

Office of the State Superintendent of
Education
State Education Agency (SEA)

Assessment Policy
for
Adult Education and Family
Literacy Programs

with
Revisions to Pages 21 and 22 Only

June 2008

Table of Contents

	Page
INTRODUCTION	
Overview	2
The CASAS System	2
CASAS Validity and Reliability	3
Training Requirements	5
Available Tests	6
Quick Search Software and Instructional Materials	6
Materials Ordering	6
Test Security	7
Test Administration	7
Quality Control Procedures	8
 APPRAISAL TESTING	
Introduction to Appraisal Testing	9
Appraisal Testing for ABE/ASE	9
Appraisal Testing for ESL	10
 PRE-TESTING AND POST-TESTING	
Introduction to Pre-testing and Post-testing	12
Pre-testing and Post-testing Schedule	12
Validity Matched Pre-tests and Post-tests	13
Impact of Assessment	13
Informal Assessments	13
Prohibited Assessment Methods and Materials	14
Life Skills Reading Phase out	14
Supplemental and Extended Range Tests	14
Top-out Scores and High Valid Range Scores	15
Exemptions	15
Tests for Learners with Special Needs	16
Testing Accommodations	16
 RESOURCES	
CASAS Skill Level Descriptors ABE	18
CASAS Skill Level Descriptors ESL	19
CASAS Skill Level Descriptors for Persons With Developmental Disabilities	20
NRS Educational Functioning Levels ABE/ASE/ESL	21
Relationship among CASAS, NRS, NLS, SPL	22
CASAS Test Series Descriptions, Content Areas And Levels	23
Available CASAS Test Series	24
DC SEA and CASAS Contact Information	25

INTRODUCTION

This document outlines the District of Columbia, State Education Agency (SEA) assessment policies and guidelines designed to comply with local, state and federal accountability and reporting requirements. All local adult education programs funded by the SEA with federal and/or district dollars are required to adhere to these policies and guidelines. The information gained will be invaluable when evaluating learner progress, instruction, and program performance and to inform public policy.

Overview

Adult learners should be assessed at specific times during the educational process to:

- Help adult learners understand their basic skill functioning levels and to explore the available educational options;
- Determine the appropriate program and instructional level for placement;
- Identify learners' strengths and gaps to inform instruction;
- Monitor student learning in class and target instruction based on learners' needs;
- Assess and monitor learners' educational gains after a period of instruction;
- Examine classroom and program performance for planning and quality improvement purposes;
- Evaluate program performance; and
- Acquire data that meets local, state and federal accountability and reporting requirements.

To achieve these aims, the DC State Education Agency mandates that all programs (Adult Basic Education (ABE), General Education Development (GED), English as a Second Languages (ESL), Family Literacy, and Workplace Literacy) use the approved standardized assessment - the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) - to determine learner outcomes. Requests to use alternate assessment instruments must be submitted in writing and approved by the SEA.

The Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS)

CASAS is the most widely used system for assessing adult basic reading, math, listening, writing, and speaking skills within a functional context. It provides learner-centered curriculum management, assessment, and

evaluation systems in educational and training programs. It is used nationwide in ABE/ASE, ESL, workplace literacy, family literacy, employment and training, welfare reform/TANF, citizenship, and correctional programs and meets Workforce Investment Act (WIA) requirements.

As the basis for this integrated system, CASAS has identified more than 300 essential skills that adults need to function effectively in their roles as parents/family members, workers, and citizens/community members. These competencies have been developed and validated at the state and national level through field research and recommendations from adult education providers, adult learners, business and industry professionals, and community based organizations. CASAS competencies correlate to the SCANS competencies, the National External Diploma Program competencies, and to the California English as a Second Language (ESL) Model Standards.

CASAS

- Links curriculum, instruction, and assessment;
- Assesses learning in real life contexts;
- Is the most widely used system for assessing adult basic reading, math, listening, writing, and speaking skills within a functional context; and
- Is the only assessment system of its kind to be approved and validated by the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Labor to assess both native and non-native speakers of English.

CASAS Validity and Reliability

Validity

All CASAS assessment instruments have undergone rigorous test development and validation procedures and meet the standards of the American Education Research Association (ARE), the National Council for Measurement in Education (NCME), and the American Psychological Association (APA). The CASAS Technical Manual, 3rd Edition, contains detailed information about test validity and reliability.

The Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing (1999) states that validity refers to the appropriateness, meaningfulness, and usefulness of the specific inferences made from test scores. There are various evidences of validity, with construct validity encompassing the overriding

issue of proper use and construction of test items, and with content-related and criterion-related validity as subcomponents. Item content evidence is a measure of the extent to which test items measure what they are intended to measure.

Criterion-related validity, sometimes referred to as predictive validity, assesses the ability or effectiveness of an instrument in predicting something it should theoretically be able to predict. CASAS created ABE/ASE Skill Level Descriptors (reading, math, and writing skills) to show a continuum of skills from beginning adult basic education through advanced adult secondary levels; ESL Skill Level Descriptors (listening, reading, writing, and speaking skills) from ESL beginning literacy through proficient skills; and Skill Level Descriptors for Persons with Developmental Disabilities. These 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 life skills and job-related tasks a person can generally accomplish. CASAS Skill Level Descriptors for ABE/ASE, ESL and Persons with Developmental Disabilities are presented on pages 18-20.

Results from most CASAS tests are reported on a common numerical scale. This scale has been used successfully with more than three million adult and youth learners. The CASAS scale is divided into five broad areas: A (Beginning Literacy) to E (Advanced Secondary), each encompassing a range of scores. Level A and B have been further subdivided to guide instructional placement and to monitor learner progress. Each level is defined by a CASAS scale score range with corresponding competency descriptors of performance in employment and adult life skills contexts.

The CASAS Skill Level Descriptors have been validated by expert teachers, members of the CASAS National Consortium, as well as through external validation studies. During the late 1990s, staff from the Center for Linguistics and CASAS worked together to review and update the correlation between Student Performance Levels (SPLs) and CASAS levels to ensure that the NRS Functioning Level (EFL) Descriptors used for reporting learner gains were consistent with research already done in the field. Large-scale CASAS implementing states such as California, Connecticut, and Oregon participated in a national-level NRS advisory committee and provided guidance in the initial development and implementation of the NRS. Once the NRS EFLs were finalized, CASAS conducted a review and confirmed that the CASAS Skill Level Descriptors aligned with the NRS EFLs.

NRS EFLs provide standardized assessment benchmarks that allow adult education administrators and instructors to place students into a particular level according to their assessment results. Test benchmarks help determine when students have made progress within a level, completed a level, and are ready to move to the next level. The NRS includes six EFLs for ABE/ASE and ESL as presented on page 21. CASAS benchmark test scores (the highest number in each scale score range) are used to identify adult learners who complete an EFL based on CASAS Pre-and Post-Test match scores. The relationship among CASAS levels and score ranges and NRS EFLs is presented on page 22.

Reliability

CASAS reliability (test accuracy) has two major subcomponents – consistency and stability. For each scale score attained on a CASAS test, a standard error of measurement (SEM) is given. In addition to reporting a scale score for raw scores attained on a test, CASAS established a range of accuracy for each test form. For every score in the accurate range, a SEM for each scale score is given. For scale scores exceeding the accurate range, CASAS provides a usable, conservative scale score estimate. Therefore, administrators are encouraged to administer a test at the next more difficult test level to obtain a more accurate scale score estimate. CASAS does not report scale scores for raw scores falling below the accurate range.

CASAS uses the most currently researched and recommended methodology in educational measurement practice – Item Response Theory (IRT) – to establish indexes of item bank, test, and test score reliability. For indexes of consistency, CASAS tests for the unidimensionality of the item bank ensuring items all measure the same underlying construct.

Training Requirements

Training on the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) is required to ensure accurate use of tests, appropriate interpretation of learner results, and to maintain the integrity and quality of the assessment and reporting process. CASAS assessments cannot be used by agencies that have not completed CASAS training by certified personnel. Therefore, per Subcontract Agreement, all SEA grantees are required to participate in CASAS Implementation Training. This training teaches participants to administer, score, and interpret CASAS reading, math, listening, writing, and speaking assessments. It also addresses how

to use the CASAS competency system and CASAS resources, such as Quick Search, to facilitate instruction.

The SEA provides CASAS Implementation Training on an as needed basis to SEA grantees and other agencies in the District of Columbia. At least two staff members from each agency are required to successfully complete CASAS training. Once trained, these individuals can train others within their respective agency, but may not train outside that agency. The SEA will maintain a database of individuals who have participated in CASAS Implementation Training offered by the SEA to ensure that grantees have a sufficient number of staff trained to implement CASAS. Participant contact information and other training logistics will be recorded in the database. SEA grantees must maintain documentation of their staff's participation in CASAS Implementation Training by a Certified CASAS Trainer or trained staff member in their agency, and demonstrate proper utilization of the approved standardized assessments as part of the SEA informal and formal monitoring process.

Available CASAS Tests

CASAS offers assessment instruments in different series or contexts as presented on pages 23 and 24. Local adult education providers must select, order and administer the appropriate CASAS test series based on the learners' goals and the instructional focus of the program (i.e. general life skills and work skills, employability, workplace).

Quick Search Software and Instructional Materials

Quick Search software (formerly known as the Instructional Materials Guide) cross-references the CASAS Competencies to more than 2,000 commercially published print, audio, visual, and computer-related instructional materials appropriate for use with adults or youth.

Materials Ordering

Only SEA grantees who successfully complete the CASAS Implementation Training may order CASAS assessments and materials. Individuals who do not complete the training may not order materials. CASAS tests are designed to assess learning along a continuum from beginning literacy and English language acquisition through completion of secondary level skills. There are several test series that differ in contextual focus with test difficulty levels ranging from below Level A (beginning literacy) through Level D (adult secondary) as presented on pages 23 and 24.

SEA grantees must select and order the appropriate CASAS test series based on the learners' goals and the instructional focus of the program (i.e. general life skills and work skills, employability, workplace).

Test Security

The SEA requires all grantees to sign an annual test security agreement. This agreement stipulates the following:

- The local adult education program director assumes responsibility for safeguarding all CASAS-developed assessment materials, including Test Administration Manuals, and answer sheets (which contain marks or responses).
- All CASAS materials should be stored in a locked, preferably fireproof, file cabinet accessible to the program director or the director's designee(s).
- Staff who administer assessments should return all materials immediately after use to the program director or the director's designee(s).
- All answer sheets and writing samples are treated as confidential until destroyed.
- No duplication of any test form or any portion of any test form is permitted for any reason.
- Staff 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 must use instructional resources provided by CASAS, Quick Search and/or other support materials to link curriculum, assessment and instruction.

Test Administration Manual

A Test Administration Manual (TAM) or Test Administration Directions accompany each test series and provide quality control guidelines to ensure proper test utilization, administration, scoring and results interpretation.

Test Administration Manuals typically include:

- The CASAS Assessment System
- Overview of CASAS Progress Testing
- Description of Tests
- Determining Pre- and Post-Test Level
- Test Security
- Instructions for Administering Tests
- Scoring
- Data Collection
- Interpretation of Results
- Curriculum Planning, Instruction, and Assessment
- Resources
- Testing Accommodations
- Skill Level Descriptors
- Suggested Next Test Chart
- Answer Keys and Score Conversion Charts (for converting raw scores to scale scores)
- Learner Profile Sheets
- Learner Performance by Competency
- Class Profile by Competency

The SEA requires that all grantees follow the guidelines in each Test Administration Manual for each test series. Each SEA grantee must maintain copies of Test Administration Manuals onsite for all the assessments used.

Quality Control Procedures

CASAS assessment data must be entered in the approved SEA reporting/information management system (LARS/LACES). Data integrity checks will be conducted during informal, desk and formal monitoring reviews; and the approved SEA reporting system will prevent inappropriate assessment data from being entered in the system, and entail other data verification procedures to ensure accuracy of assessment information.

APPRAISAL TESTING

Introduction to Appraisal Testing

As part of the initial orientation and placement of a student into a program, a CASAS appraisal test is administered to all new students to ensure that appropriate decisions are made regarding diagnosis of learners' needs, educational placement, pre-test form to administer, development and/or selection of short- and long-term goals, and instruction.

CASAS appraisal tests include:

- Life Skills ESL Form 20
- Life Skills ABE Form 30
- Employability Competency System (ECS) Form 120 and 130
- Workforce Learning Systems (WLS) Form 220 and 230
- Life Skills Special Needs Form 350

Life Skills ESL Form 20 assesses ESL proficiency in four key areas (reading, listening, writing and speaking). Life Skills ABE Form 30 assesses reading and math proficiency in a general life skills context. ECS Form 120 and 130 help to identify the reading and math skills needed to succeed in the workforce and to place youth and adults into appropriate levels in education and employment programs. WLS Form 220 and 230 assess the learners' functional reading and math skills in a workplace context. Life Skills Special Needs Form 350 is used to assess learners with developmental disabilities or beginning literacy skills. Local adult education providers must select and order the appropriate CASAS test series based on the learners' goals and the instructional focus of the program (i.e. general life skills and work skills, employability, workplace).

Appraisal Testing for Adult Basic Education/Adult Secondary Education

Depending upon the instructional focus of the local adult education provider, the SEA mandates that the appropriate CASAS appraisal test be administered to all new students upon entry and before any instructional intervention has occurred. These instruments are appropriate for assessing learners interested in enrolling in an Adult Basic Education, General Educational Development (GED), Adult High School Diploma, or External Diploma Program, and are used to determine placement into Adult Basic Education or secondary completion.

Appraisal test scores for 100% of students enrolled in the local adult education program must be recorded in the SEA approved reporting system and documented in students' files within 30 days from the students' date of enrollment. Data integrity checks will be conducted during informal, desk and formal monitoring reviews. Appraisal scores may be carried from year to year in the approved SEA reporting/information management system (LARS/LACES). Returning students do not need to be administered another appraisal test unless they are returning after a 90 day period of absence.

Appraisals may not be used as a pre-test or to measure learner progress. SEA grantees must consult the CASAS Test Administration Manual or the TOPSpro Suggested Next Level Report for Learner and Class for specific recommendations about which level of pretest to administer to a student, based on the appraisal test score.

SEA grantees are encouraged to counsel and support students in establishing short-term and long-term goals based on their entry level abilities, interests and needs to enable them to document interim success and stay motivated to pursue their goals. Students should be provided opportunities to revise and/or update goals at specific intervals, as necessary.

Appraisal Testing for English as a Second Language

Incoming learners should be administered the short oral interview for survival level language ability. Learners, who do not score at least 6 on the oral interview, can be referred directly to ESL classes. Learners, who score 6 or more on the oral interview, receive Listening Appraisal Form 20. Learners, who score below 215 on the Listening Appraisal, do not receive Form 20 Reading Appraisal. Learners, who score above 215 on the Listening Appraisal, must receive the Reading Appraisal Form 20 at intake or during the first week of class. Programs may administer Form 50 Reading Appraisal in lieu of Form 20 Reading. The writing component of the ESL appraisal, while encouraged is optional. ESL Programs offering Citizenship classes should use Form 20 Listening/Reading or Form 50 Reading based on the learner's level of English proficiency.

If an ESL Program is unable to administer an appraisal to an ESL learner with limited proficiency skills, the CASAS ESL appraisal self-scoring answer sheet should be marked "unable to test" to document that the student is unable to take the test. After enrollment, pre-testing and post-

testing should be administered. Local adult education providers may consider using Beginning Literacy Reading Assessment Forms 27 and 28 to pre-test and post-test ESL learners with low-level skills.

The SEA mandates that the appropriate CASAS appraisal test be administered to all new ESL students upon entry and before any instructional intervention has occurred. These instruments are appropriate for assessing learners interested in enrolling in an ESL Program, and are used to determine placement into an ESL Program.

Appraisal test scores for 100% of ESL students enrolled in the local adult education program must be recorded in the SEA approved reporting system and documented in students' files within 30 days from the students' date of enrollment. Data integrity checks will be conducted during informal, desk and formal monitoring reviews. Appraisal scores may be carried from year to year in the approved SEA reporting/information management system (LARS/LACES). Returning students do not need to be administered another appraisal test unless they are returning after a 90 day period of absence.

Appraisals may not be used as a pre-test or to measure learner progress. SEA grantees must consult the CASAS Test Administration Manual or the TOPSpro Suggested Next Level Report for Learner and Class for specific recommendations about which level of pretest to administer to a student, based on the appraisal test score.

SEA grantees are encouraged to counsel and support ESL students in establishing short-term and long-term goals based on their entry level abilities, interests and needs to enable them to document interim success and stay motivated to pursue their goals. Students should be provided opportunities to revise and/or update goals at specific intervals, as necessary.

PRE-TESTING AND POST-TESTING

Introduction to Pre-Testing and Post-Testing

The appropriate level pre-test to administer to a student is determined by the scale score results on the student's appraisal tests. Pre-tests diagnose learner strengths and weaknesses and inform instruction. These tests should be administered - after a student enrolls in the program; during the intake process after an appraisal is given, or after the learner is placed into the appropriate instructional level. From the results of the pre-test, individual and class profiles can be created to identify competencies for beginning instruction. Interim and post-testing is a routine component of a program's instructional process and should be administered to measure student progress. SEA grantees must consult the CASAS Test Administration Manual or the TOPSpro Suggested Next Level Report for Learner and Class for specific recommendations about which level of pre-test or post-test to administer to students.

Pre-testing and Post-testing Schedule

SEA grantees must administer an appropriate pre-test to students upon entry and before any instructional intervention has occurred. Learners must be assessed in the areas that are the focus of instruction, using the appropriate CASAS test in reading, math, writing, speaking, or listening comprehension. A pre-test score for 100% of students enrolled must be recorded in the SEA approved reporting system and evidenced in students' files within 30 days from the students' date of enrollment. Data integrity checks will be conducted during informal, desk and formal monitoring reviews.

SEA grantees must administer a post-test to students after a minimum of 50 hours and a maximum of 70-100 hours of instruction, and prior to exiting the program. Post-test scores must be recorded in the SEA approved reporting system and evidenced in students' files within 30 days from the date of the post-test. Programs may assess individual learners who indicate they are leaving the program before the scheduled post-test time to maximize collection of paired test data. Data integrity checks will be conducted during informal, desk and formal monitoring reviews.

A post-test is reliable for up to 90 days if no significant instructional intervention has occurred in the interim. Therefore, it is recommended that a returning learner be pre-tested at entry into the new fiscal year if that learner's post-test in the prior fiscal year is more than 90 days past.

Validity Matched Pre-tests and Post-tests

The combination of scores on a pre-test and post-test constitute a matched pair. The first test in each skill area (reading, math, writing, listening, speaking) 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 level as the pre-test;
- the form number of each subsequent test must be different from that of the most recent test; and
- the post-test must be in the same skill area as the pre-test.

SEA grantees must have validity matched pre-tests and post-tests for a minimum of 60% of enrolled students. Data integrity checks will be conducted during desk and formal monitoring reviews.

Impact of Assessment

In addition to pre-testing and post-testing, programs should also have methods and strategies in place to capture the impact the adult education program has on adult learners in their roles as parents/ family members, workers, and citizens/community members. This information can be documented in the goals section of the approved SEA reporting system and evidenced in students' files. An analysis of this information can be used to encourage students to write articles in the SEA Literacy Advocate Newsletter or other publications, or to share with friends and family members at graduation or policy makers in the District of Columbia.

Informal Assessments

In addition to CASAS assessments, programs are encouraged to use a variety of informal assessments to guide instruction. The use of teacher-made tests, unit tests, portfolios, applied performance assessments, and learner observations can be used to monitor learning and to inform instruction. However, programs may only use CASAS assessments to report learner gains in the National Reporting System.

Prohibited Assessment Instruments and Methods

The following assessment instruments and/or methods are prohibited:

- Using the same CASAS form for both pre-test and post-test assessment (i.e. CASAS Reading pre-test 31 and CASAS Reading post-test 31);
- Using a different instrument with CASAS for pre-test or post-test assessment (i.e. CASAS Reading pre-test and TABE Reading post-test);
- Official GED Practice Test;
- GED (General Educational Development Tests);
- TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language);
- College placement tests; and
- Professional judgment.

Life Skills Reading Phase Out

The Life Skills Reading pre-test and post-test forms 31R through 38R (including 32RX and 34RX) will be discontinued effective July 1, 2007. The Life Skills Math assessments (31M – 38M) are not being discontinued. The retirement of old tests and the development of new tests is essential to ensuring that assessments are based on competencies that are relevant to the present day learner. Local adult education programs are encouraged to substitute the use of the Life Skills Reading series with comparable reading assessments from other test series such as Life and Work, ECS or WLS. Although the reading tests are being discontinued, the test items must remain secure now and in the future.

Supplemental and Extended Range Tests

The Life Skills Reading series has supplemental pre-tests and post-tests (32RX and 34RX) that provide an alternative assessment at levels A and B respectively. The ECS Reading forms 114R and 116R are supplemental pre-tests and post-tests that provide an alternative third assessment at levels B and C respectively. The Life and Work Series pre-test and post-test forms 81RX (Level A) and 82RX (Level A) are extended range tests designed to bridge the gap between testing levels A and B and provide a more accurate measurement of scale score gains. Citizenship assessments have extended range tests (951X and 952X) for Level A. Programs should administer the “X” Level test after the other level tests have been administered.

Top-out Scores and High Valid Range Scores

Top-out Scores

Top-out Scores (scale scores above the accurate range for each pre-test and post-test) are provided for most CASAS assessments to reflect conservative scale score gains. This allows programs to utilize top range scores for each test. It should minimize the occurrence of negative gains when a learner takes a higher level post-test.

When learners score in the top-out range, programs may either accept the top-out score keeping in mind that this score may not be the most reliable measurement and administer the next level tests when the learner is tested following an instructional period/semester; or disregard the top-out score and administer the next higher level test immediately. In this case, only the score from the higher-level test should be entered into the approved reporting system.

This process does not apply for bottom-out scores. Learners who bottom-out must be retested at the next lower level. Those learners who bottom-out of CASAS Level A can be retested using Life Skills Reading Forms 27 or 28.

High-Valid Range Scores

Learners sometimes pre-test in the upper valid range of a particular CASAS level. As a result of this, the test administrator may decide to give the student the next higher level post-test. While this may be an appropriate decision, occasionally, the learner will show a negative gain at the next level. The test administrator may wish to avoid this by giving the same level post-test instead of the higher level post-test. In all likelihood, the learner will fall into the top-out range but that score can be reported and a gain will result.

Exemptions

According to Federal reporting requirements, students with 12 or more hours must be included in calculating the percentage of learners completing a NRS Educational Functioning Level. Learner gains in local adult education programs funded by the SEA can only be measured using CASAS. Therefore, SEA grantees are urged to use Life Skills Reading Forms 27 and 28 to pre-test and post-test low level ABE and ESL learners, Forms 310-343 (Levels 2A through 5A) for learners with

developmental disabilities/special needs, and Forms 951-952 for low level citizenship learners to minimize incidences of exemptions.

Tests for Learners with Special Needs

Students with learning and other developmental disabilities or beginning literacy skills should be assessed with the CASAS Adult Life Skills Locator, Form 350, as the initial assessment and then pre-tested and post-tested with Forms 310-343 (Levels 2A-5A). These tests are administered one-to-one and assess reading and listening proficiency in a life skill context across the CASAS content areas. The level 2A is the most difficult level and provides a transition into CASAS Level Pre-A and A. The tests cover the range of the CASAS Scale from 117-196.

CASAS Life Skills Reading Forms 27 and 28 can also be used to pre-test and post-test learners with developmental disabilities and beginning literacy skills.

Other CASAS test forms that are appropriate for learners with special needs include computer-based tests and large-print tests, such as the ECS and Life Skills reading pre-tests and post-tests with enhanced print, the Beginning Literacy Reading Assessment and Reading for Citizenship test forms. Functional auditory and Braille tests to measure basic literacy skills for learners who are blind or have a visual impairment are being developed by CASAS.

Testing Accommodations

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, Title III, Section 36.309, requires that accommodations in testing be provided to allow the learner who has a disability to demonstrate his/her level of understanding or mastery of a subject. The accountability standards in the 1998 Workforce Investment Act (WIA) include the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998 which aim to improve access to adult programs and achieve employment outcomes for learners with disabilities.

Accommodations in testing alter the conditions for administering a test or change the nature of an assessment instrument allowing test takers with disabilities to demonstrate more accurately their skills and abilities. Proper accommodations meet the needs of examinees without changing what the test is intended to measure.

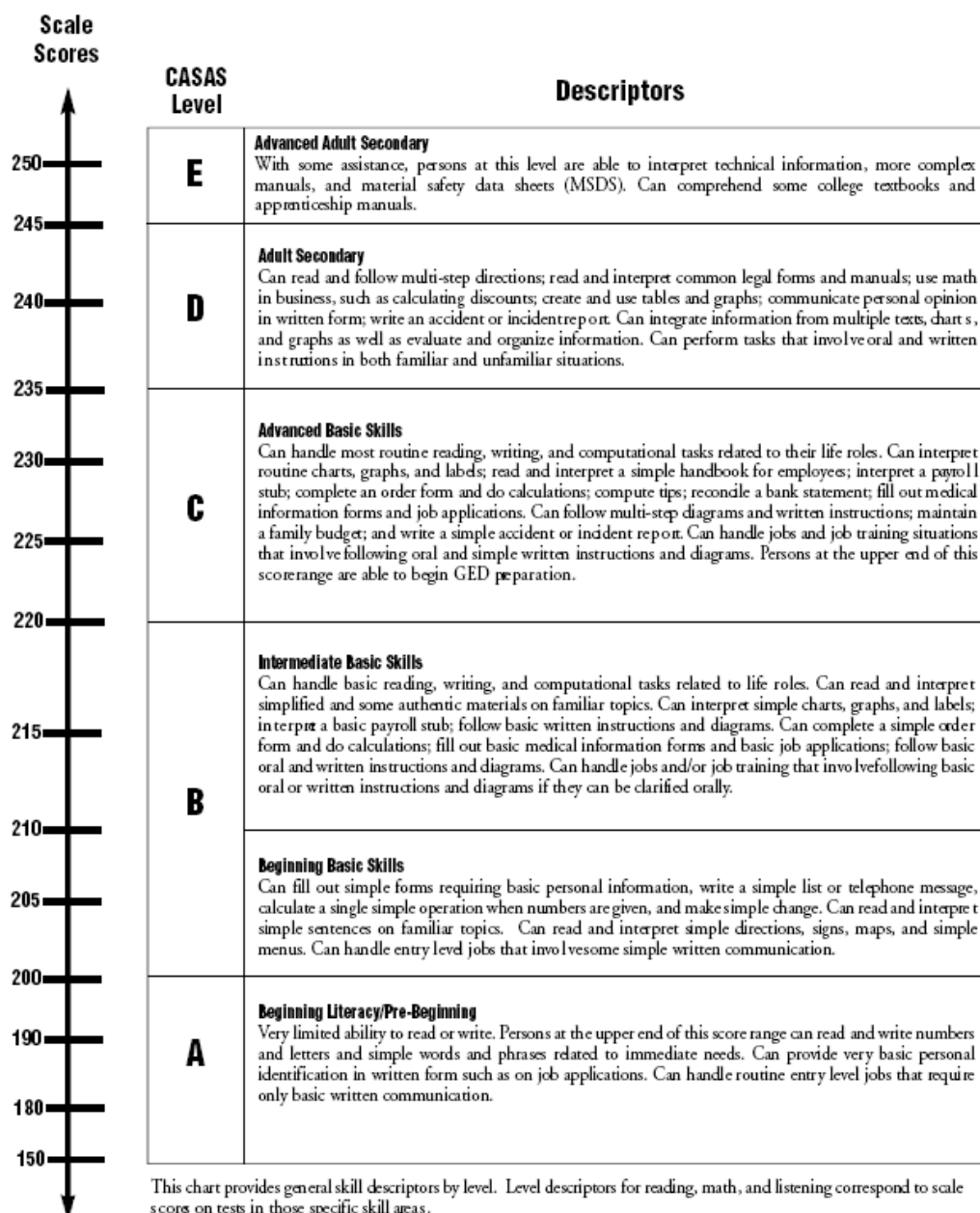
Local test administrators may provide or allow some accommodations in test administration procedures or environment for documented

disabilities. Examples of accommodations in test administration procedures or environment include testing in an alternate room, using a colored overlay, allowing extended time, giving supervised breaks, or providing a sign language interpreter for test administration directions only. It is not an appropriate accommodation in test administration procedures to read a CASAS reading test to a learner with beginning literacy skills or blindness.

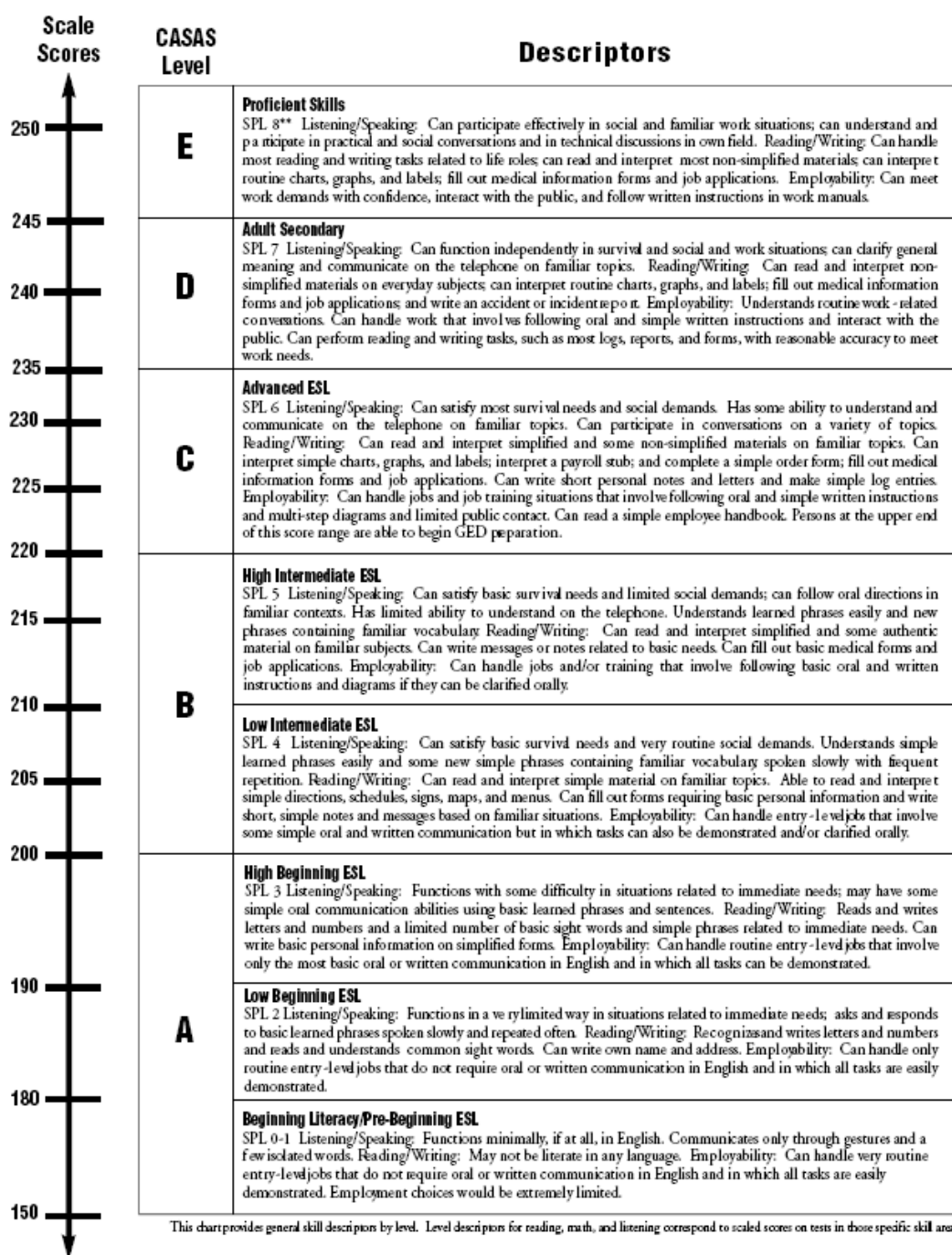
Adult education programs are responsible for providing fully accessible services and for ensuring that these services meet reasonable criteria. Adult learners with disabilities are responsible for requesting accommodations and for submitting documentation of their disability at the time of registration, program entry, or after diagnosis. The need to use an accommodation should be documented in official learner records, such as the Individual Program Education Plan (IPP), Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) or other related planning document. The information can come from a doctor's report, a diagnostic assessment from a certified professional, and other clinical records. Adult education programs can often contact the local division of vocational rehabilitation or a secondary school to request documentation of a disability.

Guidelines for Providing Accommodations Using CASAS Assessments for Learners with Disabilities provides more detailed information on providing accommodations, including a matrix of disabilities and suggestions for disability categories. It is available at www.casas.org. If an appropriately modified test form is not currently available from CASAS, contact CASAS at 1-800-255-1036 to obtain permission before changing a test format locally.

CASAS Skill Level Descriptors for ABE



CASAS Skill Level Descriptors for ESL



CASAS Skill Level Descriptors for Persons with Developmental Disabilities

Scale Scores	CASAS Level	Descriptors
210	B	Beginning Basic Skills Can fill out simple forms requiring basic personal information, write a simple list or telephone message, calculate a single simple operation when numbers are given, and make simple change. Can read and interpret simple sentences on familiar topics. Can read and interpret simple directions, signs, maps, and simple menus. Can handle entry-level jobs that involve some simple written communication.
200	A	Beginning Literacy/Pre-Beginning Very limited ability to read or write. Persons at the upper end of this score range can read and write numbers and letters and simple words and phrases related to immediate needs. Can provide very basic personal identification in written form such as on job applications. Can handle routine entry-level jobs that require only basic written communication.
190	AA	Beginning Literacy/Pre-Beginning Can use some very simple communication skills with others in daily activities and at work. Can handle most daily living skills such as dressing, hygiene, and meal preparation. Can identify and follow directions on public signs and buildings. Can use some community services such as grocery, banking, restaurant, and public transportation. Can handle jobs with mild level of support.
180	AAA	Beginning Literacy/Pre-Beginning Can follow some very simple safety practices in the home, community, and the job with help from support person. Can cross streets and follow directions on safety signs with support. Can use some very basic community services with help such as health, transportation, and telephone. Can handle jobs requiring moderate level of support.
160	AAAA	Beginning Literacy/Pre-Beginning Can perform some minimum basic daily living skills such as washing hands, brushing hair, and dressing with help from support person. Can identify simple public signs such as entrances, exits, and public restrooms. Can handle community experiences and jobs requiring intensive level of support.
140	AAAAA	Beginning Literacy/Pre-Beginning Can identify a few common household objects such as comb, toothbrush, and shoes. Can perform very basic communication skills using gestures, sign language, or simple words. Can perform simple hygiene skills such as washing hands with support.

© CASAS 2006. All rights reserved.

**NRS Educational Functioning Levels for
Adult Basic Education (ABE)/Adult Secondary Education (ASE)**

NRS Educational Functioning Level	CASAS Level	CASAS Scale Score Range in Reading and Math	CASAS Scale Score Range in Writing
1. Beginning ABE Literacy	A	200 and below	136 - 200
2. Beginning Basic Education	B	201-210	201-225
3. Low Intermediate Basic Education	B	211-220	226-242
4. High Intermediate Basic Education	C	221-235	243-260
5. Low Adult Secondary Education	D	236-245	261-270
6. High Adult Secondary Education	E	246 and above	271 and above

**NRS Educational Functioning Levels for
English as a Second Language (ESL)**

NRS Educational Functioning Level		CASAS Scale Score Range in Reading and Listening	CASAS Scale Score Range in Writing
1. Beginning ESL Literacy	A	180 and below	N/A
2. Low Beginning ESL	A	181-190	136-145
3. High Beginning ESL	A	191- 200	146 - 200
4. Low Intermediate ESL	B	201-210	201-225
5. High Intermediate ESL	B	211-220	226-242
6. Low Advanced ESL	C	221-235	243-260

Relationship among CASAS, NRS*, NALS, SPL***,
and Years of School Completed**

CASAS Level	CASAS Score Ranges	NRS Levels and Names for ABE	NRS Levels and Names for ESL	NALS Levels	SPL Levels	Years of School Completed
A	180 and Below		1 Beginning ESL Literacy	1	1	1 to 2
A	181 – 190		2 Low Beginning ESL	1	2 and 3	1 to 2
A	191- 200 (ESL) 200 and below (ABE)	1 Beginning ABE Literacy	3 High Beginning ESL	1	2 and 3	1 to 2
B	201-210	2 Beginning Basic Education	4 Low Intermediate ESL	1	4	3 to 5
B	211-220	3 Low Intermediate Basic Education	5 High Intermediate ESL	1	5	6 to 7
C	221-235	4 High Intermediate Basic Education	6 Low Advanced ESL	2	6	8 to 10
D	236-245	Low Adult Secondary Education		2/3	7	11 to 12
E	246 and above	High Adult Secondary Education		3	8	13+

*National Reporting System (NRS) - Workforce Investment Act Title II

**National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS)

***Student Performance Levels (SPLs)

CASAS Test Series Descriptions, Content Areas and Levels

CASAS Test Series	Description	Content Area and Level
Life Skills Assessment – ABE/ASE	Identifies the basic skills in reading, math, and listening that individuals need to function successfully in today’s workplace, community, and society.	-Reading and Math (Levels A-D)
Life Skills Assessment – ESL	Identifies the basic skills in reading and listening that ESL students need to function successfully in today’s workplace, community, and society.	-Reading (Levels A-D) -Listening Comprehen. for ESL Students (Levels A-C)
Employability Competency System (ECS)	Monitors progress in reading, math, and listening to measure a learner’s ability to apply basic skills in an employability context.	-Reading and Math (Levels A-D) -Listening Comprehen. for ESL Students (Levels A-C)
Life and Work	Contains progress tests for reading and listening in the workplace and life skills contexts. The reading tests are appropriate for both ABE and ESL learners. Listening tests are in development.	-Reading (Levels A-D)
Workforce Learning System (WLS)	Provides an initial assessment of learner’s functional reading and math skills in a workplace context. The test content focuses on priority competencies identified by business and industry.	-Reading and Math (Levels A-D) -Listening Comprehen. for ESL Students (Levels A-C)
Special Needs	The Adult Life Skills, Forms 310-350, are for learners with developmental disabilities and assess life skill competencies across the content areas of basic communication, community resources, health, employment, computation, learning to learn, and independent living skills.	-See description for content (Levels 2A - 5A)

Available CASAS Test Series

Test Series	Reading	Math	Listening	**Writing	Speaking
Life Skills					
Appraisal	50, 20/ESL	50	20/ESL		
2A	310/311				
3A	320/321				
4A	330/331/ 332/333				
5A	342/343				
Pre-Level A	27/28				
Level A	31/32/32X	31/32	51/52		
Level B	33/34/34X	33/34	53/54		
Level C	35/36	35/36	55/56		
Level D	37/38	37/38			
Employability Competency System (ECS)					
Appraisal	120/130	120/130			
Level A	11/12	11/12	51/52		
Level B	13/14/114	13/14	63/64		
Level C	15/16/116	15/16	65/66		
Level D	37/38	37/38			
Workforce Learning System (WLS)					
Appraisal	230	230			
Level A					
Level B	213/214	213/214			*273/274
Level C	215/216	215/216			*273/274
Level D					
Life and Work					
Level A	81/82/ 81X/82X				
Level B	83/84				
Level C	185/186				
Level D	187/188				
Citizenship					
Level A	951/952 951X/952X				

*Pilot Implementation

**Form Task: 410/411 and Picture Task: 460/461/462/463 (Life Skills)
Form Task 464/465/466 (WLS)

For questions or clarification, contact:

State Director
Office of the State Superintendent of Education
State Education Agency (SEA), Adult Education and Family Literacy
51 N Street, N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002
www.osse.dc.gov
(202) 741-5531

CASAS
www.casas.org
1-800-255-1036 or 858-292-2900