



TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
ADULT EDUCATION DIVISION
LOCAL PROGRAM POLICY

ASSESSMENT ADMINISTRATION

Effective Date: May 19, 2025 | Date Issued: May 19, 2025 | Last Version: April 2, 2025

POLICY SUMMARY

- Local AE providers must use TDLWD-approved assessments to measure and report educational gains of students.
- Approved assessments include TABE 11/12, TABE 13/14, and CASAS STEPS.
- Pre-tests establish a student's educational functioning level; a locator or appraisal establishes which pre-test to administer to a student.
- Students must post-test after a period of instruction to measure progress and get level gains; passing an HSE subtest counts as a level gain; the minimum number of instructional hours (and exceptions) depends on the specific assessment and the student's circumstance.
- Students who can demonstrate MSG through options other than pre- and post-testing may be exempted from pre- and post-testing.
- The specific assessment and class assignment for ESL students depends on the student's English proficiency.
- If a student exits the program and returns within six months, a new pre-test is not required.
- Students may take an assessment via remote online proctoring.
- Testing accommodations must be made available for students with disabilities.
- Local staff who administer or score assessments must complete required training.
- Assessments scores must be entered into the data system within 10 business days. TDLWD purchases online TABE and CASAS assessments, and local providers must purchase paper-based testing materials.

REVISIONS SUMMARY

- Updated qualifying period of TABE 11/12 to extend to June 30, 2026.

POLICY

Table of Contents

1. Background	3
2. Assessments Permitted.....	3
3. Pre-Testing.....	4
4. Post-Testing.....	4
5. Pre- and Post-Testing Exceptions	6
6. ESL Students.....	6
7. “Stop-out” Students	6
8. Remote Proctoring.....	7
9. Accommodations	7
10. Training Requirements	8
11. Quality Control & Purchasing.....	8
Appendix.....	10

1. Background

To ensure valid and reliable assessments for measuring student skill gains, Adult Education (AE) providers must only use TDLWD-approved assessments (as established by the U.S. Department of Education’s National Reporting System [NRS]). Accurately obtaining and reporting assessment data is critical for program performance accountability and program development. Local providers must strive to measure the educational gain of all program participants.¹

2. Assessments Permitted

Local providers must use either TABE 11/12, TABE 13/14, or CASAS STEPS (forms 621-630) assessments. The specific assessment and subject to give a student depends on the student’s program of instruction and learning goals.

Assessment	Subject	Student	Qualifying Period
TABE 11/12	Math, Reading, Language	For Adult Basic Education (ABE) and Adult Secondary Education (ASE) students who will focus on math, reading, and/or language (writing)	All scores attained up to June 30, 2026.
TABE 13/14	Math, Reading, Language	For Adult Basic Education (ABE) and Adult Secondary Education (ASE) students who will focus on math, reading, and/or language (writing)	All scores attained since April 1, 2025.
CASAS STEPS	Reading, Listening	For English as a Second Language (ESL) students who will focus on English language acquisition skills (listening and reading)	All scores attained since July 1, 2024.

Students should only be tested in the subjects in which they will receive instruction. Students are *not* required to be tested in multiple subjects.

¹ See [34 CFR Part 462 Subpart D](#).

3. Pre-Testing

Educational Functioning Level (EFL)

A pre-test establishes the student's initial educational functioning level (EFL) and helps determine their instructional needs.² Students must be pre-tested as part of their intake process, ideally within their first 12 program hours. Based on their initial pre-test scores, participants are categorized into one of 12 EFLs: ABE 1-6 or ESL 1-6. See Appendix for score ranges tied to specific EFL. A student who takes a pre-test in multiple subjects is assigned their EFL based on their test subject with the lowest EFL score.

Locator and Appraisal

Prior to the pre-test, a student must take a TABE locator, CASAS locator (computer-based) or appraisal (paper-based), or other TDLWD-approved screening assessment, in the subject(s) the student will pre-test in. Local staff should use these results to determine the appropriate pre-test form to give, as indicated in the respective test administration manuals (note: for computer-based tests, the correct form will be automatically assigned). See Appendix for specific locator or appraisal details, such as the form numbers and number of test items.

4. Post-Testing

EFL Gains

Students are considered program “participants” after attaining 12 program hours. Participants must be post-tested after a period of instruction to measure progress. EFL gains, or “level gains”—a primary performance metric—are achieved by students showing significant gains between pre-test and post-test scores. See Appendix for scores tied to EFL and determining EFL gain. A student who pre-tested in multiple subjects can get an EFL gain in any subject, regardless of which subject they initially scored higher or lower in.

A student can also achieve a level gain by passing an approved high school equivalency subtest. Note: Because TABE is now one of the approved options for earning a high school equivalency diploma, if a student scores a level 4 or higher on a TABE math, reading, or language pre-test, then they get a level gain.

Post-test Rate

Local providers must strive to achieve the target of at least 41% of participants who are pre-tested also receiving a post-test.

² See EFL descriptors in the [NRS Technical Assistance Guide](#).

Pre- and Post-test Pairing

A student's post-test must be paired correctly with their pre-test. The post-test must be from the same publisher (TABE or CASAS) and in the same subject(s) as the pre-test. Students must be given alternate forms or different difficulty levels of the test between iterations of testing (e.g., a student who pre-tests with TABE 13 should post-test with TABE 14 of the same difficulty, or with the next higher difficulty level).

Time Between Tests

Students must receive instruction between iterations of testing. The table below indicates the minimum hours of instruction a student needs in a subject prior to taking a post-test. All subsequent iterations of post-testing must follow this same rule.

Assessment	Minimum Hours Between Tests
TABE (students in ABE EFL 1-4)	40 hours (recommended 50-60 hours)
TABE (students in ABE EFL 5-6)	30 hours (recommended 30-59 hours)
CASAS (all students)	40 hours (recommended 70-100 hours)

Hours Exceptions

There may be instances where a student needs the opportunity to post-test and achieve a level gain prior to receiving the minimum instructional hours. Examples of such circumstances may include if a student is dependent on getting a level gain before they will be admitted into a training program, or if a student needs to leave the program soon and hasn't yet achieved a level gain. In such instances, local providers may grant an exception to the post-test hours requirement. Local providers must follow the requirements outlined below to grant exceptions:

- The student must have received *at least* 12 hours of instruction since their previous test.
- There must be a justifiable need for the exception, such as a pending deadline for admission into a training program.
- The staff have determined that the student is likely to get a level gain based on how much instruction they had, how close they were to getting a gain on a previous test, etc.
- Only the local program director (or designee) may grant an exception, and it must be in writing. Proof of the exception must be kept in the student's records for monitoring purposes.

5. Pre- and Post-Testing Exceptions

Students who are able to demonstrate a measurable skill gain (MSG) through options other than pre- and post-testing may be exempted from pre- and post-testing (e.g., students in an IET or HSE prep program). Local providers are encouraged to still give these students some kind of formative assessments in order to determine skill gaps and instructional needs.

6. ESL Students

CASAS has an intake procedure and oral and written screenings that local staff can use with ESL students to assist with initial testing. See <https://www.casas.org/training-and-support/testing-guidelines/intake-screening>.

In general, very proficient ESL students should be given the TABE pre-test, even if they plan to attend an ESL class. All other students should be given the CASAS pre-test. An ESL student who scores *within* the ESL level 6 range on a CASAS pre-test may get a level gain if they score above the EFL 6 range on the post-test. An ESL student who scores *above* ESL level 6 on a CASAS pre-test is unable to get a level gain, so they must redo their pre-test by taking the TABE. Students who score above ESL level 6 should be assessed with TABE for all subsequent iterations of testing.

An ESL student may transition to receiving ABE instruction at any time, regardless of assessment scores, and without being assessed via a TABE test. The instruction or class that a student is assigned should be based on the professional judgement of staff and the needs of the student.

7. “Stop-out” Students

A student who “stops out” of a program by not attending for a period of six (6) months must be re-assessed with a pre-test if they return to the program, just like a new student. If a student returns *within* six months, then a new pre-test is not required. If the student has “exited” the program due to 90 days with no attendance, then their most recent test scores may be entered into a new application as the pre-test. A case note should be included in the student’s records indicating the actual date of their test.

8. Remote Proctoring

Remote proctoring of TABE and CASAS tests via online video conferencing is allowed. Local providers must adhere to the following requirements for remote test proctoring:

- TABE Online and CASAS eTests must be used (i.e., no paper-based tests).
- The proctor's and student's computers must have functional audio and webcams.
- The proctor should follow the test publisher's guidelines for remote test administration:
 - [TABE Remote Proctoring Guidance](#)
 - [TABE Remote Testing FAQs](#)
 - [Remote Testing for CASAS Tests](#)

9. Accommodations

Testing accommodations must be made available for students with disabilities, including physical, mental, and learning disabilities. Such accommodations should be within reason, and not create "undue hardship" on a local provider.³ Prior to testing, students should be notified that accommodations are available. Accommodations can vary depending on the student's disability and documentation they provide (e.g., local staff can use a student's IEP, doctor's report, or referral from an appropriate agency to determine the appropriate accommodations). If a student is given a testing accommodation, it should be documented in a case note in the student's record.

For a list of possible TABE accommodations and procedures for administering them, see http://tabetest.com/PDFs/TABE_Guidelines_to_Inclusive_Testing_2017.pdf.

For a list of possible CASAS accommodations and procedures for administering them, see <https://www.casas.org/training-and-support/testing-guidelines/accommodations-guidelines>

³ See <https://www.eeoc.gov/policy/docs/accommodation.html>.

10. Training Requirements

All staff who will administer or score TABE or CASAS assessments must first complete required training. First-time training includes two components:

- A. TABE- and/or CASAS-specific training, as follows:
 - i. For TABE, complete TABE *Certification Training* parts 1 & 2⁴
 - ii. For CASAS, complete CASAS Implementation Basics Training and eTests Online Proctor Certification⁵
- B. TDLWD NRS & Assessment Administration Basics⁶

In addition, all staff who administer or score TABE or CASAS assessments must renew completion of the TDLWD *NRS & Assessment Administration Basics* training on an annual basis. This training will be offered virtually periodically throughout the program year, with a full recording available via TDLWD's learning management system.

The TABE and CASAS trainings are offered online by their respective publishers. Upon completing training, staff will automatically receive TABE and/or CASAS certificates through the online interface. Local providers must keep these certificates on file or have some other means for tracking which staff have completed the training. Local providers must keep record of staff who complete *NRS Assessment Administration Basics* training via an internal tracking method or a record of attendance in TDLWD's learning management system.

11. Quality Control & Purchasing

Local staff must enter student assessment scores into the data management system within ten (10) business days after the assessment is administered. For quality control, local staff should regularly review reports from the data management system to see which students do not have an EFL (which means they were not pre-tested) and which students have sufficient hours to take a post-test (and then ensure they will post-test). Program directors (or designees) should regularly observe testing environments to enforce assessment administration rules.

TDLWD purchases everything needed for online TABE and CASAS testing and provides access to the online testing portals to local providers. Local providers are required to purchase paper-based testing materials to meet their needs, including test booklets, answer sheets, pencils, calculators, and scanners.

⁴ Details at <https://tabetest.com/tabe-certification-process/>.

⁵ Details at <http://training.casas.org/>.

⁶ This training is offered online by TDLWD staff, through live webinar or video recording. It covers NRS requirements, data collection and reporting, definitions of measures, and conducting assessments.

GOVERNANCE

Local program directors are responsible for disseminating this policy to their staff members, and for providing staff with associated training, checking for understanding, enforcing compliance, and seeking technical assistance from TDLWD staff as necessary.

To ensure compliance with this policy, TDLWD staff will review student assessment data and post-testing hours exceptions, review TABE and/or CASAS training certificates, observe testing environments, and observe local quality control procedures.

APPENDIX***TABE Locator***

Subtest	Total Items	Testing times
Reading	16	35 minutes
Language	16	20 minutes
Math	16	10 minutes (Part1) 10 minutes (Part2)

TABE 11/12 & 13/14 ABE Scores by EFLs

READING						
	NRS Level 1	NRS Level 2	NRS Level 3	NRS Level 4	NRS Level 5	NRS Level 6
TABE L	300–441	442–500	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
TABE E	310–441	442–500	501–535	n/a	n/a	n/a
TABE M	n/a	442–500	501–535	536–575	n/a	n/a
TABE D	n/a	n/a	501–535	536–575	576–616	n/a
TABE A	n/a	n/a	n/a	536–575	576–616	617–800

MATHEMATICS						
	NRS Level 1	NRS Level 2	NRS Level 3	NRS Level 4	NRS Level 5	NRS Level 6
TABE L	300–448	449–495	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
TABE E	310–448	449–495	496–536	n/a	n/a	n/a
TABE M	n/a	449–495	496–536	537–595	n/a	n/a
TABE D	n/a	n/a	496–536	537–595	596–656	n/a
TABE A	n/a	n/a	n/a	537–595	596–656	657–800

LANGUAGE						
	NRS Level 1	NRS Level 2	NRS Level 3	NRS Level 4	NRS Level 5	NRS Level 6
TABE L	300–457	458–510	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
TABE E	310–457	458–510	511–546	n/a	n/a	n/a
TABE M	n/a	458–510	511–546	547–583	n/a	n/a
TABE D	n/a	n/a	511–546	547–583	584–630	n/a
TABE A	n/a	n/a	n/a	547–583	584–630	631–800

CASAS STEPS Appraisal/Locator

CASAS Level	Form Number	Number of Test Items
Appraisal	619R	28
Locator	620R	14
Appraisal	619L	28
Locator	620L	14

CASAS STEPS ESL Scores by EFLs

NRS Levels	Reading and Listening ESL Educational Functioning Levels	Reading STEPS Score Ranges	Listening STEPS Score Ranges
1	Beginning ESL Literacy	183 and below	181 and below
2	Low Beginning ESL	184 – 196	182 – 191
3	High Beginning ESL	197 – 206	192 – 201
4	Low Intermediate ESL	207 – 216	202 – 211
5	High Intermediate ESL	217 – 227	212 – 221
6	Advanced ESL	228 – 238	222 – 231
	Exit Advanced ESL	239 and above	232 and above

CASAS Life & Work Appraisal

Form Number	Subject	Number of Test Items
80	Reading	25
80	Listening	26

CASAS Life & Work ESL Scores by EFLs

NRS Levels	Reading and Listening ESL Educational Functioning Levels	Life and Work Reading Score Ranges	Life and Work Listening Score Ranges
1	Beginning ESL Literacy	180 and below	180 and below
2	Low Beginning ESL	181 - 190	181 – 189
3	High Beginning ESL	191 – 200	190 – 199
4	Low Intermediate ESL	201 – 210	200 – 209
5	High Intermediate ESL	211 – 220	210 – 218
6	Advanced ESL	221 – 235	219 – 227
	Exit Advanced ESL	236 and above	228 and above