



# **Assessment Policy Guidelines**

**2016**



## 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 (ED): Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE) 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: OCTAE 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**

#### **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.

#### **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 on Education (NCME),

and the American Psychological Association (APA). *CASAS Technical Manuals* contain 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*** (2014) 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 Enterprise (TE): Tracking of Programs and Students (TOPSpro Enterprise®) 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 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](http://www.casas.org) > research. 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 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, or writing.

### ***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**

<b>CASAS ASSESSMENT Series</b>					
<b>Basic skills assessed in each series</b>		Citizenship	Life and Work	Life Skills	Secondary Assessment
Reading		✓	✓	✓	✓
Math				✓	✓
Listening			✓		
<b>Programs that may use each series</b>					
ESL		✓	✓		
ABE			✓	✓	
ASE		✓	✓	✓	✓

**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 Scale Score Ranges	Math Scale Score Ranges
<b>1</b>	Beginning ABE Literacy	<b>A</b>	200 and below	200 and below
<b>2</b>	Beginning Basic Education	<b>B</b>	201-210	201-210
<b>3</b>	Low Intermediate Basic Education	<b>B</b>	211-220	211-220
<b>4</b>	High Intermediate Basic Education	<b>C</b>	221-235	221-235
<b>5</b>	Low Adult Secondary Education	<b>D</b>	236-245	236-245
<b>6</b>	High Adult Secondary Education	<b>E</b>	246 and above	246 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 Scale Score Ranges	Listening Scale Score Ranges
<b>1</b>	Beginning ESL Literacy	A	180 and below	180 and below
<b>2</b>	Low Beginning ESL	A	181 - 190	181 - 189
<b>3</b>	High Beginning ESL	A	191 - 200	190 - 199
<b>4</b>	Low Intermediate ESL	B	201 - 210	200 - 209
<b>5</b>	High Intermediate ESL	B	211 - 220	210 - 218
<b>6</b>	Low Advanced ESL	C	221 - 235	219 - 227

\* 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– 3d list alternate and equivalent test forms eligible providers must use for pre- and post-testing. Next Assigned Test Charts provided by CASAS or the TOPSpro Next Assigned 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.

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**Table 3a CASAS Alternate and Equivalent Test Forms by NRS Educational Functioning Levels for Reading (ESL)**

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

Appraisal	80, 130, or eTests CAT
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\*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 #		Life Skills Series Form #
1	Beg. Literacy	27 28		310** 311**
1	A	81 82		
1-2	AX	81 X 82 X		
2-3	B	83 84		
3-5	C	85, 86* 185 186	<b>Secondary Assessment Series Form #</b>	
4-6	D	187 188	513 514	

Appraisal	80, 130, or eTests CAT
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\*workplace focused

\*\* for learners who have intellectual disabilities

**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 #	Secondary Assessment Form #
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 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 *
1-4	A	981 982
3-5	B	983 984
5-6	C	985 986

Appraisal	80 or eTests CAT
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### **II.C.2.d Link to NRS EFLs**

See Tables 2a, 2b, and Tables 3a – 3d

## **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 to 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)**

##### **Accommodation procedures are applicable to all CASAS tests and include:**

- allowing extended time to time-and-a half (1.5)
- giving supervised breaks
- 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

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

The paper *CASAS Assessment Accommodations* provides more detailed information on providing accommodations. This document is available at [www.casas.org](http://www.casas.org) > [training & support](#) > [testing guidelines](#) > [accommodation guidelines](#)

##### **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 learners 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 Education Plan (IEP), Individual Program 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 – 3d
- Types of learners — see Tables 3a – 3d
- 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, and 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/site using the CASAS system successfully complete CASAS Implementation Training. It is recommended that all staff responsible for administering, scoring and interpreting test results complete CASAS Implementation training which is available online at no cost.

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.

[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 that 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, or offered online at [www.casas.org](http://www.casas.org), 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 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.

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.

### **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

**Validity**

*The Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing (2014)* 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 Manuals*.

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. 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.

## Reliability

The *CASAS Technical Manuals* provide data on the reliability of the item bank and specific test series. The test administration manuals for each test series also contain information about reliability.

Reliability (test accuracy) has two major subcomponents — consistency and stability. In every CASAS test, the raw score (number correct) converts to a scale score. Each scale score has an associated standard error of measurement (SEM). CASAS establishes a range of accuracy for each test form. For scale scores exceeding the accurate range, CASAS provides a usable conservative scale score estimate that may be reported for accountability purposes. However, test administrators may administer a test at the next more difficult level to obtain a more accurate scale score. CASAS does not report scale scores for raw scores falling below the accurate range.

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. The *CASAS Technical Manuals* present traditional item statistics that include 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. 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. As part of ongoing maintenance for the assessments, the stability of item parameter estimates are evaluated by CASAS periodically.

## 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.

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.

There have been a number of 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:

- CASAS Content Standards for Reading and Mathematics and Common Core State Standards for Reading, Language, and Mathematics: A Comparative Analysis 2010
- Revalidation of the CASAS Competencies 2008
- CASAS National Consortium Content Standards 2007

For more detailed information and complete copies of these validation studies go to [www.casas.org](http://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.

On behalf of CASAS National Consortium states, CASAS also undertook the alignment of CASAS content standards to the Common Core State Standards in 2010 and the subsequent College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education in 2013.

## Appendix B Additional Quality Control Procedures

### Test Security Policy

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 are aware of and follow said practices.

It is the immediate 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, including but not limited to computerized-testing versions of CASAS eTests, whether 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 an 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 dictated in the appropriate CASAS Test Administration Manual.

**CASAS eTests:** CASAS will occasionally embed unpublished test items into operational CASAS eTests in order to maintain and build its item bank. These items are not scored. The security of these items cannot be compromised and must be maintained in the same manner as all testing materials.

**Paper test booklets:** 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.

***Paper test booklets:*** If test booklets have been marked in or torn, agencies should shred these test booklets. If an agency is transitioning to a new test series, CASAS requests that agencies 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 discusses the proper handling and use of test materials.

All testing personnel must sign the **Test Security Policy Agreement** below agreeing to uphold the security policies of the agency, school, or testing entity.

Should CASAS determine that any agency, school, or other testing entity has violated any provision of this test security policy or that 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.

## Test Security Policy 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.

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Signature

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Position/Title

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Date

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Print Name

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Agency Name