3) the storage and safekeeping process, and the name or title of the person responsible for maintaining the security of the TAMs.]*

### V. Training Requirements for Administering Standardized Assessments

The CDE requires all adult literacy providers to comply with the CASAS training policy. The CDE also requires each agency to participate annually in California Accountability Training, which provides guidance on specific state data and accountability requirements, including timelines. Training in CASAS assessments is also required to ensure accurate use of tests and appropriate interpretation of learner results, and to maintain the integrity and quality of the assessment process. CDE requires that at least one person from each agency using the CASAS system successfully complete CASAS Assessment Implementation Training. Once trained, this individual will train others within his or her respective agency but may not train outside that agency. Agencies may use the packet titled *California Teachers New to CASAS*, which is included in the CASAS Implementation Training packet, to train others within the agency. Please refer to the CASAS website [https://www.casas.org/online\\_registration/](https://www.casas.org/online_registration/) for the list of regional and online trainings.

*[Instructions for local agencies: Provide the following: (1) the names and/or titles of persons responsible for attending CASAS Implementation Training and California Accountability Training and for providing training to other agency staff, if appropriate, and (2) a*

*description of how the local agency trains all staff within the agency on implementation and accountability procedures. Include dates and times, location, and sign-in sheets.]*

## VI. Test Security Agreements

The CDE requires that all WIA, Title II: AEFLA funded adult literacy providers sign an annual test security agreement. The following stipulations must be part of the local assessment guidelines:

To protect the quality and standardization of CASAS assessments, I agree to:

1. Follow all test procedures as required in this Test Security Policy document.
2. Secure all CASAS test materials, whether paper-based or computer delivered, under lock and key except during testing sessions.
3. Ensure that before or after any test administration all test materials are secure and inaccessible to any non-testing personnel, examinees, or others not responsible for test administration.
4. Remain in the testing room at all times during the testing event and monitor all examinee activity as appropriate and in compliance with test security procedures.
5. Ensure that examinees sit at least three to five feet apart and do not talk or seek help from others during the testing event in any way, including use of electronic devices.
6. Refrain from assisting examinees with test answers on any test before or during the testing event.
7. Refrain from reviewing test questions with examinees after the testing event.
8. Ensure that agency staff members follow all specific testing procedures as stated in CASAS Test Administration Manuals.
9. Disallow use of any CASAS assessments as practice tests or as instructional tools.
10. Advise any agency, school, or testing entity to contact CASAS, and not my agency, with any inquiry about sharing or duplicating CASAS testing materials.
11. Refrain from duplicating or in any way reproducing any CASAS testing materials, including but not limited to test booklets, answer keys, answer sheets, CDs, and CASAS eTests.
12. Report any violation of this test security policy.

My signature on this document certifies that I have read the above policy, will follow all test administration directions as stated in my CASAS Test Administration Manual, and agree to abide by all test security procedures.

---

Signature

---

Position/Title

---

Date

---

Print Name

---

Agency Name

## Appendix C

**Definition of Distance Learners:** Learners who receive more than 50 percent of instructional hours in a distance learning format during the program year are considered distance learners for NRS reporting purposes.

**Testing:** Learners in distance learning settings must fulfill the same assessment requirements as all other learners (see section 2).

Agencies must assess distance learners in a secure proctored environment, either at the adult education site or other proctored and secure location and with staff trained to administer the assessment.

**Curricula and Proxy Hours:**

- **Curricula used for distance education:** Agencies may use curricula approved by the CDE that field-based distance learning programs have implemented successfully. Programs may also submit other curricula for CDE approval that meet the needs of the population they are serving.
- **Proxy Hours:** Proxy hours are determined by a review of CDE-approved range for each curriculum and may include hours for additional activities to meet local needs. CDE provides proxy contact hours for curricula that are used extensively in distance learning programs throughout California. CDE-recommended proxy hours are determined by a field group convened from each program area to review the most widely used curricula and determine an appropriate number of proxy hours per unit for each. The field colleagues are distance learning professionals with experience using the curricula in question. Agencies requesting a number different from the suggest number of proxy hours provide a justification, and if the CDE consultant has questions about the request, he or she contacts the agency to discuss and gather additional information
- CDE promotes a rigorous outcome-based learner mastery model with designated benchmark levels for program completion verified by an identified process that may include teacher and/or external certification.