

Manual

Adult Education and Literacy Assessment Manual

This manual includes the Distance Education Policy

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AEL Student Assessment Policy

A Statement of Common Practice

Standardized assessment plays a critical role in the educational experience and success of adult students. It provides the basis for personalized learning plans, creating engaging and relevant instruction, and measuring student progress. It also provides the evidence used to measure program, provider, and State efficacy. Organizational leadership at the provider, center, and classroom level is responsible for managing assessment administration, including adherence to State policy. In order to ensure consistent assessment administration practices across the statewide Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) system, this manual will inform operational decisions by AEL providers until revised by the Vermont Agency of Education (AOE).

Assessment Policy

Vermont Adult Education and Literacy (VAEL) providers are required by Federal rules to baseline assess 100% of students who receive 12 hours or more of instruction in the State's adult education program with a test that the United States Department of Education (US DOE) Secretary has determined is suitable for use in the National Reporting System (NRS). The State requires that each skill level assessment in reading, language, math must be administered to Adult Basic Education/Adult Secondary Education (ABE/ASE) students within a 45-day timeframe. The 45-day timeframe will begin on the date of the first assessment. In addition, at least 45% of all students (including ESL) with baseline assessments must be progress assessed. Progress assessments are crucial to demonstrating Measurable Skill Gains (MSGs) and are reported to the US DOE.

An individual who does not speak English, and therefore cannot be assessed with the BEST Plus 2.0, should be assigned to the ESL NRS level "Low Beginning" and formally assessed when English language acquisition warrants.

Reasonable accommodations during assessment may be provided to any individual with a documented disability. By law ([Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#)), students with one or more disabling conditions, who would be otherwise able to participate, must be provided accommodations that permit access to testing.

An accommodation is any technique that alters the academic setting or environment in some way but does not change the content of required work. Accommodations do not: alter the content of assignments, give students an unfair advantage, or, in the case of assessments, change what a test measures. They do make it possible for students with disabilities to access an assessment and/or show what they know without being impeded by their disability.

Once a person has been formally diagnosed with a disability, the student may request accommodations if that disability is determined to impede their ability to access the

assessment or testing environment. For students receiving Special Education services, the [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act](#) states that a person’s Individualized Education Program (IEP) team must decide which accommodations are appropriate for them. Any appropriate accommodations must be written into a student's IEP or 504 Plan, and this documentation must be maintained by the AEL provider. For detailed information about accommodations, including specific guidelines from each assessment’s publisher, see the AEL Accommodations Manual.

Assessment testing data must be entered into the AEL database at least every two weeks per the State’s grant agreement. Programming in the database prevents data entry errors for out-of-range assessment scores and includes required fields and error messages. Local providers are responsible for ensuring data accuracy by correcting errors in a timely way. Reports create easy access for review by local and State staff.

Baseline/Progress Assessment – Baseline assessments will be administered to 100% of students who receive 12 hours or more of instruction. In addition, re-baseline assessments are required for those students who exited for two years or more from services, even if the Educational Functioning Level (EFL) has not expired. EFLs are valid for the program year [July 1 – June 30] in which the assessment (baseline or progress) is given and in the two program years that follow. At least 45% of students who have been baseline assessed will, at an appropriate interval, be progress assessed in order to determine educational gains. *Progress assessment will be considered valid if the student has received 40 hours of instruction and a minimum of 31 days have passed since the previous assessment.* When a valid progress assessment is administered, the EFL expiration date for that content area will be re-set. The EFL content area for the student at baseline (or at the beginning of the fiscal year for continuing students) shall remain the same for the entire fiscal year, even if there is a higher score in that skill area achieved via progress assessment within the fiscal year. The data acquired from baseline and progress assessments will be used for instructional and goal setting purposes. In addition, assessment data may be used for National Reporting System (NRS) purposes and/or for State reporting purposes as described below.

For **State reporting** purposes, assessments may include those in the College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS) for Adult Education in the areas of reading, writing, speaking and listening, and math. Those assessments approved for State reporting purposes include the following (this list is subject to change):

Assessment

- Accuplacer
- BEST Plus 2.0
- BEST Plus 3.0 (beginning 1/1/25)
- CASAS Life and Work, Life Skills
- CASAS Reading STEPS (1/1/25)
- TABE CLAS-E
- TABE 11/12

Skill area

- Reading, Writing & Math
- Speaking & Listening (ESL only)
- Speaking & Listening (ESL only)
- Reading, Math (ESL only)
- Reading (ESL only)
- Writing (ESL only)
- Reading, Language, & Math

TABE 13/14 (1/1/25)
WorkKeys (National Career
Readiness Certificate)

Reading, Language, Math
Workplace skills: reading, writing,
math, charts and graphs

Educational Functioning Level (EFL) gains and National Reporting System (NRS) gains are federal measures that must comply with federal policy. Only assessments approved for this use under Federal policy and adopted by the Vermont Agency of Education can be used to determine an EFL or an NRS level in the specific skill areas of reading, writing, speaking, or math. The EFL is a measure of functional ability as determined by a student's *lowest score* in any of the skill areas. This is a state requirement. EFL gains in *any skill area* may count toward a Measurable Skill Gain (MSG) according to NRS rules. These requirements should not limit the breadth of goal setting, which should also inform instructional decisions.

Federally-approved assessments that can generate EFL and NRS levels and adopted for this use by the Vermont Agency of Education include the following (this list is subject to change):

Assessment

BEST Plus 2.0
BEST Plus 3.0 (1/1/25)
CASAS Life and Work
CASAS Reading STEPS (1/1/25)
TABE 11/12
TABE 13/14 (1/1/25)

Skill area

Speaking & Listening (ESL only)
Speaking & Listening (ESL only)
Reading (ESL only)
Reading (ESL only)
Reading, Language, & Math
Reading, Language, & Math

Compliance with the following rules will determine validity of assessment for the purposes described.

A student is considered to have a valid **baseline assessment** for the purpose of determining instructional needs, and therefore eligible for inclusion in **State reporting**, if all of the following are true:

- The student is a member of the report population (open enrollment during the reporting period and services received according to the selection parameters).
- An appropriate pre-screening mechanism (i.e., Locator test) has been used prior to assessment to determine which instrument and level is most appropriate.
- As long as the EFL has not expired (see above), the baseline assessment will remain valid even if the student has not received services for 90 days or more.
- The assessment is administered by a staff person trained and certified for the assessment instrument.
- The assessment is a skill level assessment or skill diagnostic assessment.
- The assessment is in one of the skill areas of reading, language, writing, math, or speaking and listening, and produces a skill level record.

A student is considered to have a valid **baseline assessment** for the purpose of establishing an EFL baseline, and therefore eligible for inclusion in **federal NRS reporting**, if all of the following are true:

- The student is a member of the report population (open enrollment during the reporting period and services received according to the selection parameters).
- An appropriate pre-screening mechanism (i.e., Locator test) has been used prior to assessment to determine which instrument and level is most appropriate.
- As long as the EFL has not expired (see above), the baseline assessment will remain valid even if the student has not received services for 90 days or more.
- The assessment is administered by a staff person trained and certified for that assessment instrument.
- The assessment is a skill level assessment.
- The assessments for ABE/ASE students are in each of the three content areas of reading, language, and math and produce a skill level record using the TABE 11/12 and TABE 13/14 (January 1, 2025).
- For ESL students, the available assessments are in reading, or speaking and listening, and produce a skill level record. There is only one skill area assessment required for ESL students. Once an ESL student is ready to transition to ABE/ASE the student must be assessed in ABE/ASE reading, language, and math skill areas using the TABE 11/12 or TABE 13/14 (January 1, 2025) as described above.

A student is considered to have a valid **progress assessment** for the purpose of establishing educational gains, and therefore eligible for inclusion in **both State and Federal NRS reporting**, if all of the following are true.

- The student has a qualifying baseline assessment as described above respectively for State and/or Federal reporting.
- The progress assessment uses the same instrument and measures the same skill (i.e., reading, language, or math) as the baseline assessment.
- The progress assessment must use the same test. (i.e. If your student pre-tested using the TABE 11/12, then the student must post test using the TABE 11/12. Same is true for a student who pre-tested using the TABE 13/14. The student must progress assess using the TABE 13/14. Form usage rules apply.)
- The assessment is administered by a staff person trained and certified for that assessment instrument.
- The student has participated in a minimum of 40 hours of instructional service and a minimum of 31 days have elapsed since the paired baseline assessment was administered.
- If the baseline assessment has a form associated with it, the progress assessment must use a different form:
 - progress assessment may not use a lower level than the paired baseline assessment; for example, progress assessment using 13M is invalid if the

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- baseline assessment used was 13D – the form should have been a 14 and should have been a D or A.
- CASAS Reading STEPS progress assessment may not use a lower level or form; for example, progress assessment using Level A is invalid if baseline assessment used Level B or higher. Progress assessments may become the new baseline assessment if the previous baseline assessment has expired.

Assessment materials are purchased by the AEL providers directly from the respective publishers. It is allowable for State funds to be used to purchase approved assessments when included in a budget as part of a grant agreement approved by the Vermont Agency of Education.

Paper and Online Assessments

All ABE/ASE students entering AEL services must be assessed using the TABE **online**. The use of online assessments is a fundamental issue of equity in a rural state with geographic disparities and barriers for learners. In addition to equity, teaching adult learners how to learn and assess online is also a fundamental component of being a literate, digital citizen in an evolving and global economy.

The exception to using the online version of TABE 11/12 and TABE 13/14 occurs when the Locator indicates use of the Literacy form (L) level, which is only available in the paper version. When the Locator indicates a student is ready to take the E or higher assessments, the AEL provider shall evaluate the student's digital literacy skills and ability to take an online assessment prior to assessing the student. AEL providers should prioritize providing sufficient instruction to prepare all students (in advance) to develop the digital skills necessary to access the online tests.

Transitioning to New Assessments

OCTAE approves federally-required assessments for a specified period of time. When assessments expire, it means that the assessment needs to go to OCTAE for review. If acceptable, OCTAE will then issue a period of time for which the field can continue to use the legacy assessment(s). However, once an assessment “sunset”, the assessment is NO LONGER VALID, and cannot be used. You will notice a new assessment will replace the former test. These tests will either change names (most often) or change forms.

In FY26 (July 1, 2025), current English as a Second Language assessments sunset and new assessments, that better align with the National Reporting System (NRS) Achievement Level Descriptors, will be mandated. In Vermont, we will go from CASAS Life and Work Reading to CASAS Reading STEPS, from BEST Plus 2.0 to BEST Plus 3.0, and the TABE CLAS-E will use forms C/D instead of A/B. (TABE CLAS E will no longer be used to set EFL starting 7/1/24.) Although both assessments may measure English language proficiency, the new assessments will have a different scale, items,

and blueprint. Progress assessment must be done using the same version of the assessment.

Additionally, in FY26 (July 1, 2025), the TABE 11/12 will transition to the TABE 13/14. Unlike the move from TABE 9/10 to 11/12 and the transitioning of ELP assessments, the *standards* assessed in the TABE 13/14 will remain the same. The blueprints have changed slightly, and therefore mixing the test versions for pre- and post-testing will not be permitted.

Because assessments that sunset are no longer valid for reporting purposes, a transition timeline needs to be in place in order to ensure a smooth transition from one assessment to another. **Please see the timeline below for transitioning to new assessments.**

FY25

July 1, 2024

- TABE CLAS-E will no longer be used to set EFL. However, it may still be used for instructional purposes. Testing certification will need to be maintained and kept current for that assessment if used instructionally and entering the scores into the AEL database

September 2024

- Providers should inventory current assessments on hand and order new assessments for use after January 1, 2025.

July - December 2024

- All teachers who administer, or who might administer, the BEST Plus 3.0 must receive training from the Center for Applied Linguistics and certify.
- All teachers who administer, or who might administer, the CASAS Reading STEPS, must certify using the CASAS online certification course.
- Certificates generated must be uploaded into LACES.
- All teachers who administer the TABE 13/14 will need to take the online training and certify, ideally, prior to January 1, 2025.
- Certificates generated for each assessment must be uploaded into LACES.

January - June 2025:

- New English Language Learner (ELL) students must baseline to set EFL and progress assess using the BEST Plus 3.0 or CASAS Reading STEPS.
- All current ELL students can continue to progress assess using the BEST Plus 2.0 and CASAS Life and Work Reading.
- New ABE/ASE students must baseline and progress assess using the TABE 13/14.

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- All current ABE/ASE student may continue to progress assess using the TABE 11/12.
- Test Trainers/Administrators need to monitor remaining administrations of legacy assessments and order only what is needed to complete progress assessing until June 30, 2025.

May – June 2025:

- Assessments given using instruments that sunset June 30, 2025, will expire on July 1, 2025.
- Students with 40 or more hours of instruction since their last assessment using an instrument that will be sunsetting on June 30, 2025, must be progress assessed using the same instrument to capture possible Measurable Skill Gains.
- Options for re-baselining students with fewer than 40 hours of instruction since their last assessment using an instrument that will be sunsetting on June 30, 2025
 1. Re-baseline using a new assessment before July 1, 2025, to prevent expiration of EFL or,
 2. Re-baseline using the new assessment as soon as possible when the new fiscal year begins (FY26).

July 1, 2025

- Re-baseline all continuing students who do not have an active EFL due to the sunsetting of the older assessments.
- Continue to use only the new assessments to baseline any new students.
- All expired legacy assessments may not be used for practice and must be destroyed. (e.g., shredded.)

Virtual Proctoring of Assessments

The availability of online assessments does not mean that all students must be virtually proctored when taking the tests. It is still permitted to administer an online assessment in person. The AOE allows virtual proctoring for the TABE 11/12, the TABE 13/14, BEST Plus 2.0 and BEST Plus 3.0 assessments as an alternative to in-person proctoring per the [Virtual Test Proctoring Procedures for Continuity of Learning](#). The decision to virtually or in-person proctor a test shall be determined by such things as the student's preference, the student's digital literacy skills, connectivity and equipment access, and ability to attend a local learning center. Per the publisher's guidance, the TABE Locator does not currently require proctoring.

WorkKeys

Where the WorkKeys assessments are made available, testing opportunities are to be offered on a regular basis as appropriate to local demand. VAEL learning centers will

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also provide instruction designed to prepare students for the WorkKeys assessments and may offer the WorkKeys certifications only in compliance with the guidelines of the publisher, ACT, and only using assessment proctors who have successfully completed the necessary training and are therefore trained as WorkKeys test administrators.

Distance Education Policy

Purpose

The Vermont Agency of Education (AOE) has developed the following distance education policy in recognition that innovations in the delivery of distance education (also referred to as distance learning) may effectively engage, motivate and retain many Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) students.

Introduction

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act’s (WIOA) thirteen considerations for the selection of AEL providers emphasizes that adult education programs are to “. . . effectively use technology, services, and delivery systems, including distance education in a manner sufficient to increase the amount and quality of learning and how such technology, services and systems lead to improved performance.” – WIOA, Sec. 231 (e)(7).

“Distance education,” “distance learning,” and “remote learning” are terms often used interchangeably. Distance education is defined (see Definitions section below) in the National Reporting System’s Technical Assistance Guide. For the purposes of Federal reporting the term “distance education” will be used as a formal reference, but “distance learning” or “remote learning” are also acceptable ways to describe the program and activities on a daily basis and in promotional materials that local AEL providers may develop.

Distance learning can offer the flexibility some adult education students need to access a rigorous education when juggling multiple demands on their time – such as work and/or family obligations – or navigating barriers outside of their control.

Integrating distance learning into AEL instructional programs will support:

- the delivery of educational services to individuals who cannot or prefer not to receive traditional in-person instruction;
- extended learning opportunities and/or differentiated instruction for students already enrolled in AEL in-person programs; and,
- local program preparedness in case in-person interactions are not possible due to a state of emergency.

Through technical assistance, the Vermont AOE will support local AEL providers to continue maximizing technology resources so that students receive sufficiently rigorous educational services that meet their individual needs.

Definitions

Distance Education: Formal learning activity where students and instructors are separated by geography, time, or both for the majority of the instructional period.

Distance learning materials are delivered through a variety of media including, but not limited to, print, audio recording, videotape, broadcasts, computer software, web-based programs and other online technology. Teachers support distance learners through communication via mail, telephone, e-mail or online technologies and software - [Technical Assistance Guide for Performance Accountability under WIOA, National Reporting System for Adult Education.](#)

Traditional Learners: Learners who receive the majority of their instructional hours through in-person instruction.

Distance Learners: Learners who receive the majority of their instructional hours through distance learning.

Hybrid learning: This instructional model delivers content and instruction both in-person and remotely to students. May also be referred to as “blended learning.” A learner who participates in hybrid learning will be considered a distance learner for NRS purposes only if the majority of instructional hours credited to the learner are considered distance learning contact and/or proxy hours as opposed to in-person contact hours.

Student Contact Hours

In-person contact hours and distance learning hours will be recorded separately. The determination of the learner’s status as a traditional or distance learner will be made at the end of the year and will be based on which category of hours comprises over 50% of the learner’s total instructional time. The learner’s hours in both traditional and distance situations will be included in NRS reports under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

Contact hours: *Hours of instruction or instructional activity that the participant receives from the program.* Instructional activity includes any program-sponsored activity designed to promote learning in the program curriculum, such as classroom instruction, assessment, tutoring, or participation in a learning lab. Time spent on assessment can be counted only if the assessment is designed to inform placement decisions, assess progress, or inform instruction. Time used simply to administer tests, such as the GED tests, cannot be considered instructional activity.

Contact hours for distance learning: *Synchronous time spent instructing the learner.* Contact hours for distance learners include two-way interaction between an AEL provider instructor and learner(s) by telephone, video, teleconference, or other online communication where learner(s) and provider staff are able to interact and through which learner identity is verifiable.

Proxy hours: Synchronous time a non-AEL source spends instructing the learner and/or asynchronous time a learner spends independently engaged with distance learning activities. For proxy hours to qualify, a student must have an active EFL as a pre-requisite. Proxy hours must be rounded to the nearest quarter hour and may be counted as described below.

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- **Clock Time Model** – assigns contact hours based on time a learner is engaged in a curriculum program that tracks actual time on task. All documentation must be uploaded into the student’s document file in LACES.
 - Approved Clock Time Model platforms for course-based distance learning are:
 - **Vermont Virtual Learning Cooperative (VTVLC)** – This may include traditional or on-demand courses.
 - Students can use up to 20 hours per quarter (January 1 – March 31, etc.) of proxy learning from an approved program (below) to count towards the minimal 40 hours of instruction that occurs between progress assessments. Approved Clock Time Model platforms for other study are:
 - **TABE Academy**
 - **Burlington English**
 - **Essential Education’s GED Academy**
 - **Khan Academy (standards-based content aligned with Vermont State standards only: math, reading and language arts, and science.)**
 - **IXL (standards-based content aligned with Vermont State standards only: math, language arts, science and social studies.)**
- **Learner Mastery Model** - assigns a fixed number of contact hours for unit or lesson mastery based on passing a unit or lesson test. Approved Learner Mastery Models are:
 - **ACT WorkKeys: National Career Readiness Certificate** – 3 proxy hours may be entered for each of the three assessments that the student passes AND achieves a score with a minimum of Level 4 on each WorkKeys assessment – Graphic Literacy, Applied Math, and Workplace documents for a total of 9 possible proxy hours.
 - Prerequisite: current Educational Functioning Level.
 - Required documentation to be placed in student file: dated copy of identifying screen shot or hard copy of “passed” status for each assessment or of certificate achieved.

Documenting Proxy Hours in LACES: During any quarter, a student may in fact engage in more than 20 hours per quarter, but only 20 hours may be entered into LACES for participation in the five platforms above. For example, if a student engages in 30 hours of activity in TABE Academy between the dates of January 1 and March 31 of 2024, 20 of those 30 hours may be entered into LACES on the Hours tab for proxy under a Class that is an active Enrollment called, for example, “TABE Academy FY24.” In addition to the 20 hours in the five platforms, hours may be entered for VTVLC courses and to earn the National Career Readiness Certificate.

Documentation from each platform may include a screenshot or downloaded report that shows the name of the platform, student name, activity, and the hours with dates of

activity that fall within the quarter. Name and number each platform's document using this convention provided as an example that includes the student ID: "1Proxy-FY24-Q3-121212" and "2Proxy-FY24-Q3-121212".

Upload each document into the student's record under the Student Data > Documents tab. Select ADD and then choose "Monitoring proxy hour documentation" under document type.

Selecting VTVLC Courses

Adult Diploma Program (ADP) students have access to both traditional and on-demand online courses from [VTVLC for a fee](#). Courses should be selected that will meet proficiency-based graduation requirements for ADP.

Careful consideration should be given to assist the learner in selecting the course level that will maximize learning and skills attainment successfully and advance them toward their secondary, postsecondary and/or career goals. Local AEL providers should conduct an assessment of students' digital literacy skills and provide necessary services to improve the student's ability to effectively use technology and successfully access online VTVLC courses.

AEL Activities

AEL activities that are standards-based and may be entered into the database include:

- Academic content below the postsecondary level: i.e., English Language Acquisition, Mathematics, and English Language Arts.
- Vermont's Education Quality Standards Transferable Skills: communication, collaboration, creativity, innovation, inquiry, problem solving, use of technology.

Exclusions

All courses and instruction that count as contact hours (in-person or distance learning) or proxy hours must be AEL activities. The activities described below are excluded from AEL activities and may not be entered into the AEL database or counted toward the required 40 hours of instruction between NRS assessments for AEL students.

- Courses in physical education, foreign languages, art, or psychology for example, are not AEL activities.
- AEL activities must be below the postsecondary level, therefore dual enrollment courses taken at higher education institutions are also excluded.
- AEL providers should consult with the Vermont AOE if uncertain about whether particular academic content would be considered an AEL activity.

Assessments and Distance Learning Hours

Students enrolled in distance education programs must be tested using the same instruments and following the same procedures as all other students. Qualifying

distance learning contact and proxy hours may count in the 40-hour interval between assessments as described in this federally-approved assessment manual.

Assessment Instrument Training Requirements

This is a guide to required AEL assessment-related trainings.

Overall objectives for this approach:

- Provide an understanding of the purposes of assessment (formative, diagnostic, and summative) in adult education.
- Provide a practical understanding of the proper procedures for using our current slate of approved standardized assessment instruments.

Training Requirement #1: Basics

Required of whom: AEL staff who have assessment duties and who work directly with students, and managers.

What is required:

1. Successful completion of the course “Introduction to Assessment for Adult Basic Education”, and
2. Attend the live 90-minute, provider-facilitated “Vermont Adult Education & Literacy Comprehensive Assessment Training”

LINCS: Introduction to Assessment for Adult Basic Education

By when: Complete at least once in career within 12 months of initial hire.

- It is an online course facilitated by a LINCS instructor, with specific start and end dates, for 12 hours of professional development credit. You will need to have created a LINCS account.
- This course is scheduled annually.
- Notice of course schedule and open registration will be sent via the Didja_Know listserv.
- Send proof of successful completion (i.e., attach copy of certificate) to AOE.AdultEducation@vermont.gov, and
- Upload a copy in the LACES database under the documents section of your account.

This online course is designed for teachers, program administrators, and professional development providers who want to understand the present landscape of assessment in Adult Basic Education. Participants will be introduced to LINCS and its resources, including the online assessment community where staff will post an activity as a culminating experience of this course. The intent of this course is to draw on participants’ current understanding and practice of assessment, introduce new

information, and provide opportunities for to reflect on and improve their own practice with assessment.

The objectives for the course are to:

- learn the appropriate use of diagnostic, formative, and summative assessment;
- identify stakeholders and consider which assessment type might best suit student needs.
- understand the importance of involving students in assessment and of having students establish their own goals;
- identify ways to conduct diagnostic or formative assessment in the classroom;
- understand the importance of aligning assessments and instruction with student goals; and,
- become familiar with LINCS and what resources it has to offer.

Vermont Adult Education & Literacy: Comprehensive Assessment Training

This 90-minute facilitated live training is intended to be part of any provider's new teacher orientation, regardless of test administration experience. It is a holistic training designed to comprehensively cover all aspects of testing from foundational knowledge of assessment design through state policies and procedures. This training must be given within one year of employment or prior to administering any NRS assessment, whichever comes first.

The objectives of this training are to understand:

- a. the roles and responsibilities of AEL's assessment program,
- b. general rules, procedures and protocols of testing including the Non-Disclosure and Trainer Assurance documents,
- c. training requirements,
- d. appropriate use of AEL's diagnostic, formative and summative assessments and the purpose of each instructionally,
- e. basic assessment literacy and test development,
- f. how to document assessments in LACES (state's AEL database),
- g. distance education, and
- h. Vermont's AEL specific assessment policies and procedures.

Training Requirement #2: Formative assessment

Required of whom: all AEL instructors.

What is required: Successfully complete one course on formative assessment.

Depending on primary teaching assignment, choose a course with a focus on English language students, ABE writing, OR ABE math.

By when: Complete at least one of the formative assessment courses at least once in career within 12 months of initial hire.

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- They are offered online within the LINCS Learning Portal in the formats as described below. You will need to have created a LINCS account.
- If a course is being offered and is open to Vermont AEL staff, a notice will be sent via the Didja_Know listserv.
- Send proof of successful completion (i.e., attached copy of certificate) to AOE.AdultEducation@vermont.gov, and
- Upload documentation under your account in LACES.

Course descriptions:

NOTE: The Formative Assessment to Inform Quality ESL Instruction course is not currently available through LINCS. The AOE is working to identify a replacement course.

Teaching Excellence in Adult Literacy (TEAL): Formative Assessment (6 hours) (Choose Writing OR Math)

Formative assessment refers to both the formal and the informal processes that teachers and students use collaboratively to gather evidence of student learning for the purpose of improving the learning. Formative assessment occurs *while the learning is taking place*, as opposed to summative assessment that typically occurs at the end of a learning unit or course to determine what the student has learned. Formative assessment is a *process*, not a one-time event; it is assessment *for* learning, rather than assessment *of* learning, as with summative assessment. By the end of this course, participants will be able to define formative assessment and its benefits for classroom instruction; describe strategies for using formative assessment in the adult education classroom; and identify a goal for using one or more formative assessment strategies.

TEAL: Formative Assessment is an online course facilitated by an instructor, with specific start and end dates.

Training Requirement #3: Instrument-specific

Required of whom: Staff who need to administer specific standardized assessment instruments. At least one staff member per full-service learning center must be trained to administer the TABE and CASAS. At least one staff member per AEL provider must be trained to administer the BEST Plus 2.0 and the 3.0. Each provider must maintain an adequate number of staff who can administer assessments.

What is required: Take certification training, in the specific standardized assessment instrument(s) that you will administer to students, and pass the associated quiz, on the schedule required.

When/where: Face-to-face or virtual sessions on locally planned schedule.

- training is accessed through the publisher's online training. Each test administrator must post their certificate indicating a passing score in LACES.

Training Requirement #4: Annual general assessment and NRS updates

Required of whom: All AEL staff with assessment duties (i.e., anyone working directly with students, and managers).

- What is required: Annual assessment and National Reporting System (NRS) updates webinar.
- When/where: Each year staff must successfully complete the annual NRS refresher, offered annually via video conference/webinar by the AOE.

Questions about assessment practices, trainings, or requirements? Contact the AEL team at: AOE.AdultEducation@vermont.gov.

Tracking Chart for AEL Assessments

It is recommended that staff use this chart to document that they have met the requirements.

Staff Name: _____

Primary Role: _____

Training requirement	Applicable to me?	Due date for completion	Date completed	Certificate sent to AOE & Uploaded in LACES	Next recertification due
1: Basics					
LINCS: Introduction to Assessment for Adult Basic Education	Yes/No	Within 12 months of hire:			N/A
Vermont Adult Education & Literacy: Comprehensive Assessment Training	Yes/No	Within 12 months of hire or prior to administering 1 st assessment.			N/A
2: Formative assessment	Yes/No If yes, course chosen:	Within 12 months of hire:			N/A
3: Specific instruments					
TABE 11/12	Yes/No				In 3 years from last completion:
TABE 13/14	Yes/No				In 3 years from last completion:

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Training requirement	Applicable to me?	Due date for completion	Date completed	Certificate sent to AOE & Uploaded in LACES	Next recertification due
<i>CASAS Life and Work, Life Skills</i>	Yes/No				In 3 years from last completion:
<i>CASAS Reading STEPS</i>	Yes/No				In 3 years from last completion:
<i>BEST Plus 2.0</i>	Yes/No				Every two years.
<i>Best Plus 3.0</i>	Yes/No				Every two years.
4: Annual general assessment & NRS updates	Yes/No				Annually:

Baseline and Progress Testing Timeframes

Also see Transitioning to New Assessments (above)

For the approved assessments listed above, refer to the following chart for recommended baseline and progress testing timeframes from the publishers. Please read and comply with this information carefully. The database system is programmed to disallow assessments that are not in compliance.

Test Name	Publisher Recommended Pre & Post Testing Time Frames	Contact/Notes
ACT/Work Keys	We recommend that the learner be involved in regular instruction that is offered by the institution (a semester or quarter course.)	ACT customer care: 319-337-1270 Accommodations: 319-337-1332

Test Name	Publisher Recommended Pre & Post Testing Time Frames	Contact/Notes
<p>Basic English Skills Test (BEST) Plus 2.0 & Best Plus 3.0</p>	<p>60 hours minimum; 80-100 hours recommended.</p> <p>If the hours for a course of instruction exceed the recommended number of hours, post-testing may most appropriately take place at the end of the instructional session.</p> <p>Because program-related factors such as intensity of instruction, class size, teacher training, and experience, and use of appropriate curricula and materials will affect language learning proficiency gains, programs should consider these factors when determining timing for pre- and post-testing.</p>	<p>Center for Applied Linguistics</p> <p>Dr. Anna Zilberberg azilberberg@cal.org</p>
<p>CASAS Life & Work Reading & CASAS Reading STEPS</p>	<p>40 hours minimum; 70-100 hours recommended</p> <p>e.g., allow more time for courses that meet infrequently or not intensively and for very intensive courses wait longer than the recommended number of hours to post-test.</p> <p>Programs offering high intensity courses (e.g., 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.</p> <p>Programs offering low intensity courses with less than 70 hours in</p>	<p>Linda Taylor, Director of Assessment Development, CASAS 800-255-1036, ext. 186</p>

Test Name	Publisher Recommended Pre & Post Testing Time Frames	Contact/Notes
	<p>a semester, quarter, term, or other block of instruction, may choose to post-test at the end of the instructional period (Note from State: the minimum of 40 hours must be met).</p>	
<p>TABE 11/12 & TABE 13/14</p>	<p>Data Recognition Corporation (DRC) (e.g., 11M to 12M) for students that test into NRS Levels 1-4 (ABE) with a minimum of 40 hours.</p> <p>For students testing into NRS Levels 5 and 6 (ASE Low and High) 30-59 hours of instruction is recommended (Note from State: the minimum of 40 hours must be met).</p> <p>If the pre- and posttest are with the same level and use the same form: 60-80 hours.</p> <p>DRC suggests the pre- and post-test guidelines as best practices recommendations based upon practitioner feedback.</p> <p>The purpose for assessing with TABE 11 & 12 or TABE CLAS-E will also have an impact on the implementation of these recommendations.</p> <p>DRC discourages random and frequent testing as it will not present valid gain scores and could create a practice effect, thus producing questionable or spurious scores.</p>	<p>Mike Johnson National Adult Education Director</p> <p>Data Recognition Corp 630-995-6712</p> <p>Christi Morgan Assessment Inside Sales Consultant</p> <p>Data Recognition Corp 763-744-3871</p>

Test Name	Publisher Recommended Pre & Post Testing Time Frames	Contact/Notes
	Instructional intervention between testing periods is strongly recommended to maximize gain. Proper use of the Locator Test as a determinant of appropriate content level testing is also strongly recommended (NOTE: REQUIRED by State) and is an integral part of the testing process.	

Assessment Types

Table 1: Skill Level Assessments

Assesses student abilities in a skill by using a state approved standardized instrument that generates an NRS/skill level and an Educational Functioning Level (EFL).

Instrument	Skills	Population
Best Plus 2.0	Speaking and Listening	ESL only
BEST Plus 3.0	Speaking and Listening	ESL only
TABE 11/12	Reading, Language, Math	ABE/ASE
TABE 13/14	Reading, Language, Math	ABE/ASE
CASAS Life and Work, Reading STEPS	Reading	ESL only
CASAS Reading STEPS	Reading	ESL only

Table 2: Skill Level Assessments That Produce NRS Skill Level

These assessments may be used to diagnose student strengths and weaknesses in skills by using standardized instruments that generate an NRS skill level but cannot be used to generate an Educational Functioning Level.

Instrument	Skills	Population
TABE CLAS-E	Writing	ESL Only
WorkKeys Applied Math*	Math	ABE/ASE
WorkKeys Workplace* Documents	Reading	ABE/ASE

*WorkKeys Graphic Literacy will not produce an NRS skill level, however, students can earn the National Career Readiness Certificate when combining WorkKeys Graphic Literacy with WorkKeys Applied Math and WorkKeys Workplace Documents.

Table 3: Skill Diagnostic Assessments that Do Not Produce NRS Skill Level

These assessments may be used to diagnose student strengths and weaknesses in skills by using standardized assessment instruments that do not generate an NRS skill level. Progress is measured by comparing changes in scores.

Instrument	Skills	Population
Accuplacer	Reading, Writing, Math	ASE
Adult Diagnostic Reading Inventory	Reading	All
Basic Reading Inventory	Reading	ABE
Diagnostic Assessments of Reading	Reading	All
Roswell Chall	Reading: word analysis	ABE: NRS 1-3
SPL (Student Performance Levels)	Speaking and Listening	ESL only
Stieglitz Reading Inventory	Reading	ABE
WADE	Reading: spelling	ABE, ASE
WorkKeys	Graphic Literacy	ASE

Instrument	Skills	Population
GED	Reasoning through Language arts, Mathematical Reasoning, Science, and Social Studies	ASE
Student Achievement in Reading (STAR)	Reading: Alphabetics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension	ABE: NRS 3-4
CASAS Essay Test	Writing	ABE: NRS 2+ and ESL Advanced

Table 4: Special Needs Learning Inventories

A structured assessment process used to determine disability assessments and/or to identify special learning accommodations that might be helpful for the student.

Instrument	Skills
Payne Checklist or Learning Needs Inventory	(None)

Appendix A**Assessment Score Charts**

Test	NRS Level	Subtest	Scale Score Ranges
BEST Plus 2.0			
BEST Plus 2.0	Computer Adaptive Not Applicable		
BEST Plus 2.0	ESL Level 1	Speaking & Listening	88-361
BEST Plus 2.0	ESL Level 2	Speaking & Listening	362-427
BEST Plus 2.0	ESL Level 3	Speaking & Listening	428-452
BEST Plus 2.0	ESL Level 4	Speaking & Listening	453-484
BEST Plus 2.0	ESL Level 5	Speaking & Listening	485-524
BEST Plus 2.0	ESL Level 6	Speaking & Listening	525-564
BEST Plus 3.0 Print Based (PB)		Speaking & Listening Part A only	
BEST Plus 3.0 (PB)	ESL Level 1	Speaking & Listening	TBD
BEST Plus 3.0 (PB)	ESL Level 2	Speaking & Listening	TBD
BEST Plus 3.0 (PB)	ESL Level 3	Speaking & Listening	TBD

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Test	NRS Level	Subtest	Scale Score Ranges
BEST Plus 3.0 (PB)	ESL Level 4	Speaking & Listening	TBD
BEST Plus 3.0 Computer Adaptive (CA)		Speaking & Listening Part A & B	
BEST Plus 3.0	ESL Level 1	Speaking & Listening	TBD
BEST Plus 3.0	ESL Level 2	Speaking & Listening	TBD
BEST Plus 3.0	ESL Level 3	Speaking & Listening	TBD
BEST Plus 3.0	ESL Level 4	Speaking & Listening	TBD
BEST Plus 3.0	ESL Level 5	Speaking & Listening	TBD
BEST Plus 3.0	ESL Level 6	Speaking & Listening	TBD
Casas Life & Work Reading			
Casas Life & Work Reading	ESL Level 1	Literacy	153-180
Casas Life & Work Reading	ESL Level 2	Reading	181-190
Casas Life & Work Reading	ESL Level 3	Reading	191-200
Casas Life & Work Reading	ESL Level 4	Reading	201-210

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Test	NRS Level	Subtest	Scale Score Ranges
Casas Life & Work Reading	ESL Level 5	Reading	211-220
Casas Life & Work Reading	ESL Level 6	Reading	221-235
CASAS Reading STEPS			
CASAS Reading STEPS	ESL Level 1	Reading	183 and below
CASAS Reading STEPS	ESL Level 2	Reading	184-196
CASAS Reading STEPS	ESL Level 3	Reading	197-206
CASAS Reading STEPS	ESL Level 4	Reading	207-216
CASAS Reading STEPS	ESL Level 5	Reading	217-227
CASAS Reading STEPS	ESL Level 6	Reading	228-238
CASAS Reading STEPS	ESL Level 6 ("exit"/Advanced)	Reading	239 and above
TABE 11/12 (Language ABE)			
TABE 11/12	ABE Level 1	Language ABE	300-457
TABE 11/12	ABE Level 2	Language ABE	458-510
TABE 11/12	ABE Level 3	Language ABE	511-546
TABE 11/12	ABE Level 4	Language ABE	547-583

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Test	NRS Level	Subtest	Scale Score Ranges
TABE 11/12	ABE Level 5	Language ABE	584-630
TABE 11/12	ABE Level 6	Language ABE	631-800
TABE 11/12 (Total Math ABE)			
TABE 11/12	ABE Level 1	Total Math ABE	300-448
TABE 11/12	ABE Level 2	Total Math ABE	449-495
TABE 11/12	ABE Level 3	Total Math ABE	496-536
TABE 11/12	ABE Level 4	Total Math ABE	537-595
TABE 11/12	ABE Level 5	Total Math ABE	596-656
TABE 11/12	ABE Level 6	Total Math ABE	657-800
TABE 11/12 (Reading ABE)			
TABE 11/12	ABE Level 1	Reading ABE	300-441
TABE 11/12	ABE Level 2	Reading ABE	442-500
TABE 11/12	ABE Level 3	Reading ABE	501-535
TABE 11/12	ABE Level 4	Reading ABE	536-575
TABE 11/12	ABE Level 5	Reading ABE	576-616
TABE 11/12	ABE Level 6	Reading ABE	617-800
TABE 13/14 (Language ABE)			
TABE 13/14	ABE Level 1	Language ABE	300-457
TABE 13/14	ABE Level 2	Language ABE	458-510
TABE 13/14	ABE Level 3	Language ABE	511-546

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Test	NRS Level	Subtest	Scale Score Ranges
TABE 13/14	ABE Level 4	Language ABE	547-583
TABE 13/14	ABE Level 5	Language ABE	584-630
TABE 13/14	ABE Level 6	Language ABE	631-800
TABE 13/14 (Math ABE)			
TABE 13/14	ABE Level 1	Total Math ABE	300-448
TABE 13/14	ABE Level 2	Total Math ABE	449-495
TABE 13/14	ABE Level 3	Total Math ABE	496-536
TABE 13/14	ABE Level 4	Total Math ABE	537-595
TABE 13/14	ABE Level 5	Total Math ABE	596-656
TABE 13/14	ABE Level 6	Total Math ABE	657-800
TABE 13/14 (Reading ABE)			
TABE 13/14	ABE Level 1	Reading ABE	300-441
TABE 13/14	ABE Level 2	Reading ABE	442-500
TABE 13/14	ABE Level 3	Reading ABE	501-535
TABE 13/14	ABE Level 4	Reading ABE	536-575
TABE 13/14	ABE Level 5	Reading ABE	576-616
TABE 13/14	ABE Level 6	Reading ABE	617-800

Appendix B

Change Log

Date	Description	Page #, paragraph
8/8/2024	Changed date on cover page	Title page
8/8/2024	Added TABE 13/14 and CASAS Reading Steps to the assessment list	Pg. 5
8/8/2024	Added TABE 13/14 and CASAS Reading Steps to the list of federally approved assessments that generate an EFL	Pg. 6
8/8/2024	Sixth bullet, added TABE 13/14	Pg. 7
8/8/2024	Seventh bullet, removed “writing” and added TABE 13/14	Pg. 7
8/8/2024	Added a third bullet describing pre & post testing using the same test. Added the example of moving from TABE 11/12 to TABE 13/14	Pg. 7
8/8/2024	Under bullet 6, changed the example for progress assessing from TABE 11/12 to TABE 13/14, and from CASAS Life and Work to CASAS Reading STEPS	Pg. 8
8/8/2024	Under Paper and Online Assessments – Removed the first sentence stating that TABE 11/12 paper and online progress assessments to act as matched pairs retroactive to July 1, 2019. This is outdated COVID language	Pg. 8
8/8/2024	Second sentence under Paper and Online Assessment, added “prior to January 1, 2025”	Pg. 8
8/8/2024	Deleted third sentence in the first paragraph under Paper and Online Assessments. Outdated language from COVID that has now become standard protocol	Pg. 8

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Date	Description	Page #, paragraph
8/8/2024	Last sentence, first paragraph under Paper and Online Assessments section, removed “finally”, and added “In addition to equity...”	Pg. 8
8/8/2024	Added a new section “Transitioning to New Assessments”	Pgs. 8-9
8/8/2024	Added a transition timeline that provides guidance on preemptive steps to take in order to transition from legacy assessments to new assessments	Pgs. 9-10
8/8/2024	Under Contact Hours for Distance Learning, removed the last sentence that pertained to HSCP	Pg. 13
8/8/2024	Second sentence under Proxy Hours to explain that a students must have an active EFL to qualify for proxy hours	Pg. 14
8/8/2024	Under ‘Clock Time Model”, removed language pertaining to VTVLC, and language pertaining to HSCP	Pg. 14
8/8/2024	Under ‘Learner Mastery Model”, removed language referencing HSCP	Pg. 14
8/8/2024	Added “Documenting Proxy Hours in LACES” section	Pg. 14
8/8/2024	Removed section “Selecting VTVLC Courses”	Pg. 15
8/8/2024	Removed “Instrument” from the “Assessment Instrument Training Requirements” title. Not all related to a specific instrument	Pg. 16
8/8/2024	Rewrote the Basic Training Requirement’s section to include the provider facilitated live training for new teachers	Pg. 17
8/8/2024	Under “Exclusions”, removed third bullet that contained language around HSCP	Pg. 17

Date	Description	Page #, paragraph
8/8/2024	Added a subsection “Vermont Assessment and Policy Training” section to the Basic Training section	Pg. 17
8/8/2024	Under Training Requirement #3, removed first bullet that pertained to TABE 11/12, CASAS, and TABE CLAS E that spoke about specific instrument trainings being delivered by local staff because specific instrument training will be taken online by the publisher and certificates of completion (with passing quiz scores) will be uploaded into the new LACES database	Pg. 18
8/8/2024	Under Training Requirement #3, removed reference to TABE CLAS E	Pg. 18
8/8/2024	In addition to sending certificate to AOE, added & uploading certificate into LACES	Pg. 20
8/8/2024	Added TABE 13/14 and CASAS Reading STEPS to the Tracking Chart for AEL Assessments	Pg. 20
8/8/2024	Added BEST Plus 3.0 Computer Adaptive and Paper to the Tracking Chart for AEL Assessments	Pg. 20
8/8/2024	Under Baseline and Progress Assessing Timeframes, added BEST Plus 3.0 and CASAS Reading STEPS	Pg. 22
8/8/2024	Removed TABE CLAS E from the Baseline and Progress Testing Table	Pg. 22
8/8/2024	Under Baseline and Progress Assessment Chart, added “FORMS 13/14” to the TABE section, and removed reference to CTB in the TABE contact information	Pg. 23
8/8/2024	Added Table 2 Skill Diagnostic Assessment That Produce NRS Skill Level: TABE CLAS E, WorkKeys Applied Math, and WorkKeys Workplace Documents	Pgs. 24-25

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Date	Description	Page #, paragraph
8/8/2024	Removed Table 2: Special Needs Learning Inventories	Pg. 25
8/8/2024	Changed Language – Table 3: Skill Diagnostic Assessments that do not Produce NRS Skill Levels	Pg. 25
8/8/2024	Removed WorkKeys Workplace Documents and Applied Math (now produce NRS skill levels), but kept WorkKeys Graphic Literacy	Pg. 25
8/8/2024	Added an asterisk explanation for WorkKeys Graphic Literacy and how a student can obtain a recognized credential using WorkKeys	Pg. 25
8/8/2024	Created Table 4 (formerly Table 3): Special Needs Learning Inventories	Pg. 26
8/8/2024	Added BEST Plus 3.0 to Appendix A	Pg. 27
8/8/2024	Removed TABE CLAS E Form A & Form B from Appendix A	Pg. 29
8/8/2024	Added TABE 13/14 and Scale Score Ranges to Appendix A for all three assessments: Language, Reading and Math	Pg. 30
1/4/2024	Removed reference to old database and kept a generic naming convention of “AEL database”	Pg.5, pp2
1/4/2024	Added extended explanation on the expiration of progress assessments and EFL	Pg. 5, pp3
1/4/2024	Removed reference to “progressed assessed to NRS 6” as an indication of readiness to transition to ABE/ASE courses	Pg 7, 7 th bullet (under federal NRS reporting)
1/4/2024	Removed last sentence, “The examining entity is authorized to collect fees for test administration, which is set by the Vermont Agency of Education.	Pg. 8, WorkKeys

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Date	Description	Page #, paragraph
	Currently, the fee is established at \$22 for each of the tests.”	
4/1/2024	Removed reference to COVID 19 guidance	Pg. 8
1/4/2024	Added extended explanation that defines ‘quarters’ with dates	Pg.11, 1 st bullet
1/4/2024	Added new language around proxy hours and the allowance of the use of ‘clock-time’ for documenting proxy hours. (up to 20 hours)	Pg. 11, 1 st bullet
1/4/2024	Added language regarding uploading documentation of proxy hours into the AEL database	Pg. 11, 1 st bullet
1/4/2024	Added “The following platforms...Learner Mastery Model...December 31, 2023, only:”	Pg. 12, 2 nd bullet under Learner Mastery Model
1/4/2024	Changed Training Requirement #1 Basics from 6 months to complete the course to 12 months from date of initial hire	Pg. 15, Training Requirement #1
1/4/2024	Changed Training Requirement #2 Formative Assessment from 6 months to complete the course to 12 months from the date of initial hire	Pg. 16, Training Requirement #2
1/4/2024	Added language around proof of completion and the added step of uploading the documentation of this proof into LACES, the AEL database	Page 17, 4 th bullet under Training Requirement #2
1/4/2024	Removed the language on doing a BEST Plus 2.0 Refresher training, as this will not apply in FY24	Page 17, 2 nd bullet under Training Requirement #3
4/1/2024	Test Administrators now have the option to become certified using the test publisher’s online training, thereby allowing certification documentation to be uploaded into state database	Page 17, second bullet under Training Requirement #3

Date	Description	Page #, paragraph
1/4/2024	Removed the language on doing a BEST Plus 2.0 Refresher training in the Tracking Chart for AEL Assessments	Page 18
4/1/2024	Changed BEST Plus 2.0 contact to Dr. Anna Zilberberg	Page 19
1/4/2024	Deleted the reference to allow exception for different schedules	Page 20, CASAS section in chart
1/4/2024	Added a parenthetical note that “a minimum of 40 hours must be met”	Page 20, CASAS
1/4/2024	Deleted language around Programs choosing to assess students early who are leaving the program	Page 20, CASAS
1/4/2024	Added a parenthetical note that a minimum 40-hours must be met	Page 21, TABE CLAS E
1/4/2024	Added NRS levels to the Assessment Score Charts	Appendix A