

**Connecticut Competency System (CCS)
Adult Education
Assessment Policies and Guidelines**

Fiscal Year 2024-2025



**CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	1
Overview	1
The CASAS System	2
The Assessment Process: Setting Goals, Guiding Instruction, and Measuring Progress	3
Training Requirements.....	7
Materials Ordering and Assessment Security	8
TESTING REQUIREMENTS	9
ABE/GED	9
ESL and Citizenship.....	9
Credit Diploma Program (CDP) and National External Diploma Program (NEDP).....	10
Connecticut Distance Learning Policy	11
Fiscal Year 2025 Testing Schedule.....	12
Test Selection and Standards Error of Measurement.....	13
Test for Learners with Special Needs	13
Exemptions	14
Assessment for Literacy Volunteer Programs	14
RESOURCES	15
Remote Testing	15
Testing Accommodations for Persons with Disabilities	17
CCS Available Test Charts	20
Scale Score Ranges of Available Tests	21
Suggested Next Assigned Test Chart.....	24
NRS Educational Functioning Level Descriptors for ABE and ASE.....	25
NRS Educational Functioning Level Descriptors for ESL	29
Barriers to Employment Definitions	34
NEDP Dates.....	36
Glossary	36
Expectations for CCS Program Facilitators.....	38
References	39
Assessment Administration and Security Agreement: July 2024 - June 2025	40
Data Entry Timelines	41
Data Validation	42

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INTRODUCTION

This document outlines the assessment policies and guidelines of the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) for all adult education programs and is designed to comply with federal and state accountability requirements. The CSDE collects information that will help educators inform instruction, monitor progress, and demonstrate program performance.

Overview

A learner is assessed at critical times during the educational process to:

1. Help the learner to understand their strengths and deficiencies and explore available educational options;
2. Determine the appropriate program and instructional level for placement;
3. Establish the learner's baseline skill level at the start of class;
4. Identify learners' strengths and gaps so as to inform instruction;
5. Monitor student learning in class and target instruction based on the learner's evolving needs;
6. Monitor skill gain after a period of instruction;
7. Examine classroom and program performance for planning and improvement purposes;
8. Promote program successes in the community;
9. Evaluate the performance of programs across the state and,
10. Report data for state and federal accountability.

To that end, programs funded by the Connecticut State Department of Education's Academic Office are required to utilize standardized assessments developed by the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems (CASAS) and encouraged to supplement their use with informal assessments. The CSDE prescribes the use of CASAS because:

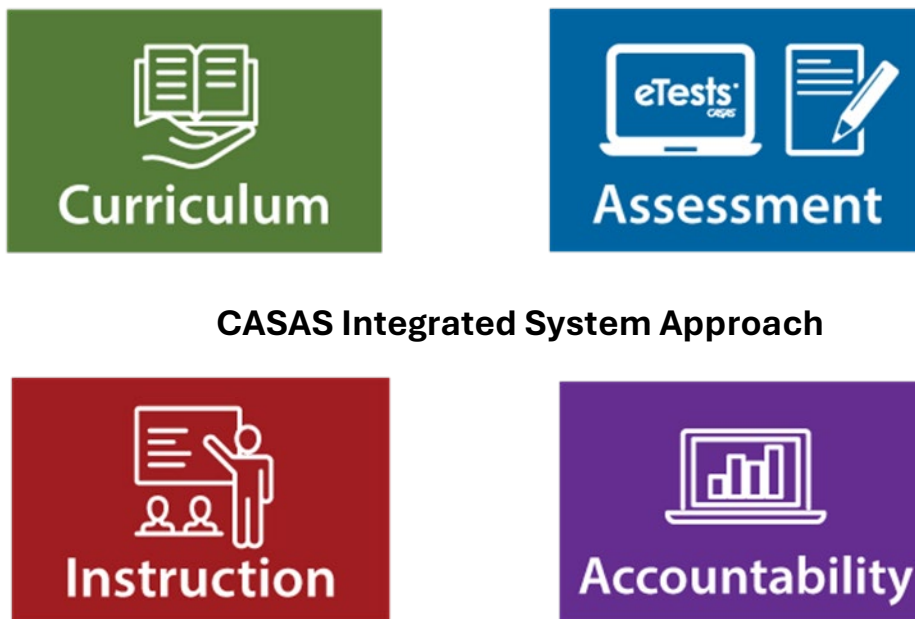
- It is a comprehensive system that connects curriculum, assessment, and instruction. It is much more than a test. The results from assessment directly inform instruction;
- The CASAS curriculum framework is based on competencies and content standards that youth and adults need to function effectively in society;
- CASAS assessments measure an individual's ability to apply basic literacy, numeracy and communication skills to perform the competencies. An overall improvement in literacy ability, and not just gain within one facet of a basic skill, is expected;
- CASAS assessments yield valid and reliable results and most are approved for reporting progress through the federal National Reporting System (NRS) educational functioning levels
- It offers selected response, constructed response, and performance-based assessment options for native and non-native speakers in modalities including reading, math and listening;
- It serves as the common assessment framework for providers funded through the adult education system and the workforce development system; and
- CASAS' consortium approach offers training and support to member states and provides practitioners with opportunities for involvement in the test development process.

Connecticut's implementation of the CASAS system which includes the available tests, relevant policies, and professional development is referred to as the Connecticut Competency System (CCS). Detailed policies and guidelines relative to data collection and reporting are outlined in the LACES manual.

The CASAS System

CASAS is more than a series of assessments; it is a system (Figure 1) that links Curriculum (the competencies and Basic Skills Content Standards), Assessment (the available tests), Instruction (e.g. the Quick Search software) and Accountability (TOPSpro Enterprise software- student, class and agency level reports).

Figure 1: The CASAS System: An Integrated Approach to Curriculum Competencies and Content Standards, Assessment and Instruction



The CASAS competencies form the basis of this integrated system and identify more than 360 essential skills that youth and adults need in order to function effectively in the family, community and workplace. They have been developed and validated at the state and national levels through field research and recommendations from education providers, learners, business and industry representatives and community-based agencies (Connecticut State Department of Education, 1997; CASAS, 1997; Indiana Department of Education 1996; California Department of Education, 1999). They are correlated to the College and Career Readiness Standards, (CCRS), the English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS), the National External Diploma Program (NEDP) competencies, and the California English as a Second Language (ESL) Model Standards.

CASAS assessments measure the basic skills of reading, math, listening, and speaking through priority competencies critical to youth and adult success in different contexts. 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). These assessments yield valid and reliable results. They are valid because they assess what they are intended to assess. CASAS uses the most current researched and recommended methodology in educational measurement practice – Item Response Theory (IRT) – to establish indices of the item bank, test, and test score reliability (Hambleton, Swaminathan, and Rogers, 1991). The CASAS Technical Manual – Third Edition 2004 (CTM) (Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems, 2005) contains detailed information about test validity and reliability.

CASAS created Adult Basic Education (ABE) Skill Level Descriptors (reading, math, and employability skills) to show a continuum of skills from beginning ABE through advanced adult secondary levels. CASAS also created ESL Skill Level Descriptors (listening, reading, 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 a person can generally accomplish. The CASAS Skill Level Descriptors for ABE and ESL were reviewed by the U.S. Department of Education during the development of the NRS Educational Functioning Level Descriptors (see Resources section). Once the NRS levels were finalized, CASAS conducted a review and confirmed that the CASAS Skill Level Descriptors aligned with the skill levels of the NRS.

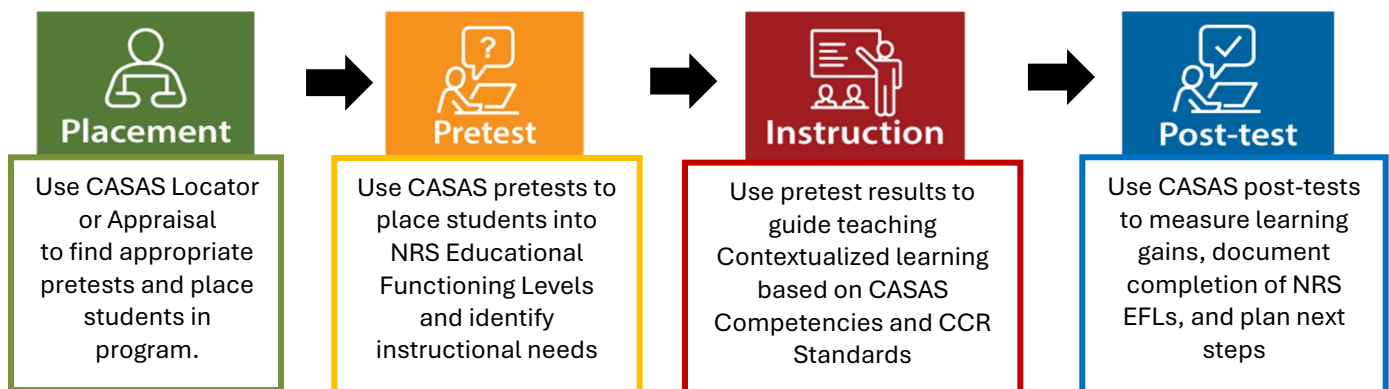
Results from CASAS assessments are reported in scale scores that clearly define the basic skills along a fixed continuum of difficulty, with each score representing gradations of difficulty in a person's proficiency. This scale has been used with more than 3,000,000 youth and adult learners. Unlike grade level equivalent scores that norm adult performances to an ever-changing comparison group of school-age children, CASAS scale scores compare adult performance to a defined set of skills that are critical to the effective functioning of adults in various contexts. The CASAS scale is divided into five broad levels: A (beginning literacy) to E (advanced secondary), each encompassing a range of scores. Levels A and B have been further subdivided to guide instructional placement and to monitor learner progress.

The [QuickSearch](#) software cross-references the CASAS competencies to more than 2,300 commercially published print, audio, visual, and computer-related instructional materials appropriate for use with adults or youth. Profiles on individual and class performance that identify strengths and gaps offer valuable assessment information to target instruction.

The Assessment Process: Setting Goals, Guiding Instruction, and Measuring Progress

Different CASAS standardized assessments are used at various points in the educational cycle (Figure 2). *Appraisal* tests provide an initial screening of a learner’s basic skill abilities. *Pre-tests* inform instruction by conducting a learning needs assessment and identifying strengths and weaknesses. Pre-tests also establish the baseline ability level for a learner in a skill area. Post-tests are administered after an instructional intervention to monitor progress from the baseline and to plan the next steps.

Figure 2: The Assessment Process



Adult learners often function at widely varying levels of basic skill ability. Therefore, each learner who is new to adult education is required to take an appraisal (placement) test at program entry. CASAS appraisal tests gauge a learner's reading, math, and/or listening skills. They are broad tests that span a wide spectrum of the CASAS scale.

For programs using CASAS eTests, the computer adaptive test (CAT) locator that is included within eTests can serve as the "appraisal" for the purposes of pre-test selection. This locator score, however, is not reported in LACES.

Unlike appraisal tests, CASAS standardized progress (pre-and post) tests are more stringent and constructed at increasing difficulty levels that range from below Level A (literacy) through Level D (secondary). Tests at each of these levels span narrower spectrums on the CASAS scale. Each level has alternate test forms that are parallel in content and difficulty. Pre- and post-tests are designed to assess learning gains in the skill areas from pre- to post-instruction (Figure 2) along a continuum from beginning literacy and English language acquisition through completion of secondary-level skills. In order to facilitate learner progress along this continuum, the difficulty spectrum of the tests at a level (e.g. Reading Forms 621R/622R (STEPS) at Level A) overlaps with that of the tests at the next higher level (e.g. Reading Forms 623R/624R (STEPS) at Level B).

The results of the appraisal should be used in conjunction with the **Next Assigned Test (NAT) Chart** (found in the Test Administration Manual of each Test Series) to determine the appropriate difficulty level of the pre-test to be administered. The pre-test is administered before any substantial instruction has occurred. The scale score results of both the appraisal and the pre-test determine class placement and guide the selection of short and long-term instructional goals. Inappropriate placement may cause learners to become frustrated or bored and leave the program. Establishing short-term goals based on the learners' entry-level abilities enables them to document interim successes and stay motivated to pursue their long-term goals (Comings, Parrella, and Soricone, 1999). It is strongly recommended that an instructor/intake person counsel the learner during the goal-setting process. Staff are encouraged to consider not only the learners' appraisal and pre-test scores but also their experiences, abilities, and interests.

Returning learners do not need to be Appraisal tested except when they return after a significant period i.e. one year. The provision that allows programs to exempt learners from appraisal testing should be used sparingly. **If a learner is exempt from Appraisal at program entry, they still require a pre-test. For agencies conducting eTesting, they may use the Locator in lieu of the appraisal, and pre-test students immediately using the Next Assigned Test assigned by CASAS.**

Pre- and post-tests are available in different series that vary primarily in contextual focus. (for example, academic language and higher-order reading skills versus general life and work skills).

Only those series that are in bold may be used for the federal NRS:

- 1. Reading - Reading STEPS (ESL only);**
- 2. Listening - Listening STEPS (ESL only);**
- 3. Reading – Reading GOALS 900 Series (ABE/ASE only); and**
- 4. Math- Math GOALS 2 (ABE/ASE Only).**

Programs are required to select the test series that responds to the federal NRS but may also select other series based on learner goals and the instructional focus of the program (Table 1).

Table 1: Test Series by Program

Adult Basic Education (ABE) | General Educational Development (GED) | National External Diploma Program (NEDP) | Credit Diploma Program (CDP)

Modality	Test Series	Forms	NRS Approval Through February 5, 2025	NRS Approval Through July, 2030
Reading	Reading GOALS	901R–908R	✓	
Math	Math GOALS 2	921M–930M		✓

English Language Learners (ESL)

Modality	Test Series	Forms	NRS Approval Through July, 2030
Reading	Reading STEPS	621R–630R	✓
Listening	Listening STEPS	621L–630L	✓

The **CCS Available Tests Chart** in the Resources section lists the specific test forms in reading, math and listening that are available within each test series at the various functioning levels.

From the results of pre-testing, individual and summary reports are created to identify competencies and standards for beginning instruction. For the purposes of NRS reporting and accountability, the pre-test scale score is used to place learners into an NRS educational functioning level (DAEL, 2005). Tables 2A and 2B illustrate the relationship between CASAS scale score ranges and the NRS levels. Descriptors of learner abilities at these levels are available in the Resources section of this manual.

Table 2A: The Relationship of CASAS Scale Score to NRS Levels for ABE and Adult Secondary Education (ASE)

Entering Educational Functioning Level	Reading GOALS 900 Series Scale Scores Ranges
1. Beginning ABE Literacy	203 and below
2. Beginning Basic Education	204-216
3. Low Intermediate Basic Education	217-227
4. High Intermediate Basic Education	228-238
5. Low Adult Secondary Education	239-248
6. High Adult Secondary Education	249 and above
NRS Mathematics Educational Functioning Levels	Math GOALS 2 Scale Score Ranges
1. Beginning ABE Literacy	192 and below
2. Beginning Basic Education	193-203
3. Low Intermediate Basic Education	204-213
4. Middle Intermediate Basic Education	214-224
5. High Intermediate Basic Education	225-235
6. Adult Secondary Education	236 and above

Table 2B: The Relationship of CASAS Scale Score to NRS Levels for ESL

NRS Entering Educational Functioning Level	Reading STEPS Scale Score Ranges	Listening STEPS Scale 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 Advance ESL)	239 and above	232 and above

*Estimated score below the accurate range

After substantial instructional intervention, a post-test is administered in the same skill area as the pre-test. The results of the pre-test should be used in conjunction with the **NAT Chart** (see TAM Manual for each test series) to determine the appropriate difficulty level of the post-test to be administered. To ensure the alignment of assessment to instruction, an alternate test form within the same test series (e.g., Reading GOALS, Reading STEPS, Listening STEPS, Math GOALS 2, or) is recommended for post-testing. Learning gains from pre- to post-test are documented in LACES.

The CASAS benchmark test scores (the highest number in each scale score range) are used to identify the learners who complete a level based on matched pair test scores. The post-test results are used to plan the next steps for the learner (e.g., register for the GED test, and be placed into a higher-level class).

The combination of scores on a pre-and a post-test constitutes a matched pair. The first test in each skill area (reading, math, and listening) in a fiscal year is the pre-test. Each subsequent test becomes a post-test to that pre-test. For a matched pair to be valid:

- the post-test must be in the same skill area as the pre-test (ex. Reading & reading);
- the form number of each subsequent test must be different from that of the last test;
- the test must be within the same series; and
- the tests must be on the same level or be only one level higher or one level lower.

Programs are encouraged to supplement the use of standardized assessments with informal assessments such as teacher-made tests, portfolios, unit tests, applied performance assessments, learner observations, etc. to inform instruction on a regular, ongoing basis.

Programs can maximize the benefits of the CASAS system and make the assessment process meaningful to the learner by:

- Explaining the purpose of the assessments and the ensuing results to the learner;
- Using the tools such as the class profile, the reading and math task areas, the listening test item types and the individual profile to inform instruction;
- Utilizing competency-based instructional approaches, authentic materials, and contextualized curricula (Condelli, 2002; Jurmo, 2004; Purcell-Gates, Degener, Jacobson, and Soler, 2002; Sticht, 1997); and
- Reviewing the curriculum periodically and updating materials and resources.

Training Requirements

CCS Training is required to ensure the accurate use of tests and the appropriate interpretation of learner results and to maintain the integrity and quality of the assessment process. All training relative to CCS is provided through the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) and through Online Self-Paced Modules offered by [CASAS](#). Training for administering assessments includes the following topics: NRS policy; accountability policies with the data collection process; definitions of measures; and conducting assessments.

To administer CASAS reading, math, and listening tests, adult education programs must ensure that a **CCS Program Facilitator** is on staff or actively pursuing Facilitator status. The Director's designee becomes a Facilitator by completing the Online Self-Paced Modules offered by CASAS (Module 1: CASAS Implementation Basics; Module 2: CASAS eTests Implementation; Module 3: CASAS Paper Test Implementation) and the

“Connecticut Competency System for New Program Facilitators and New Directors” session offered by the SDE in cooperation with ATDN. The Program Facilitator performs **critical functions** that ensure the comprehensive and high-quality implementation of the CASAS system (CSDE, 1993). **The Program Facilitator maintains certification by attending the Statewide Annual Meeting and completing refresher training offered by CASAS every two years and submitting new Certificates of Completion to ATDN.**

The CSDE requires that local programs follow the test administration guidelines in each Test Administration Manual (TAM) published by CASAS for each test series used. TAMs provide quality control guidelines to ensure proper test utilization, administration, scoring, and results interpretation. Each local program is expected to maintain copies of the most current TAMs onsite for all the assessments used.

Materials Ordering and Assessment Security

CCS materials should be ordered from CASAS. Please visit www.casas.org/product-overviews to download the catalog and order form. Please note that only those test forms listed on the **CCS Available Tests Chart** in the Resources section of this manual can be reported in LACES.

To order CCS materials from CASAS, each program must maintain a Program Facilitator. Administering the assessments according to the standardized protocols and maintaining the security of the test materials are critical aspects of CCS implementation. The **Assessment Administration and Security Agreement** on the last page of this policy manual outlines the requirements relative to the secure storage and handling of all CCS materials. Each program must have a signed **Assessment Administration and Security Agreement** on file with the CSDE’s professional development vendor. These agreements are renewed each year.

It is prohibited for an individual, school, program, or other agency to develop any workshop, training, or instructional session or create any materials designed to teach or prepare learners to answer specific test questions that appear on any CASAS test. It is not permissible for teachers to review specific test items with learners in discussing test results or include actual test items in any instructional materials. Sample test items which are approved for classroom use are available at <https://www.casas.org/product-overviews/curriculum-management-instruction/sample-test-items>. Teachers should focus on the competencies, the basic skill content standards, the reading and math task areas, and the listening item types to prepare learners.

If the Bureau funding ceases or if a particular series is retired or no longer used for state purposes, all CASAS assessments must be returned to the CSDE.

TESTING REQUIREMENTS ABE/ASE

All new learners must receive a reading and math appraisal test or locator. The results of the appraisal should be used in conjunction with the **Next Assigned Test (NAT) Chart** (see the TAM (Test Administration Manual for each test series) to determine the appropriate difficulty level of the pre-test to be administered. The pre-test should be administered before any substantial instruction has occurred. If the post-test for a learner who is returning from a prior fiscal year was administered before April 1 , then the returning learner **must** be pre-tested at entry in the current fiscal year. All ABE/ASE learners must be pre- and post-tested in **one or both** of the following skill areas:

- Reading; or
- Math.

Providers must test and report on the skill area most relevant to the learners' needs and to the program's curriculum.

Learners enrolled in online GED preparation classes must also be pre- and post-tested onsite at the local program in accordance with these policies.

Providers should utilize scale scores >238 in reading and >225 in math on CASAS progress tests as minimum requirements for placement into a GED preparation program (CSDE, g2008). Learners scoring below these thresholds will need remediation before being ready to benefit fully from secondary-level instruction.

ESL and Citizenship

All new learners should be administered the short oral interview that is included in the [CASAS Intake Screening Process](#) to screen for survival-level language ability.

Learners who do not score at least 6 on the oral interview can be referred directly to ESL classes. After enrollment, pre-post testing should be administered. In addition to listening pre-and post-tests, programs should also administer pre-post tests in reading to ensure compliance with federal obligations. New ESL learners, who score 6 or more on the oral interview, should be administered the Listening and/or the Reading Appraisal or Locator. New learners who will be pre-tested with the Listening STEPS assessments must be tested with the Form 619 listening appraisal or 620L Locator. Administration of the writing component of the ESL appraisal is encouraged (this writing component can be found on the [CASAS Intake Screening Process](#) Booklet).

The results of the appraisal should be used in conjunction with the **NAT Chart** (see the Test Administration Manual (TAM) for each test series) to determine the appropriate difficulty level of the pre-test to be administered. The pre-test should be administered before any substantial instruction has occurred. If the post-test for a learner returning from a prior fiscal year was administered more than 90 days ago, then the returning learner must be pre-tested at entry in the current fiscal year.

From the skill areas listed below, all learners in **ESL and Citizenship classes must be pre- and post-tested, for federal reporting purposes in one or both** of the following skill areas:

- Reading; or
- Listening.

Providers must test and report on the skill area most relevant to the learners' needs and to the program's curriculum.

Learners in Citizenship programs are included in federal and state reporting. Programs may pre- and post-test learners in Citizenship programs using assessments from the **Available Tests Chart** in the Resources section. Pre- and post-testing can provide meaningful progress information to learners and teachers while also improving the program's overall performance.

NOTE: All adult education providers should use assessments best suited for the student's needs. For example, any individual who enrolls as an ESL student but tests as "completed level 6" upon entry should take an ABE/ASE assessment since their English language proficiency skills are more advanced and beyond the levels assessed on ESL tests. The student may be appropriately placed in an ABE program and their progress measured with ABE/ASE assessments.

Credit Diploma Program (CDP)

The Credit Diploma Program (CDP) utilizes credits earned and diplomas attained as measures of learner progress. All new learners should receive a reading and math appraisal or locator and a pre-test. The results from this administration can be used to guide learner placement and goal-setting. Additionally, some providers are voluntarily incorporating elements of the CASAS system within the CDP to:

- integrate life and work competencies within the curriculum;
- measure basic skill progress; and
- satisfy basic skill competency standards for graduation.

Students who enter with less than 11 credits at entry are considered ABE level 5. If students have 11 or more credits on entry, they are considered ABE level 6. Students may also advance from ABE L5 to ABE L6 after achieving enough credits. Students who entered at ABE L5 may advance to ABE L6 after achieving enough Carnegie credits.

National External Diploma Program (NEDP)

The NEDP utilizes competency areas completed and diplomas attained as measures of learner progress. Learners who seek to enter NEDP should meet the CASAS requirements for entry, which means that a student must have an initial assessment at the time of entry:

- Reading GOALS - 236 scaled score (ABE L4)
- Math GOALS 2 - 226 scaled score (ABE L5) in a Test level D (927M-928M) or E (929M-930M)

- ❖ Students who assess at ABE L5 in the Diagnostic Phase may advance to ABE L6 by entering the NEDP Assessment phase. The dates the student entered each phase are entered at the Student Education tab in LACES
- ❖ NEDP Diagnostic Phase and NEDP Assessment Phase dates are both captured in the FY summary. The FY summary also captures the student's exit level.
- ❖ Students who continue from a previous FY in the Diagnostic or Assessment phase will be placed at the appropriate EFL based on the **exit level in the previous FY summary**; an assessment is not required in the current FY.
- ❖ Current FY students who begin a new PoP in the NEDP Diagnostic or Assessment phase will be placed at the appropriate EFL based on the exit level of the previous PoP.
- ❖ Once the student has earned the **NEDP Diploma**, levels will not populate in the next PoP or FY if the student continues or re-enrolls; the student must be reassessed.
- ❖ Students who show a level gain by entering the assessment phase will count on Table 4 as completing a level (if the student is NRS reportable). CASAS GOALS 900 Series Level C or D Reading Forms -907R-908R and Math GOALS 2 Series Level D and E Math Forms 927M-928M and 929M-930M.

Connecticut Distance Learning Policy

Hours attended by all students can be either In-Person, Verifiable (Instruction) Time or Instruction-Distance Learning (Proxy). Verifiable (Instruction) hours represent the actual contact hours of onsite attendance at a program site. These hours should be reported by selecting “Instruction” hour type through the attendance. In addition to verifiable hours, proxy hours should also be reported. Proxy hours represent the time spent by the learner that can only be verified through student activity and work in the online course that are over and above the verifiable hours. Proxy hours should be reported through the Instruction- Distance Learning (Proxy) option in the attendance screen. A learner who enrolls only in virtual courses must reflect at least 12 verifiable (Instruction) attendance hours in one enrollment to be considered as having been retained for 12 hours.

Attendance hours, both verifiable and proxy, for Credit Diploma Program Courses taken virtually should be reported as described below:

- If a learner attains the requisite credit in a course section as verified by the teacher, the program should report total attendance hours that equals the hours required to earn that credit within the program. These total attendance hours should be split between proxy hours *and* verifiable monthly attendance hours as appropriate.
- If a learner does not attain any credit, the program must report the **verifiable** monthly attendance hours. In addition to the **verifiable** hours, the teacher/mentor may assign **proxy** hours based on the extent to which the learner engaged in, or completed, that module as evidenced by the percentage of points earned within that course.

Fiscal Year 2025 Testing Schedule

A learner should be pre-tested as soon as possible upon entry and before any substantial instructional intervention has occurred. Connecticut's Goal for Students 12 + hrs. with a Pre-test is 90%. Providers should administer post-tests, using an alternate form in the same skill area, at the end of a semester, term, quarter, or other substantial block of instruction to document learning gains.

CASAS recommends post-testing after approximately 70-100 hours of instruction. However:

- 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, should 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 the collection of paired test data. However, post-testing should not occur before 40 hours of instruction. Although there can be exceptions to these guidelines, they should be just that- exceptions. Exceptions must be documented and should not be more than 10% of the provider's total enrollment. Examples of exceptions may include if the provider is aware that the student is moving, or if the student is traveling back to their country of origin for an unspecified amount of time. Even if there is an exception, the NRS guidelines typically recommend that a minimum of 30 hours should be earned between assessments.

Learners enrolled in courses offered virtually must also be assessed in accordance with the policies outlined in this manual. Proxy attendance hours should be included when considering whether a learner has attended sufficient instructional hours to be administered a post-test.

A post-test is reliable for up to 90 days if no significant instructional intervention has occurred in the interim. Therefore, if the post-test for a learner who is returning from a prior fiscal year was administered more than 90 days ago, the returning learner must be pre-tested at entry in the current fiscal year.

Remember: Only the test forms in **bold** found on page 20 may be used for federal NRS.

Test Selection and Standard Error of Measurement

The **Next Assigned Test** (NAT) Chart, found in the Test Administration Manual for each test series skill area, should be used, in conjunction with the scale score from a previous CASAS test administration, as a general guideline for selecting the CASAS pre-and/or post-test in each skill area. These charts recommend a specific next test for each scale score on every test form. Some error in measurement is always a consideration in the interpretation of a learner's test score. In the CASAS system, for each scale score attained on a CASAS test, a standard error of measurement (SEM) is provided. A scaled score with a lower SEM is more reliable than one with a higher SEM. CASAS has also established a range of accuracy for each test form in the Resources section). The SEM is typically the lowest for scale scores in the *middle* of the accuracy range of a test. Scale scores that exceed the accurate range have higher than acceptable SEM values. For each scale score above the accurate range, CASAS provides a usable, conservative scale score estimate.

Providers have two options for learners who score above the accurate range on a pre-test:

1. The provider may disregard that score and administer the next higher-level test immediately. This is recommended. By using the appropriate level pre-test, a more valid baseline score is established. The pre-test results can inform instruction and the post-test will be administered at the same level as the pre-test. In this case, only the score from the higher-level test should be entered into LACES.
2. Providers may accept the conservative scale score estimate bearing in mind that this score may not be the most reliable measurement. When the learner is post-tested, the next level test should be administered. Instruction between pre- and post-tests should focus on the standards that will be assessed on the post-test.

Please note that CASAS does not provide scale scores for raw scores that fall below the accurate range. Learners who score below the accurate range must be retested at the next lower level. In light of this, it is extremely important to utilize the NAT chart(s) to select the next test to be administered. This will enable providers to place learners accurately and monitor their progress effectively. Learners will also benefit from receiving challenging instruction and assessments that should accelerate their progress through the adult education system.

Tests for Learners with Special Needs

Adult Life Skills Tests (2A-5A) tests are designed for individuals with intellectual disabilities and are administered one-on-one. They assess reading and listening proficiency in a life skill context across the CASAS content areas. There are pre-post tests for four levels (2A, 3A, 4A, and 5A). Level 2A is the most difficult level and provides a transition into CASAS Levels Pre-A and A. The tests cover the range of the CASAS Scale from 117-196.

Exemptions

Learners who have been exempted from appraisal testing may also be temporarily exempted from pre/post-testing. However, according to Federal policies, **all participants with 12 or more hours must be included in calculating the percentage of learners completing a level.** Therefore, programs are urged to use discretion when exempting learners from testing and are reminded to use the [CASAS Intake Screening Process](#) to screen for survival-level language ability.

The provision that allows programs to exempt learners from testing should be used very sparingly, and only in cases of extreme hardship. It is meant to be a temporary exemption. It is the responsibility of the program to maintain documentation on file for exemption status. When a learner attains a sufficient level of proficiency, programs should begin the pre-post-test cycle.

Assessment for Literacy Volunteer Programs

The use of CCS Appraisal Tests for ABE and ESL learners in Literacy Volunteer programs is optional. **However, the use of CCS pre-post-tests is a requirement in order to receive Department of Education state or federal funds.**

Programs funded under the Department of Education require that classroom instructors have appropriate certification. Because the Department recognizes some benefits to instruction involving more than one learner, its official policy is to allow small group instruction (restricted to a maximum of four learners) by LV tutors. Any LV tutor exceeding the maximum number of participants must meet the State of Connecticut certification regulations required of all other adult education programs.

RESOURCES

Remote Testing

Remote testing provides Adult Education providers with an option to determine both the skill needs and placement of students, as well as support performance reporting under the NRS.

Remote testing requires changes to most aspects of test delivery and an increased need for test security and protection of personally identifiable information. All certified test proctors are required to be trained on remote testing procedures, and technological equipment and related supplies necessary for testing compliance are purchased and put in place.

Remote testing provides access for providers to report performance. Adult Education may also use remote testing if students are not comfortable being assessed in person.

- Agencies should assess with an NRS-approved assessment which should then be used to determine a valid placement EFL
- Students can make a Measurable Skills Gain (MSG) by attaining a secondary school diploma or recognized equivalent or enrolling in Postsecondary Education or Training with only a program-determined EFL

A non-NRS Approved Test is a test that is not approved for performance accountability under the NRS, such as, but not limited to, the CASAS Reading Level Indicator, GED Ready® Official Practice Tests, and tests included in commercial learning software programs. Grantees and providers may administer these tests to individuals enrolling in the adult education program during the pandemic period as part of staff-determined eligibility, class placement, and instructional support.

Staff-Determined Eligibility is eligibility that is not determined using a placement score on an NRS-approved test, but the staff is still required to determine whether the individual requesting services:

- is basic skills deficient;
- lacks a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent and has not achieved an equivalent level of education; or
- is an English language learner, defined as someone who:
 - has limited ability in reading, writing, speaking, or comprehending the English language; and
 - whose native language is a language other than English; or
 - who lives in a family or community environment where a language other than English is the dominant language.

All participants must be reported under adult education performance accountability, regardless of whether an NRS-approved pretest is administered. Non-NRS-approved tests cannot be used toward adult education performance measures.

Using Other MSGs: Adult education providers must be aware that other methods are available for participants to earn a basic education MSG other than the achievement of the pre-test/post-test MSG (Type 1a). These include the following:

- Awarding Carnegie Units or credits in an adult high school program (enough to move to 11th- or 12th-grade status according to state rule) (Type 1b)
- Postsecondary Enrollment after Exit (Type 1c)
- HSE Achievement MSG (Type 2)
- Secondary or Post-Secondary Transcript (Type 3)
- Progress Toward Milestones (Type 4)
- Passing an occupational exam or progress toward attaining occupational skills identified by trade-related benchmarks for specific occupations (Type 5)

Reasonable Attempt: Adult Education providers must make every reasonable attempt to resume NRS-approved testing as test publishers release remote testing guidelines or Connecticut communities begin to transition out of stay-at-home restrictions and on-site testing resumes. Using a staff-determined eligibility process, providers should administer an NRS-approved pretest in accordance with the CT assessment policy as soon as feasible for all students enrolled. CSDE recognizes that remote testing or on-site testing implemented with social distancing protections may initially be difficult for providers to accomplish for current participants and new students.

Remote Testing Procedures: Adult Education providers must implement remote testing following procedures that align with the test publisher's guidelines, including the following:

- Pre-Screening and Test Orientation: The provider has a pre-screening and test orientation procedure to do the following:
 - Ensure that the test taker has access to an adequate computer, iPad, or similar items and necessary software at home and/or broadband access to meet test-publisher remote testing requirements.
 - Provide advance planning with test takers to respond to audio, video, or other technical problems as well as control for unexpected disruptions.
 - Verify the identity of the test taker.
 - Orient the test taker to the remote testing process and expectations. If applicable, also allow time for individuals to practice using equipment in accordance with the test requirements and answer practice test questions with the proctor before entering the testing room session.
 - Explain to the test taker what steps are necessary to ensure a secure testing environment and that the remote testing process should not be interrupted or otherwise jeopardized.
- Test Security: The testing environment is properly secured.
- Proctor Compliance: The remote testing proctor meets the proctor qualifications and professional development requirements to properly administer the test.
- Administration Compliance: The proctor follows the unique remote testing requirements as specified by the test publisher.
- Retesting: The program has a procedure for retesting if remote administration of the test is interrupted or otherwise jeopardized.

Testing Accommodations for Persons with Disabilities

Source: Guidelines for Providing Accommodations Using CASAS Assessment for Learners with Disabilities.
(May 2016).

Purpose

The accountability standards in the 2014 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) include the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998. WIOA, effective July 2015, focuses on learners most in need, such as learners with a low level of literacy skills, English language learners, and those with disabilities. Other legislation addresses provisions related to testing accommodations for learners with disabilities, including the ADA Amendments of 2008, Section 504 in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004.

These laws ensure equal access for all learners in education programs, including learners with disabilities. Accommodations provide an opportunity for all test takers to demonstrate their skills and ability. The accommodations may alter test administration procedures without changing what the test is intended to measure. The following guidelines address methods for administering CASAS assessments using accommodations for learners with documented disabilities.

The suggested accommodations for disability categories consist of the provisions below:

1. Accommodations in test administration procedures
2. Use of appropriate CASAS test forms
3. Providing accommodations for written components

Local Agency Responsibility

Local test administrators must consider the individual needs of the learner when they provide accommodations. The responsibility of fulfilling learner requests for accommodations is that of the local agency following state guidelines, not of CASAS. However, CASAS will work with state and local agencies to develop additional tests that are in a format reflecting the manner in which learners acquire and report information needed to function in everyday life

Local agencies are responsible for providing fully accessible services and have the responsibility to ensure that these services meet reasonable criteria. The local program needs to establish a simple process for making accommodations available to learners with disabilities. All local programs should have a Disability Contact Person through whom requests for accommodations are processed. In addition, the agency administering the test must provide any necessary accommodations at no cost to the learner. Costs are negligible for most of the common accommodations that learners will request. The agency may wish to contact the district or state rehabilitative or health and human welfare agencies for diagnostic services such as for learning disabilities. Local agency, district, and state accountability data collection systems should include CASAS test results for learners with disabilities. However, all public reports of test results must follow confidentiality laws and report scores without reference to the name,

address, or Social Security number of the learner. Local and state agencies may also want to collect accountability data on which and how many accommodations or alternate test forms are provided during test administration for program improvement purposes.

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 with appropriate documentation. The information could come from a doctor's report, a diagnostic assessment from a certified professional, and other clinical records. Adult agencies can often contact the local division of vocational rehabilitation or a secondary school to request documentation of a disability. The documentation must show that the disability interferes with the learner's ability to demonstrate performance on the test.

Local agencies should provide the same accommodations when they administer CASAS assessment as they do for the learner during instruction and as documented in annual plans such as individual education plans. For example, if the learner acquires information and receives instruction with the assistance of a sign language interpreter, then an interpreter is also necessary to provide directions for standardized testing. However, interpreters do not sign the test questions themselves because the purpose of the assessment is to determine the level of basic reading literacy skills. It is important that a learner practice using the appropriate accommodation during instruction before using the accommodation during the assessment. Also, it is important to ask learners what accommodations will work best in their situation.

CASAS has a variety of standardized performance-based assessment instruments to use with learners who do not demonstrate their skills well on multiple-choice tests. Standardized performance-based instruments are available for special purposes such as demonstration of speaking skills and functional life skills for adults who have intellectual disabilities.

1. Accommodations in Test Administration Procedures

Local test administrators may provide or allow some accommodations in test administration procedures or environment for documented disabilities without contacting CASAS. Test administrators often use these same strategies as test-taking strategies for other learners who do not have documented disabilities. Students may request to take only one test per day or to test in an alternate quiet room. Learners may also use a variety of strategies when they take a test, such as a plain straight-edge ruler, magnifying strips or glass, colored overlays, ear plugs, and other devices as deemed appropriate.

Sample accommodations in test administration procedures or environment are shown in Table 3. Examples of these accommodations are extended time, supervised breaks, or a sign language interpreter for test administration directions only. The accommodations listed are suggestions only. Accommodations are based on the needs of individual

learners and not on a disability category. Any testing accommodation must be consistent with documentation in the annual plan. These strategies do not alter the validity of the test results. The local test administrator does not need to contact CASAS when providing these accommodations.

It is not an appropriate accommodation in test administration procedures to read a CASAS reading test to a learner simply because of low literacy skills. The purpose of a reading test is to Assess reading skill level, to determine the learner’s appropriate instructional level, and to document progress. Agencies may call CASAS to provide information on additional accommodations in test administration procedures and formats not listed in Table 1 or about the documentation of accommodations on individual records.

2. Use of Appropriate CASAS Test Forms

It is important to use an appropriate test form that best meets the learner’s goals and manner of receiving and reporting information. Most learners with a disability can take some form of a CASAS test. CASAS provides large-print versions of all tests. Large-print tests and CASAS eTests® are examples of test forms often used for learners with documented disabilities based on need as well as for all learners. The POWER performance-based assessment series, Forms 301-307, and the Tests for Adult Life Skills, Forms 312 through 352, are available specifically for learners who have intellectual disabilities. **These test forms cannot be used for NRS reporting.**

CASAS is currently expanding the development of other test forms to measure the basic literacy skills of learners with specific documented disabilities. Please contact CASAS if you are interested in participating in a national validation of other appropriate assessments for specific needs. The CASAS test development process always includes field-based specialists who help design, develop, and field test assessment instruments to ensure appropriateness for the assessment of the specific population.

Table 3: Providing Accommodations for Using CASAS Assessments

Disability	Test Administration Procedures	CASAS Test Forms Available	Development
Specific Learning Disability and/or ADHD such as dyslexia, dyscalculia, receptive aphasia, hyperactivity, written language disorder, attention deficit disorder	Extended time (1.5) Alternate schedule Frequent breaks Scribe/writer/alternate room Computer — spelling and grammar check disabled Simple calculator for Level A/B Only	Large-print forms and Answer Sheet for all CASAS tests Oral assessment for Citizenship Interview Test Large-Print Answer Sheets for Reading for Citizenship CASAS eTests®	Low-level Literacy Forms in CASAS eTests® (with touch screen)
Deaf or Hearing Impairment	Sign language interpreter for test		

	directions only Head phones for those taking a listening test		
Blind or Visually Impaired	Magnifier/Template Text-to-speech software Video magnifiers Scribe/reader	Level A/B Reading test in Contracted Braille format Large-print CASAS tests CASAS Listening test series (Levels A, B and C)	Level B/C Reading test in contracted Braille format Audio Version
Mobility impairment	Extended time Alternate site/equipment Scribe/writer/communication board		
Emotional/Mental Disability such as bipolar disorder and major depression	Extended time Supervised breaks Private room Limit testing per day		
Intellectual Disabilities such as traumatic brain injury, autism, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, mental retardation	One-on-one administration Extended time	Adult Life Skills Color-Photo Forms 312-352 POWER Forms 301- 307 Beginning Literacy Forms 27/28	Low-level Literacy Forms in CASAS eTests® (with touch screen)

CCS Available Tests Chart – Only Test Forms in Bold May be Used for NRS

Test Series		
STEPS (ESL) (NRS Approved until 2030)		
Level	Reading STEPS	Listening STEPS
Appraisal/ Locator	619R (Appraisal) 620R (Locator)	619L (Appraisal) 620L (Locator)
Level A	621R - 622R	621L - 622L
Level B	623R - 624R	623L - 624L
Level C	625R - 626R	625L - 626L
Level D	627R - 628R	627L - 628L
Level E	629R - 630R	629L - 630L
GOALS (ABE ASE only)		
Level	Reading GOALS (NRS Approved until 2025)	Math GOALS 2 (NRS Approved until 2030)

Appraisal/ Locator	900R (Appraisal) 104R (Locator)	919M (Appraisal) 920M (Locator)
Level A	901R-902R	921M - 922M
Level B	903R - 904R	923M - 924M
Level C	905R - 906R	925M - 926M
Level D	907R - 908R	927M - 928M
Level E		929M - 930M

Scale Score Ranges of Available Tests

ESL Approved Testsg

Reading STEPS Series for ESL

Appraisal	Test Form	Raw Score Range	Scale Score Accurate Range
Reading	619R	1-28	-
Level	Test Form	Raw Score Accurate Range	Scale Score Accurate Range
A	621	4-28	160-196
A	622	4-28	160-196
B	623	10 -29	184-206
B	624	10 -29	184-206
C	625	10 -29	197-216
C	626	10 -29	197-206
D	627	10 -29	207-227
D	628	10 -29	207-227
E	629	10 -33	217-251
E	630	10 -33	217-251

Listening STEPS Series for ESL

Appraisal	Test Form	Raw Score Range	Scale Score Accurate Range
Listening	619L	1-28	-
Level	Test Form	Raw Score Accurate Range	Scale Score Accurate Range
A	621	4-28	158 – 191
A	622	4-28	158 – 191
B	623	13 -30	182 – 201
B	624	13 – 30	182 – 201
C	625	14 - 32	192 – 211
C	626	14 – 32	192 – 211
D	627	14 – 32	202 – 221
D	628	14 – 32	202 – 221
E	629	14 -34	212- 235
E	630	14 – 34	212 – 235

Reading GOALS Series for ABE/ASE

Appraisal	Test Form	Raw Score Range	Scale Score Accurate Range
Reading	900R	7-24	200-244
Level	Test Form	Raw Score Accurate Range	Scale Score Accurate Range
A	901	4-34	165-212
A	902	4-34	165-212
B	903	11-33	196-225
B	904	11-33	196-225
C	905	11-33	210-238

C	906	11-33	210-238
D	907	11-36	228-262
D	908	11-36	228-262

Math GOALS 2 Series for ABE/ASE

Appraisal	Test Form	Raw Score Range	Scale Score Accurate Range
Math	919M	1-28	-
Level	Test Form	Raw Score Accurate Range	Scale Score Accurate Range
A	921M	4-27	171-203
A	922M	4-27	171-203
B	923M	10 – 29	193-213
B	924M	10 – 29	193-213
C	925M	10 – 29	204-224
C	926M	10 – 29	204-224
D	927M	10 – 29	214-235
D	928M	10 – 29	214-235
E	929M	10 – 32	225-255
E	930M	10 – 32	225-255

Suggested Next Assigned Test (NAT) Chart

This chart serves as a general guideline for selecting matched pair tests for pre and post testing in each skill area. For detailed Next Assigned Test charts, please refer to the CASAS Test Administration Manuals (TAMs). These can be purchased from CASAS at the following link: <https://www.casas.org/product-overviews/order>

Skill Area	Suggested Next Assigned Test Options*	
	GOALS ABE/ASE Only	STEPS – ESL
Reading	901 902	621 622
	903 904	623 624
	905 906	625 626
	907 908	627 628
		629 630
Math	921 922	
	923 924	
	925 926	
	927 928	
	929 930	
Listening		621 622
		623 624
		625 626
		627 628
		629 630

*The next test cannot be the same form number as the most recent test

NRS Educational Functioning Level Descriptors for ABE and ASE

These descriptors are illustrative of what a typical learner functioning at that level is able to do. It is not necessary for providers to change program groupings according to these levels. **The CASAS benchmark test scores i.e. the highest number in each scale score range, represent the score a learner in that level must achieve to complete that educational functioning level.** This reporting of educational gain is a Core Indicator of Performance that is required in the federal Workforce Investment Act, Title II.

NRS/CASAS Level	Educational Functioning Level Descriptors for ABE and ASE
<p>Beginning ABE Literacy</p> <p>ABE LEVEL 1</p> <p>CASAS Scale Scores</p> <p>Reading GOALS: 203 and below</p> <p>Math GOALS: 193 and below</p> <p style="text-align: center;">CASAS Level</p> <p style="text-align: center;">A</p>	<p>Reading: The individual has no or minimal reading and writing skills. May have little or no comprehension of how print corresponds to spoken language and may have difficulty using a writing instrument. At the upper range of this level, an individual can recognize, read, and write letters and numbers, but has a limited understanding of connected prose and may need frequent re-reading. Can write a limited number of basic sight words and familiar words and phrases; may also be able to write simple sentences or phrases, including very simple messages. Can write basic personal information. Narrative writing is disorganized and unclear, inconsistently uses simple punctuation (e.g., periods, commas, question marks), and contains frequent errors in spelling.</p> <p>Numeracy: The individual has little or no recognition of numbers or simple counting skills or may have only minimal skills, such as the ability to add or subtract single-digit numbers.</p> <p>Functional/Workplace: The individual has little or no ability to read basic signs or maps, and can provide limited personal information on simple forms. The individual can handle routine entry-level jobs that require little or no basic written communication or computational skills and no knowledge of computers or other technology.</p>

<p>Beginning Basic Education</p> <p>ABE LEVEL 2</p> <p>CASAS Scale Scores</p> <p>Reading GOALS: 204-216</p> <p>Math GOALS: 194 - 203</p> <p>CASAS Level</p> <p>B</p>	<p>Reading: The individual can read simple material on familiar subjects and comprehend simple and compound sentences in single or linked paragraphs containing familiar vocabulary; can write simple notes and messages on familiar situations, but lacks clarity and focus. Sentence structure lacks variety, but the individual shows some control of basic grammar (e.g., present and past tense) and consistent use of punctuation (e.g., periods, capitalization).</p> <p>Numeracy: The individual can count, add, and subtract three-digit numbers, can perform multiplication through 12, can identify simple fractions, and perform other simple arithmetic operations.</p> <p>Functional/Workplace: The individual can read simple directions, signs, and maps, fill out simple forms requiring basic personal information, write phone messages, and make simple changes. There is minimal knowledge of, and experience with, using computers and related technology. The individual can handle basic entry-level jobs that require minimal literacy skills; can recognize very short, explicit, pictorial texts, (e.g., understands logos related to worker safety before using a piece of machinery); and can read want ads and complete simple job applications.</p>
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NRS/CASAS Level	Educational Functioning Level Descriptors for ABE and ASE
<p>Low Intermediate Basic Education</p> <p>ABE LEVEL 3</p> <p>CASAS Scale Scores</p> <p>Reading GOALS: 217-227</p> <p>Math GOALS: 204 – 214</p> <p>CASAS Level</p> <p>B</p>	<p>Reading: The individual can read text on familiar subjects that have a simple and clear underlying structure (e.g., clear main idea, chronological order); can use context to determine meaning; can interpret actions required in specific written directions; can write simple paragraphs with a main idea and supporting details on familiar topics (e.g., daily activities, personal issues) by recombining learned vocabulary and structures; and can self and peer edit for spelling and punctuation errors.</p> <p>Numeracy: The individual can perform with high accuracy all four basic math operations (addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division) using whole numbers up to three digits; and can identify and use all basic mathematical symbols.</p> <p>Functional/Workplace: The individual can handle basic reading, writing, and computational tasks related to life roles, such as completing medical forms, order forms, or job applications; and can read simple charts, graphs, labels, and payroll stubs and simple authentic material if familiar with the topic. The individual can use simple computer programs and perform a sequence of routine tasks given directions using technology (e.g., fax machine, computer operation). The individual can qualify for entry-level jobs</p>

	<p>that require following basic written instructions and diagrams with assistance, such as oral clarification; can write a short report or message to fellow workers; and can read simple dials and scales and take routine measurements.</p>
<p>High Intermediate Basic Education ABE LEVEL 4</p> <p>CASAS Scale Scores</p> <p>Reading GOALS: 228-238</p> <p>Math GOALS: 215 - 225</p> <p>CASAS Level C</p>	<p>Reading: The individual can read simple descriptions and narratives on familiar subjects or from which new vocabulary can be determined by the context, and can make some minimal inferences about familiar texts and compare and contrast information from such texts, but not consistently. The individual can write simple narrative descriptions and short essays on familiar topics and has consistent use of basic punctuation, but makes grammatical errors with complex structures.</p> <p>Numeracy: The individual can perform all four basic math operations with whole numbers and fractions; can determine correct math operations for solving narrative math problems can convert fractions to decimals and decimals to fractions; and can perform basic operations on fractions.</p> <p>Functional/Workplace: The individual can handle basic life skills tasks such as graphs, charts, and labels, and can follow multi-step diagrams; can read authentic materials on familiar topics, such as simple employee handbooks and payroll stubs; can complete forms such as a job application and reconcile a bank statement. Can handle jobs that involve following simple written instructions and diagrams; can read procedural texts, where the information is supported by diagrams, to remedy a problem, such as locating a problem with a machine or carrying out repairs using a repair manual. The individual can learn or work with most basic computer software, such as using a word processor to produce their texts, and can follow simple instructions for using technology.</p>

NRS/CASAS Level	Educational Functioning Level Descriptors for ABE and ASE
<p data-bbox="190 264 496 300">Low Adult Secondary</p> <p data-bbox="190 331 375 367">ABE LEVEL 5</p> <p data-bbox="190 533 480 569">CASAS Scale Scores</p> <p data-bbox="190 611 415 684">Reading GOALS 239-248</p> <p data-bbox="190 726 383 800">Math GOALS: 226 - 235</p> <p data-bbox="261 1052 448 1087">CASAS Level</p> <p data-bbox="323 1108 386 1182">D</p>	<p data-bbox="505 264 1435 684">Reading: The individual can comprehend expository writing and identify spelling, punctuation, and grammatical errors; can comprehend a variety of materials such as periodicals and non-technical journals on common topics; can comprehend library reference materials and compose multi-paragraph essays; can listen to oral instructions and write an accurate synthesis of them; and can identify the main idea in reading selections and use a variety of context issues to determine meaning. Writing is organized and cohesive with few mechanical errors; can write using a complex sentence structure; and can write personal notes and letters that accurately reflect thoughts.</p> <p data-bbox="505 716 1435 905">Numeracy: The individual can perform all basic math functions with whole numbers, decimals, and fractions; can interpret and solve simple algebraic equations, tables, and graphs and can develop their tables, and graphs; and can use math in business transactions.</p> <p data-bbox="505 936 1435 1314">Functional/Workplace: The individual is able or can learn to follow simple multi-step directions, and read common legal forms and manuals; can integrate information from texts, charts, and graphs; can create and use tables and graphs; can complete forms and applications and complete resumes; can perform jobs that require interpreting information from various sources and writing or explaining tasks to other workers; is proficient using computers and can use most common computer applications; can understand the impact of using different technologies; and can interpret the appropriate use of new software and technology.</p>
<p data-bbox="190 1335 358 1409">High Adult Secondary</p> <p data-bbox="190 1440 375 1476">ABE LEVEL 6</p> <p data-bbox="190 1535 480 1570">CASAS Scale Scores</p> <p data-bbox="190 1612 415 1686">Reading GOALS 249 and above</p> <p data-bbox="190 1696 399 1770">Math GOALS: 236 and above</p>	<p data-bbox="505 1335 1435 1608">Reading: The individual can comprehend, explain, and analyze information from a variety of literacy works, including primary source materials and professional journals, and can use context cues and higher-order processes to interpret the meaning of written material. Writing is cohesive with clearly expressed ideas supported by relevant detail, and individuals can use varied and complex sentence structures with few mechanical errors.</p> <p data-bbox="505 1640 1435 1787">Numeracy: The individual can make mathematical estimates of time and space and can apply principles of geometry to measure angles, lines, and surfaces, and can also apply trigonometric functions.</p> <p data-bbox="505 1818 1435 1923">Functional/Workplace: The individual is able to read technical information and complex manuals; can comprehend some college-level books and apprenticeship manuals; can function in most job</p>

CASAS Level D	<p>situations involving higher-order thinking; can read the text and explain a procedure about a complex and unfamiliar work procedure, such as operating a complex piece of machinery; can evaluate new work situations and processes; and can work productively and collaboratively in groups and serve as a facilitator and reporter of group work. The individual is able to use common software and learn new software applications; can define the purpose of new technology and software and select appropriate technology; can adapt the use of software or technology to new situations; and can instruct others, in written or oral form, on software and technology use.</p>
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NRS Educational Functioning Level Descriptors for ESL

These descriptors are illustrative of what a typical learner functioning at that level is able to do. It is not necessary for providers to change program groupings according to these levels. **The CASAS benchmark test scores i.e. the highest number in each scale score range, represent the score a learner in that level must achieve to complete that educational functioning level.** This reporting of educational gain is a Core Indicator of Performance that is required in the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Title II.

NRS/CASAS Level	Educational Functioning Level Descriptors for ESL
<p>Beginning ESL Literacy ESL LEVEL 1</p> <p>CASAS Scale Scores</p> <p>Life & Work Reading 180 and below</p> <p>Life & Work Listening: 162-180</p> <p style="text-align: center;">CASAS Level A</p>	<p>Listening and Speaking: The individual cannot speak or understand English or understands only isolated words or phrases.</p> <p>Reading: The individual has no or minimal reading or writing skills in any language. May have little or no comprehension of how print corresponds to spoken language and may have difficulty using a writing instrument.</p> <p>Functional/Workplace: Individual functions minimally or not at all in English and can communicate only through gestures or a few isolated words, such as name and other personal information; may recognize only common signs or symbols (e.g., stop sign, product logos); can handle only very routine entry-level jobs that do not require oral or written communication in English. There is no knowledge or use of computers or technology.</p>

<p>Low Beginning ESL ESL LEVEL 2</p> <p>CASAS Scale Scores</p> <p>Life & Work Reading: 181 - 190</p> <p>Life & Work Listening: 181 - 189</p> <p>CASAS Level</p> <p>A</p>	<p>Listening and Speaking: The individual can understand basic greetings, simple phrases, and commands. Can understand simple questions related to personal information, spoken slowly and with repetition. Understands a limited number of words related to immediate needs and can respond with simple learned phrases to some common questions related to routine survival situations. Speaks slowly and with difficulty. Demonstrates little or no control over grammar.</p> <p>Reading: The individual can read numbers and letters and some common sight words. May be able to sound out simple words. Can read and write some familiar words and phrases, but has a limited understanding of connected prose in English. Can write basic personal information (e.g., name, address, telephone number) and can complete simple forms that elicit this information.</p> <p>Functional/Workplace: Individual functions with difficulty in social situations and in situations related to immediate needs. Can provide limited personal information on simple forms, and can read very simple common forms of print found in the home and environment, such as product names. Can handle routine entry-level jobs that require very simple written or oral English communication and in which job tasks can be demonstrated. May have limited knowledge and experience with computers.</p>
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NRS/CASAS Level	Educational Functioning Level Descriptors for ESL
<p>High Beginning ESL ESL LEVEL 3</p> <p>CASAS Scale Scores</p> <p>Life & Work Reading: 191 - 200</p> <p>Life & Work Listening: 190 - 199</p> <p>CASAS Level A</p>	<p>Listening and Speaking: The individual can understand common words, simple phrases, and sentences containing familiar vocabulary, spoken slowly with some repetition. Individuals can respond to simple questions about personal everyday activities and can express immediate needs, using simple learned phrases or short sentences. Shows a limited control of grammar.</p> <p>Reading: The individual can read most sight words and many other common words. Can read familiar phrases and simple sentences but has a limited understanding of connected prose and may need frequent re-reading.</p> <p>Individuals can write some simple sentences with limited vocabulary. The meaning may be unclear. Writing shows very little control of basic grammar, capitalization, and punctuation and has many spelling errors.</p> <p>Functional/Workplace: The individual can function in some situations related to immediate needs and in familiar social situations. Can provide basic personal information on simple forms and recognizes simple common forms of print found in the home, workplace, and community. Can handle routine entry-level jobs requiring basic written or oral English communication and in which job tasks can be demonstrated. May have limited knowledge or experience using computers.</p>
<p>Low Intermediate ESL ESL LEVEL 4</p> <p>CASAS Scale Scores</p> <p>Life & Work Reading: 201 - 210</p> <p>Life & Work Listening: 200 - 209</p> <p>CASAS Level</p>	<p>Listening and Speaking: The individual can understand simple learned phrases and limited new phrases containing familiar vocabulary spoken slowly with frequent repetition; can ask and respond to questions using such phrases; can express basic survival needs and participate in some routine social conversations, although with some difficulty; and has some control of basic grammar.</p> <p>Reading: The individual can read simple material on familiar subjects and comprehend simple and compound sentences in single or linked paragraphs containing a familiar vocabulary; can write simple notes and messages on familiar situations but lacks clarity and focus. Sentence structure lacks variety but shows some control of basic grammar (e.g., present and past tense) and consistent use of punctuation (e.g., periods, capitalization).</p> <p>Functional/Workplace: The individual can interpret simple directions and schedules, signs, and maps; can fill out simple</p>

B	forms but needs support on some documents that are not simplified; and can handle routine entry-level jobs that involve some written or oral English communication but in which job tasks can be demonstrated. Individuals can use simple computer programs and can perform a sequence of routine tasks given directions using technology (e.g., fax machine, computer).
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NRS/CASAS Level	Educational Functioning Level Descriptors for ESL
<p>High Intermediate ESL ESL LEVEL 5</p> <p>CASAS Scale Scores</p> <p>Life & Work Reading: 211 - 220</p> <p>Life & Work Listening: 210 - 218</p> <p style="text-align: center;">CASAS Level B</p>	<p>Listening and Speaking: The individual can understand learned phrases and short new phrases containing familiar vocabulary spoken slowly and with some repetition; can communicate basic survival needs with some help; can participate in conversation in limited social situations and use new phrases with hesitation; and relies on description and concrete terms. There is inconsistent control of more complex grammar.</p> <p>Reading: The individual can read text on familiar subjects that have a simple and clear underlying structure (e.g., clear main idea, chronological order); can use context to determine meaning; can interpret actions required in specific written directions; can write simple paragraphs with main idea and supporting details on familiar topics (e.g., daily activities, personal issues) by recombining learned vocabulary and structures; and can self and peer edit for spelling and punctuation errors.</p> <p>Functional/Workplace: The individual can meet basic survival and social needs, can follow some simple oral and written instruction, and has some ability to communicate on the telephone on familiar subjects; can write messages and notes related to basic needs; can complete basic medical forms and job applications; and can handle jobs that involve basic oral instructions and written communication in tasks that can be clarified orally. Individuals can work with or learn basic computer software, such as word processing, and can follow simple instructions for using technology.</p>

<p>Advanced ESL ESL LEVEL 6</p> <p>CASAS Scale Scores</p> <p>Life & Work Reading: 221 - 235</p> <p>Life & Work Listening: 219 - 227</p>	<p>Listening and Speaking: The individual can understand and communicate in a variety of contexts related to daily life and work. Can understand and participates in conversation on a variety of everyday subjects, including some unfamiliar vocabulary, but may need repetition or rewording. Can clarify own or others' meaning by rewording. Can understand the main points of simple discussions and informational communication in familiar contexts. Shows some ability to go beyond learned patterns and construct new sentences. Shows control of basic grammar but has difficulty using more complex structures. Has some basic fluency in speech.</p> <p>Reading: The individual can read moderately complex text related to life roles and descriptions and narratives from authentic materials on familiar subjects. Uses context and word analysis skills to understand vocabulary, and uses multiple strategies to understand unfamiliar texts. Can make inferences, and predictions, and compare and contrast information in familiar texts. An individual can write multi-paragraph text (e.g., organizes and develops ideas with a clear introduction, body, and conclusion), using some complex grammar and a variety of sentence structures. Makes some grammar and spelling errors. Uses a range of vocabulary.</p> <p>Functional/Workplace: The individual can function independently to meet most survival needs and to use English in routine social and work situations. Can communicate on the telephone on familiar subjects. Understands radio and television on familiar topics. Can interpret routine charts, tables, and graphs and can complete forms and handle work demands that require non-technical oral and written instructions and routine interaction with the public. Individuals can use common software, learn new basic applications, and select the correct basic technology in familiar situations.</p>
<p>CASAS Level</p> <p>C</p>	

BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT DEFINITIONS

Cultural Barriers- if the learner perceives him or herself as possessing attitudes, beliefs, customs, or practices that influence a way of thinking, acting, or working that may serve as a hindrance to employment

Disabled- if the learner indicates that s/he has any "disability", as defined in the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. A "disability" is a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the person's major life activities.

Displaced Homemaker- if the learner has been providing unpaid services to family members in the home and who has been dependent on the income of another family member but is no longer supported by that income, or is the dependent spouse of a member of the Armed Forces on active duty and whose family income is significantly reduced because of a deployment, a permanent change of station, or the service-connected death or disability of the member **and** is unemployed or underemployed and is experiencing difficulty in obtaining or upgrading employment.

English Language Learner- A learner is a person who has limited ability in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language and also meets at least one of the following two conditions (a) his or her native language is a language other than English, or (b) he or she lives in a family or community environment where a language other than English is the dominant language.

Ex-Offender- a person who either (a) has been subject to any stage of the criminal justice process for committing a status offense or delinquent act, or (b) requires assistance in overcoming artificial barriers to employment resulting from a record of arrest or conviction for committing delinquent acts, such as crimes against persons, crimes against property, status offenses, or other crimes.

Youth in Foster Care or aged out- a person who is currently in foster care or has aged out of the foster care system.

Homeless:

The individual:

- (a) Lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. This includes:
 - (i) Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason;
 - (ii) Living in a motel, hotel, trailer park, or campground due to a lack of alternative adequate accommodations
 - (iii) Living in an emergency or transitional shelter
 - (iv) Abandoned in a hospital
 - (v) Awaiting foster care placement
- (b) Has a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, such as a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground
- (c) Is a migratory child who in the preceding 36 months was required to move from one school district to another due to changes in the parent's or parent's spouse's seasonal employment in agriculture, dairy, or fishing work
- (d) Is under 18 years of age and absents himself or herself from home or place of legal residence without the permission of his or her family (i.e., runaway youth).

Long-term Unemployed- learner has been unemployed for 27 or more consecutive weeks at program entry.

Low-Income individual- A learner is a person who:

In the 6 months prior to application to the program has received, or is a member of a family that is receiving:

- Assistance through the supplemental nutrition assistance program under the Food and Nutrition Act
- Assistance through the temporary assistance for needy families program under part A of Title IV of the Social Security Act
- Assistance through the supplemental security income program under Title XVI of the Social Security Act or state or local income-based public assistance.
- Is in a family with total family income that does not exceed the higher of the poverty line or 70% of the lower living standard income level
- Is a foster child on behalf of whom State or local government payments are made
- Is an individual with a disability whose own income is the poverty line but who is a member of a family whose income does not meet this requirement
- Is a homeless individual or a homeless child or youth or runaway youth or
- Is a youth living in a high-poverty area

Low Levels of Literacy-is unable to read, write, and speak in English; compute and solve problems at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job, in the family of the participant, or in society.

Migrant & Seasonal Farmworker

Migrant Seasonal Farmworker:

The participant is a seasonal farmworker whose agricultural labor requires travel to a job site such that the farmworker is unable to return to a permanent place of residence within the same day. A dependent of the person described above.

Seasonal Farmworker:

The participant is a low-income individual (i) who for the 12 consecutive months out of the 24 months prior to application for the program involved, has been primarily employed in agriculture or fish farming labor that is characterized by chronic unemployment or underemployment; and (ii) faces multiple barriers to economic self-sufficiency. A dependent of the person described above.

Single Parent- single, separated, divorced, or a widowed individual who has primary responsibility for one or more dependent children under age 18 (including single pregnant women).

No TANF in 2 Years or Less- if the learner is within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under Part A of Title IV of the Social Security Act.

NEDP: REQUIRED DATES FOR DATA ENTRY

An NEDP client shall be enrolled in the LACES in NEDP Program Area AFTER MEETING THE CUT SCORES:

- Reading GOALS: 236 in a CASAS Assessment form C/D,
- Math GOALS 2 in a CASAS Assessment level D form (927M-928M) | level E form (929M- 930M): 226
- and entering Diagnostics.

The date a client enters Diagnostics shall be listed in LACES as their “Diagnostic Phase Entry Date.” Upon completion of NEDP Diagnostics, the client then enters the NEDP Assessment phase, and the client’s record shall be updated to include an “Assessment Phase Entry Date.” If for any reason a client chooses not to continue in the NEDP program but enters another ASE program in the agency, an “NEDP Exit Date” must be entered in LACES.

Glossary

ABE	Adult Basic Education
AHSCDP	Adult High School Credit Diploma Program
ASE	Adult Secondary Education
ATDN	Adult Training and Development Network
CAACE	Connecticut Association for Adult and Continuing Education
CASAS	Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems
CBE	Competency Based Education
CCS	Connecticut Competency System
COABE	Commission on Adult Basic Education
CSDE	Connecticut Department of Education
CTDLC	Connecticut Distance Learning Consortium
CTAVHS	Connecticut Adult Virtual High School
DOL	Connecticut Department of Labor
DSS	Connecticut Department of Social Services
EFL	Educational Functioning Level
ELL	English Language Learner
ESL / ESOL	English as a Second Language; English for Speakers of Other Languages
FY 2025	Fiscal Year beginning 7/1/2024 and ending 6/30/2025
GED	General Educational Development
HSC	High School Completion

LEP	Limited English Proficient
NEDP	National External Diploma Program
NELRC	New England Literacy Resource Center
NRS	National Reporting System
SDA	Service Delivery Area
TAM	Test Administration Manual
TANF	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
TOPSpro	Tracking of Programs and Students
WIA	Workforce Investment Act. [Title II: Adult Education and Family Literacy Act]
WIOA	Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act
WIB	Workforce Investment Board

Connecticut Competency System (CCS)

Expectations and Responsibilities for CCS Program Facilitators

Overview

- Hold primary responsibility for CCS coordination, quality data collection, and use.
- Have a comprehensive understanding of CCS; be able to train new staff in the implementation of the CCS System; and, provide ongoing technical assistance to district teachers.
- Bring together the curriculum, assessment, instruction, and accountability system, and help teachers monitor learning.
- Able to connect teaching and learning and be much more than a “tester”.

Qualifications

- Nomination by the program director.
- Possesses CCS Program Facilitator Professional Development Certification which is obtained through the completion of CASAS Online Self-Paced Modules 1-3 in addition to the Connecticut Competency System (CCS) for New Program Facilitators and New Directors Training offered by ATDN in cooperation with the State Department of Education.
- Comprehensive understanding of and commitment to the CSDE’s CCS which incorporates Appraisals and Pre- and Post-Assessments.
- Willingness to work toward continuous program improvement.
- Maintains program facilitator certification by attending the Statewide Annual Meeting.

Liaison/Communication

- Represent the program and provide input at facilitator meetings.
- Share communications between the director and other staff members.
- Obtain answers to staff CCS inquiries.

Connect Assessment to Instruction and Insure Quality Data Collection and Use

- Ensure security for testing materials and provide inventory information to the Academic Office, Adult Education.
- Explain and interpret the Literacy, Adult, and Community Education System (LACES) data as needed.
- Review/coordinate/complete forms as needed for quality data collection.
- Evaluate test results and assist in placements.
- Encourage the use of class profiles from pre-tests to provide feedback to students and teachers, and to connect curriculum, assessment, and instruction.
- Review data reports with the program director for accuracy and for program implications.



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STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Adult Education

Assessment Administration and Security Agreement: July 2024- June 2025

Program: _____ **Director:** _____

Address: _____

City: _____ **Zip:** _____ **Phone:** _____

E-Mail: _____ **CCS Program Facilitator** _____

1. Program Director assumes the responsibility for safeguarding all restricted materials which include all CASAS developed paper-based and computer-based assessment materials, including test administration manuals, eTests data files and answer sheets (which contain marks or responses). Program Director ensures that all program staff who use the restricted materials covered by this agreement adhere to all the conditions listed.
2. Program Director ensures that there is a designated and trained Connecticut Competency System (CCS) Program Facilitator available to staff for CCS/CASAS-related questions.
3. Only staff members, designated by the program director, administer assessments. In order to maintain the integrity, quality, and standardization of the assessment process, the Program Director ensures that all CCS assessments are administered and used in accordance with the procedures outlined in:
 - the CCS Assessment Policies and Guidelines published by the Connecticut State Department of Education, Academic Office; and
 - the Test Administration Manuals published by CASAS.
4. Agencies may not use displays, questions, or answers that appear on any CASAS test to create materials designed to teach or prepare learners to answer CASAS test items. Instead, programs should focus on the competencies, underlying basic skill content standards, task areas, and item types to prepare learners.
5. Restricted materials are stored in a locked, fireproof file cabinet accessible to the program director or to his/her designee(s) only. Restricted materials are not made accessible to general staff. Staff members who administer assessments return all restricted materials immediately after use to the program designee.
6. Completed answer sheets and eTests data files are treated as confidential until destroyed.
7. **Duplication of a test form or a portion of a test form for any reason is prohibited.**

8. Inventory information concerning restricted materials is supplied to the Connecticut State Department of Education upon request for monitoring and review purposes.
9. Defaced materials may not be destroyed unless authorized by the Connecticut State Department of Education.

Our program will adhere to the above-mentioned stipulations related to the administration and security of assessments.

Signature Program Director Only: _____ **Date:** _____

**Please return to: EdAdvance, P.O. Box 909, Litchfield, CT 06759 Attn: Adult Education
Rev. September 2024**

Literacy, Adult and Community Education System (LACES) Data Entry Timelines

The use of LACES for instructional and program management purposes can be maximized only if data are entered in a timely fashion. LACES allows multiple data-entry staff to enter data simultaneously. Therefore, attendance should be entered into LACES according to the following timelines.

**The LACES system will be locked and no data entry will be possible for fiscal year 2024-25 after
July 11, 2025**

By October 25, 2024	Enter September attendance
By November 26, 2024	Enter October attendance
By December 20, 2024	Enter November attendance
By January 24, 2025	Complete data entry (i.e., attendance, achievements, credits earned, assessments, etc.) for the first semester; ensure that data are error-free.
By February 21, 2025	Enter January attendance
By March 21, 2025	Enter February attendance
By April 25, 2025	Enter March attendance
By May 23, 2025	Enter April attendance
By June 20, 2025	Enter May attendance
By July 10, 2025	Complete all data entry for the fiscal year (i.e., attendance, achievements, credits earned, assessments, etc.). Ensure that all data is error free. Notify the CSDE that the data is finalized.

Data Validation

The accuracy and completeness of the data are critical to their validity and usefulness. LACES contains numerous edit checks that prevent incomplete and inaccurate data from being entered. For example, a student cannot be enrolled in a class unless entry status and reasons for enrollment are entered. To ensure the completeness of the data, it is recommended that program administrators compare the NRS reports for a fiscal year with the same report from the prior year. If the data appear incomplete, then the student-diagnostic search within LACES can provide insights into data that may not have been entered.

LACES also includes a comprehensive dashboard that provides local providers with an updated list of errors and warnings. Providers are urged to check the dashboard regularly and correct errors on an ongoing basis. Student errors span fiscal years while class and enrollment errors are school-year specific.