

**ARKANSAS ADULT EDUCATION
ASSESSMENT POLICY
AND DISTANCE EDUCATION GUIDELINES**

Arkansas Adult Education Section

July 1, 2024- June 30, 2025

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	3 - 4
Section 1: Administering Assessments	5 - 14
1.1 Approved Assessments	
1.2 Entering Subject Areas.	
1.3 NRS- Approved ABE Assessments	
1.4 NRS- Approved ESL Assessments	
1.5 Alternative Placement Assessment	
1.6 Guidelines for Pre- and Post-Testing	
1.7 Rollover Students	
1.8 Special Populations	
1.9 Training	
1.10 Additional Notes on Assessments	
Section 2: Data Quality and Collection	14 – 16
2.1 Data Quality	
2.2 Collecting and Reporting Data	
2.3 Guidelines for Entering Data	
Section 3: Performance Indicators	17 - 22
3.1 Measurable Skill Gain	
3.2 Periods of Participation	
3.3 Follow-up Measures	
3.4 Collection for Follow-up Measures	
Section 4: Distance Education Guidelines and Policies	23- 28
4.1 Administering Distance Education Classes	
4.2 Instruction	
4.3 Distance Learners	
4.4 Assessment of Distance Learners	
4.5 Approved Distance Education Hours	
4.6 Accommodating Learners with Disabilities or Other Special Needs	
4.7 Approved Distance Education Reporting	
Appendix A: NRS- Approved Assessment Charts	31 – 33
References	34

To abide by Federal and State requirements, Adult Education programs must be familiar with and follow the policy and guidelines outlined in this document.

INTRODUCTION

The Arkansas Assessment Policy and Distance Learning Guidelines are based on the federal manual “[Technical Assistance Guide for Performance Accountability under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act](#)” by the National Reporting System (NRS) for Adult Education (August 2019), in addition to Arkansas Adult Education Policies. In addition, the Policy outlines state policies as determined by the Arkansas Adult Education Section (AES).

The NRS is the accountability system for the federally funded, State-administered adult education program. It addresses the accountability requirements of the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, Title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). The assessment policy describes the NRS measures that 1) assess the impact of adult education instruction; 2) methods for collecting the measures; 3) reporting forms and procedures; and, 4) provide training and technical assistance in collecting and reporting the measures.

The NRS measures are reported through the performance indicators presented in “Section 116 of WIOA [which] establishes performance accountability indicators and performance reporting requirements to assess the effectiveness of States and local areas in achieving positive outcomes for individuals served by... “the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) ¹.

VALID AND RELIABLE STANDARDIZED ASSESSMENTS

The following section is excerpted from NRS Technical Assistance Guide, August 2019.

All programs must use state-approved standardized assessment procedures that ensure the “comparability of meaning of the EFLS across all programs” in Arkansas. To that end, the development and use of the assessment instruments are aligned and maintained.

Validity: *Matching Instrument Content to NRS Educational Functioning Level Descriptors*

"Validity is concerned with the *accuracy* of measurement; in other words, the extent to which the instrument measures what it is intended to measure. *Content validity* of an assessment is the extent to which the items and tasks of the instrument cover the domain of interest. For the NRS, the domain of interest comprises the skills used to describe the EFLs for ABE and ESL. To establish content validity concerning the requirements of the NRS, there must be evidence that the items and tasks of that instrument measure the skills associated with the EFLs (and, by the same token, do not measure skills not associated with the levels).

"Typically, content validity is established via the judgments of subject matter experts (SMEs). For instance, a panel of such experts might be asked to judge the extent to which the items and tasks of a given instrument require the types and levels of skills described for a particular EFL. In general, the greater the judged overlap between the content of the instrument and the skills associated with a given level descriptor, the greater the content validity of the instrument with respect to its use as a measure of educational attainment at that level. It is important to point out that the content validity of a given instrument may vary with respect to different EFLs; that is, it may provide adequate coverage of the skills associated with some levels but less than adequate coverage of the skills associated with other levels. Finally, it should be noted that the usefulness of content validity evidence is directly proportional to the quality of the judgments provided. Consequently, the test publisher should establish the credentials of the SMEs whose judgments were obtained, including their familiarity with adult education and the NRS levels, along with information regarding the number of experts used and the degree of agreement among them, both by skill and level."

Reliability/Classification Consistency

"Reliability refers to the degree of consistency in performance on an assessment; that is, the extent to which an examinee would be expected to perform similarly across multiple administrations of the instrument or under different conditions. An important condition that can differ across administrations of a particular instrument to be used for the NRS is the form of the instrument administered. More specifically, because the educational gain is determined as a function of the difference between an examinee's pre- and post-test performance *as measured on different forms of the instrument*, it is essential to review the test publisher's information regarding the expected similarity of performance across forms in the absence of instruction or other external interventions. The greater the similarity in performance across forms, the greater the *alternate forms reliability* of the instrument and the stronger the inference that improvements in performance between pre- and post-testing is attributable to something other than measurement error associated with differences across forms."

This document will focus on the guidelines, process, and procedures for collecting and reporting data for the performance indicator **Measurable Skill Gains** (MSGs) of participants in programs, as well as outline the follow-up measures and collection periods.

See Appendix A for a complete list of approved assessments.

SECTION 1. ADMINISTERING ASSESSMENTS

All students must be administered an NRS-approved assessment within 12 hours of attendance. All students must be given the TABE Locator prior to being administered the TABE pre-test. The TABE Locator function points to the most appropriate TABE testing level. The TABE Locator scores must be recorded in LACES.

If a participant scores a 535 in any area on the TABE, they should be given the appropriate GED Ready® subject area test. If the test taker earns at least the minimum passing score of 145 on the GED Ready®, then the test taker is eligible for the GED® Official test. GED® Testing recommends that the GED® Official test be scheduled within two weeks of passing the GED Ready®, which increases the chances of passing the GED® Official test. (State Requirement)

1.1 Approved Assessments

Program	Assessment	Subject Area
ABE	TABE 11/12	Language Mathematics Reading
ESL	TABE CLAS-E	Listening Reading Speaking Writing

1.2 Entering Subject Areas

ABE participants may pre-test in Language, Math, and/or Reading of the Test of Adult Basic Education Assessment (TABE) and choose to focus his/her studies on 1, 2, or all 3 subject areas. Programs are encouraged to assess students in all subject areas and enter all subject scores into the state-approved data management system.

The lowest entering score becomes the participant’s Entering Educational Functioning Level (EFL) for the program year and sets the target benchmark. To meet the target benchmark, a participant must make a gain in that lowest functioning level. For example, if the participant has been assessed at Level 2 in Reading and Level 3 in Math, the overall EFL is Level 2. The participant will appear in the ABE Level 2 row of Tables 1, 4, and 4B for the program year.

The participant can show a level gain with a post-test in any of the subject areas that have a pre-test. For example, if a participant pre-tests in Language Level 4, Reading Level 4, and Math Level 3. The participant’s entering EFL is Level 3 (determined by the Math pre-test). The student post-tests in Reading and makes a gain to Level 5. ***The participant will be recognized on Tables 4 and 4B with a level gain; however, this will not change the Entering Educational Functional Level 3 Math. If a level gain is made in a subject that was not the lowest Entering EFL, it will still show up on Table 4 in column E, which affects your overall MSG.***

Federal tables are de-duplicated and will only reflect one MSG per participant per period of participation (PoP) within the program year in LACES.

Additional gains in multiple subject areas and/or EFL levels with post-testing will be recognized as “Multiple Gains” at the state level and can be used in future program funding (See “Level Gains” report in LACES).

ESL participants can be administered the *TABE CLAS-E* in one or multiple subject areas may also be administered. Programs are encouraged to assess students in multiple and enter the scores into the state-approved data management system.

A participant may be pre-tested with the *TABE CLAS-E* in any combination of the four skill areas: Reading, Writing, Speaking, and/or Listening. Participants may be assessed in only one, two, three, or all four skill areas. Each skill area score must be entered separately in the data management system.

The lowest entering score becomes the participant's Entering Educational Functioning Level (EFL) for the program year and sets the target benchmark. To meet the target benchmark, a participant must make a gain in that lowest functioning level. For example, a participant is pre-tested with the *TABE CLAS-E* in Reading at Level 3, Writing at Level 2, and Listening at Level 3. The entering EFL is ESL Level 2. The participant is post-tested in all areas and makes a gain in Reading to Level 4 and Listening to Level 4. The participant has made an MSG on table 4 with a total of 2 multiple gains.

If a participant enters the program year as an ESL participant and chooses to pursue ABE/ASE content areas, s/he should be administered the *TABE Locator* and 11/12 and entered into the state-approved data management system. The participant will continue to appear in the lowest Entering EFL as an ESL participant on Federal Tables 1, 4, and 4B. The participant will also be eligible for an MSG after a *TABE* pre- and post-test or earning a secondary school diploma.

All ESL participants' advancements and completions will be tracked in the data management system and reflected on Tables 4 and 4B. Federal tables are de-duplicated and will, therefore, only reflect one MSG per participant per period of participation (PoP) within the program year.

Additional gains in multiple subject areas and/or EFL levels with post-testing will be recognized as "Multiple Gains" at the state level and can be used in future program funding (See "Level Gains" report in LACES).

1.3 NRS- APPROVED ABE ASSESSMENTS

Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) 11/12

The *TABE* is comprised of three content areas (Reading, Language, and Mathematics) and is appropriate for all levels of adult basic education and literacy participants, from non-readers to learners preparing to take a secondary school diploma or equivalent.

Programs should administer *TABE* 11/12 online only. Paper-based administration should be limited to environments that lack technological requirements, such as a correctional setting. Prior approval by AES to use paper-based *TABE* 11/12 is required. Participants are not required to be assessed in all content areas (Reading, Language, and Math). The local program must decide the skill areas most relevant to each participant's needs or the program's curriculum and assess participants in these areas. (See 3.1 *Entering Subject Areas* page 10).

The TABE Locator Test **must be used** to determine the TABE level to be administered: Literacy, Easy, Medium, Difficult, or Advanced levels (L, E, M, D, or A). The locator may indicate a learner should be administered different levels in one or more of the content areas.

For example, The Locator may determine whether the learner should be administered Level D for Reading and Language and Level M for Mathematics. The learner would be post-tested at the same level as the pre-test in an alternating form.

Programs may administer the automated or paper-administered Locator (correctional facilities and jails). Best practices should be used for paper-administered Locator. Learners with very low literacy skills who cannot complete the Locator Test should be administered the TABE Literacy Level (L).

The pre-test and post-test must be alternating forms. The same level should be used for pre and post-tests; however, if a student will likely score out of range on the same level post-test, a program may administer a different level. The form should still alternate.

For example, A learner is located and pre-tests with an 11M and scores in top range within the valid score range. The learner receives the required minimum hours of instruction and has shown progress. Based on the learner’s demonstrated knowledge, the program determines the student would likely attain an invalid score on a level M, so the learner is administered a 12D. If the student achieves an educational level gain, it will be reflected on Table 4 and/or the Level gains report.

Please refer to the publisher’s guidelines for TABE test times below:

	Number of Items	Allowable Time	Locator Time
Language	40	0:55:00	20 mins
Mathematics	40	1:05:00	20 mins
Reading	40	1:40:00	35 mins
Practice Items		15 minutes	10 minutes
Total	120	3:55:00	1:25:00

If the learner is functioning in different educational levels in different subject areas (reading, language, math), the **lowest** functioning level will be the basis for the NRS Entering EFL placement. **To be eligible for an educational gain, the participant must be post-tested with a different form and show a gain in any subject area that has a pre-test.** The post-test should be given in the same level or the different form unless the score on the pre-test fell in the highest range, at which a post-test should be given on the next level of the different form so the student may show a gain.

For example: A participant’s TABE Locator reading score indicates the appropriate level is M. The participant is then given the TABE **Form 11, Level M** reading pre-test. After a period of instruction (based on test publisher’s guidelines), the participant must be post-tested with TABE **Form 12, Level M**. If the participant shows gain, then the participant may be tested in the future with a higher level TABE, for example Level D.

Advancement(s) will be recorded in Table 4 and a *minimum* of one educational gain per year is necessary to meet the NRS core indicators of performance. If the participant does not show progress, then the participant needs to receive further instruction and be post-tested again according to the test publisher’s guidelines. The program needs to alternate the testing forms (TABE 11 and TABE 12) at each assessment.

NOTE: Do not post-test with the same form.

TABE Versions

Programs are only to administer the **TABE 11/12** series during the -2024-2025 program year.

Allowable TABE Accommodations

Q. When administering TABE, can we offer accommodations for participants with special needs?

A testing accommodation is a change made to the test administration procedure to provide equal access for participants with disabilities to demonstrate their knowledge and skills. If an accommodation is employed, it is important that the selected accommodation minimize any advantage or disadvantage of completing the test. In particular, if the accommodation under consideration is not used in instruction, then it should not be used in the testing situation. TABE-PC is appropriate for some participants who have difficulty taking paper-and-pencil tests. Some TABE administrators have made other accommodations such as allowing extra time to complete the test or letting participants mark answers in test booklets rather than on separate answer sheets. Additional accommodation suggestions are available through Data Recognition Corp (DRC) (formerly McGraw-Hill/CTB) online or at Customer Service 1-800-826-2368.

Q. May I administer TABE as an untimed test?

If you use different time limits than were used in the standardization process, it compromises the interpretation of the norms. However, DRC recognizes that time extensions may be warranted to accommodate persons with certain disabilities or when TABE is being used exclusively to diagnose the learning objectives an individual still needs to master.

Q. Are there special editions of TABE for people with visual disabilities?

Yes. Large-print, Braille, and audio editions of TABE Forms 11/12 are available from DRC and may be ordered by calling Customer Services toll-free at (800) 538-9547 or through the website at www.datarecognitioncorp.com.

Q. How should we interpret scores when we administer TABE under non-standard conditions?

Whenever non-standard directions and time limits are utilized, norm-referenced comparisons should be treated with great caution since the only norms available are those based on test administrations using standard directions and time limits. Nonetheless, DRC believes that information about instructional strengths and participant needs can be obtained from a non-standard test administration. This is best done by focusing on the curriculum-referenced or objective mastery information the test can provide. For more information, consult CTB's publication, *Guidelines for Using the Results of Standardized Tests Administered Under Non-Standard Conditions*. Obtain your free copy by calling Customer Services at (800) 538-9547.

1.4 APPROVED NRS ESL ASSESSMENTS

When ESL participants score above the Advance ESL NRS Level score range on any ESL assessment, they should be given the TABE in order to be able to show educational progress.

Participants do not need to be assessed in all of the content areas. The local program must decide the skill areas most relevant to each participant's needs or the program's curriculum and assess participants in these areas. Assessments should also be in the area(s) in which instruction will be focused. Programs may choose which ESL assessment to use; however, programs are responsible for and required to complete the appropriate training for the ESL assessment administered.

TABE Complete Language Assessment System-English (TABE CLAS-E™)

The TABE CLAS-E™ must be administered within 12 hours of program entry for all ESL/ELL participants. The paper-based TABE CLAS-E™ tests are available for Listening, Reading, Speaking, and Writing on 4 levels.

Listening (20 Minutes)	Writing (47 minutes)
Speaking (15 minutes)	Multiple Choice (20 minutes)
Reading (25 minutes)	Expository Writing (27 minutes) [3 tasks](Levels 2-4 only)

A participant may be assessed in any or all of the subject areas. For example, a participant may be assessed only in Reading or may choose to be assessed in all four subject areas. **If a participant is pre-and post-tested in 1-4 subject areas and makes a gain in any, they will show an EFL gain on Table 4 and 4B as well as being eligible for multiple gains.**

Note: A student administered Levels 2-4 Writing assessment must be administered both the multiple choice and expository writing parts.

A locator interview should be administered to determine the correct test level. Each level has alternating forms: A and B, which must be alternated for pre-and post-tests. The locator, writing, and speaking assessments each have a corresponding rubric.

Administrators of the TABE CLAS-E™ must complete training using the DRC/CTB's *Staff Development DVD and Workbook* or attend state-provided training.

Test Level	Attainable NRS ESL Educational Functioning Level	Corresponding SPL
1	0-1, 2, 3, 3+ (Beginning to High Beginning)	0-1, 2, 3, 3+
2	0-1, 2, 3, 4, 4+ (Beginning to Low Intermediate)	0-1, 2, 3, 4, 4+
3	0-1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 5+ (Beginning to High Intermediate)	0-1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 5+
4	0-1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 5+ (Beginning to Advanced)	0-1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

Note: Participants who are pre or post-tested at ESL Level 6 should be administered the TABE 11/12. There is no exit score for BEST Literacy; therefore, a participant with a score of 76+ cannot show EFL advancement or completion with further testing.

1.5 STATE APPROVED ALTERNATIVE PLACEMENT ASSESSMENT

With prior approval from the State Office, Alternative Placement has been added to allow new placement flexibility for participants enrolling in workplace classes and/or pre-approved IETs. The TABE Locator has been identified as the approved testing mechanism to allow participant placement in workplace or IET classes designed to yield MSG Indicators such as MSG Types 3, 4, and 5.

The reporting of these outcomes must follow the data collection and validation requirements for these specific MSG types, as described in OCTAE Program Memorandum 19-1, and in this Arkansas Assessment Policy. When calculating the state's post-test rate, participants with an alternative placement in Tables 1, 4, 4A, and 4C will be removed from the post-test denominator.

Participants with alternative assessments will still be reflected as an NRS participant and still count in the MSG percentage on Table 4 and Follow-Up Tables as previously recorded.

1.6 GUIDELINES FOR PRE- AND POST-TESTING

An NRS-approved assessment must be administered within 12 hours of program entry. Programs must follow the test publisher's guidelines regarding test administration and selecting the correct test level for each participant's assessment.

Sixty-five percent (65%) of participants that are pre-tested must be post-tested by the end of the program year. To find the **post-test rate**, divide the total number of participants from Table 4B, Column B by the total number of participants from Table 4, Column B. To see the educational gains made by pre- and post-tested participants, refer to Table 4B. **All post-tests must be within one calendar year of the pre-test.** After one calendar year, the assessment is invalid, and a participant should be assessed, which will be designated as a pre-test.

Note: Every participant should be encouraged to make as many EFL gains as possible. Keep going after one EFL gain is achieved. Every administration of an assessment test must be recorded in the data management system. Failure to follow post-testing guidelines could result in a reduction or elimination of funding.

1.7 ROLLOVER STUDENTS

A continuing student is an adult learner who continues to receive services from one program year to another program year without a 90-day break in service.

For students continuing from one program year to another (or "rolling over"), if the last assessment was administered within **90 days**, it may be pushed forward to the new year. For example, assessments taken within the last 90 days of the fiscal year (4th Quarter April-June) can be moved forward to act as the student's pre-test in the new fiscal year. The lowest subject will become the new entry EFL for the new program year. Local Programs must ensure all participant demographic information is correct and updated in the data management system to accurately reflect roll-over participants on reports.

Hours between assessments will count from the prior Fiscal Year (FY) if an assessment is moved forward, potentially allowing a program to post-test sooner in the new fiscal year. Those hours only count for assessment purposes, not for the 12 hours a student needs to become a participant. For example, if a program moved an assessment forward from 4/20/2023, any hours earned after that assessment would follow and count toward post-testing.

If a participant continues into the new fiscal year without a 90-day break in service, is assessed in the new fiscal year, and receives .25 hours in the new fiscal year, the student will still reflect on the Federal Table 4 in the fiscal program, although they have less than 12 hours because their hours

have followed them forward.

Rollover Date: This is the date when LiteracyPro will rollover the state database to the next program year. This date comes after the freeze date and after the state has had time to verify that the data is correct.

Rollover Explanation:

During the Rollover, each program’s settings are updated to reflect data for the new fiscal year. This includes:

- Assessments – Only students who have an NRS-approved assessment within the current fiscal year will display level information. This includes both assessments dated within the new fiscal year, and assessments that are ‘moved forward’ from the previous year. Students who do not have an assessment in the fiscal year will be ‘level not defined.’
- Current Fiscal Year search (Student area and Staff area) – will return people who meet the Current FY criteria in the new reporting year.
- Hours – The ‘Current FY Instruct Hours’ field will be updated to reflect hours in the new fiscal year.
- PoP Summaries – after the rollover, prior year PoP Summaries will no longer be created unless requested by the state office. Existing PoP Summaries for the prior year will continue to be updated with Table 5 outcome data since there is a delay in reporting this information to the NRS.

Exceptions to Minimum hours for Post-testing

Exceptions to the minimum post-testing hours should be limited. Factors that may be used to determine if early post-testing is warranted are intensity/duration of instruction, participant goals, and motivation, class setting, and/or participant leaving the program due to outside circumstances.

Exceptions to the post-test guidelines must be **pre-approved** by the Adult Education Senior Management Team, and documentation must be provided. Documentation may include but is not limited to, a completed waiver, portfolio, informal assessments, and/or curriculum/lesson plans. The approval must be documented as a Case Note in the data management system.

Complete and submit the early post-testing waiver (see Appendix B) to adulted@arkansas.gov prior to administering the post-test or before a class begins (i.e. workplace class).

No more than 8% of a program’s students may be early post-tested. Programs that exceed this limit or do not receive prior approval for early post-testing may be penalized.

Time Frame for Pre- and Post-testing

NRS Test	Recommended Number of Instructional Hours Between Pre-Test and Post-test
TABE 11 & 12 Alternate Form (Paper-based or Online)	50-60 hours of instruction is recommended for post-testing with an alternate form (i.e. 11M to 12M) for participants that test into NRS Levels 1-4 (ABE). Minimum of 40 hours 30-59 hours of instruction is recommended for post-testing with an alternate form (i.e. 11M to 12M) for participants that test into NRS Levels 5-6 (ASE). Minimum of 30 hours
TABE 11 & 12 Same Form Testing (Paper-based or Online)	60-80 hours of instruction is recommended when post-testing with the same form (i.e. 11M to 11M). Minimum of 60 hours

TABE CLAS-E™ Alternate Form Testing	60-95 hours of instruction is recommended when post-testing with an alternate form (i.e. A2 to B2). (This assessment is used for ESL Participants). Minimum of 40 hours
TABE CLAS-E™ Same Form Testing	100-140 hours of instruction is recommended when post-testing with the same form (i.e. A2 to A2). (This assessment is used for ESL Participants). Minimum of 50 hours.

If pretesting was done in all three subject areas, eligible post-testing hours would begin after the pretest test date for all three subject areas. The lowest subject score would become the Entering Functioning Level. All three subject areas would be valid after meeting the minimum instructional hours between pretest and posttest based on their EFL level, 40 hours for ABE Levels (1-4) and 30 hours for ASE Levels (5-6).

If only one subject area was tested at the time of the pretest, that subject would become the lowest EFL, and hours to posttest would begin on that date. If the participant has other subjects that are pretested after the initial pretest date, the posttest eligible dates for those subject areas would not be valid until reaching the approved minimum hours for those specific subject areas according to their pretest dates. (Hours can be validated in LACES by comparing the subject pre-test date in the Assessment tab with the accrued hours of instruction in the Hours tab.

1.8 SPECIAL POPULATIONS

Sixteen and Seventeen-Year-Old Participants

Before a program may enroll a 16 or 17-year-old participant, proper documentation and assessment-determined grade level must be presented. Acceptable documentation includes a Home-School Waiver, Public-School Waiver, or a Court Order. The documentation must be presented to the program before an assessment is administered. If the local high school/school district cannot assess the student, then the adult education provider can administer the TABE/TABE CLAS-E test to determine eligibility.

While conducting research on the minimum TABE/TABE CLAS-E score requirements for 16-17 year old participants, the Division of Workforce Services, Adult Education Section is waiving the minimum 535 TABE score of interested 16-17-year olds until further written notice. Court-ordered students will be allowed to enroll in Adult Education regardless of their scores.

Programs with participants who are 16 and 17 years old must follow the guidelines outlined in Arkansas Act 1659 of 2001 and Act 604 of 2003. Refer to the [Arkansas Adult Education Program Policies](#) for further information on serving 16 and 17-year-old participants.

Act 478 of the State of Arkansas 91st General Assembly requires a person seeking a high school diploma or equivalency diploma to pass the civics portion of the naturalization test used by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. This requirement applies to all adult education students seeking a GED® credential who are ages 16, 17, or 18. If a student passed the Civics Exam while in a traditional high school, the student may present his high school transcript, which will show a pass/fail rating for the exam, and will not be required to retake an exam that was passed. If the student has not taken or failed the exam, the student may do so at any Arkansas Adult Education Center. The Civics Exam must be passed before GED® testing may begin. The adult education center will notify the State Adult Education office via email to ged@arkansas.gov, that a student has passed the Civics Exam. The notification should include the student's legal name and date of birth.

English Language Learners

Programs with English language learners should have their Intake Form and their class schedule of English as a Second Language (ESL) classes available in the most common foreign languages of the program's community. Programs should assess ESL participants with an NRS and state-approved assessment (TABE CLAS-E™) before receiving 12 hours of instruction.

The Adult Education Section highly recommends that ESL participants be assessed in all four skill areas (Speaking, Listening, Reading, and Writing) to provide the most appropriate services to participants.

Participants with Disabilities:

Participants with documented disabilities will be granted reasonable accommodations upon request during testing and instruction. The audiocassette or CD format of TABE (Levels E–A) and the Locator are valid substitutes for the paper format and are available through the Arkansas Adult Learning Resource Center (AALRC) (501-907-2490, or 800-832-6242).

All programs must begin the process of screening for learning disabilities during participant intake. The process, administered by trained personnel, includes the use of a validated learning disabilities screening tool, a follow-up interview to review the results of the screening tool and

appropriate further steps for investigating diagnostic referrals as warranted by the screening process. For further information regarding learning disabilities, accommodations, and training in administering a learning disabilities screening tool, programs should contact Ms. Wendy Bryant, the state Disabilities Project Manager (479-232-5760, or 800-569-3539).

The following interventions do **not** require disability documentation and may be provided during testing: use of a large-print version, use of a straight edge, use of colored overlays, request to sit near a window (away from fluorescent lights), use of graph paper, or taking individual tests on different days.

1.9 TRAINING

Local Programs are responsible for ensuring staff administering assessments have been trained and maintain up-to-date records of transcripts and/or certificates. Local Programs are required to have had at least one staff member with applicable training within the last two (2) years. New staff members need to attend the appropriate training prior to administering assessments. Previously trained staff should attend refresher courses (every 2-3 years) to become familiar with any assessment updates.

Training on test administration is available from the Arkansas Adult Learning Resource Center (AALRC) regularly. Contact AALRC for the most current calendar of training events (501-907-2490, or 800-832-6242) at www.aalrc.org. The AALRC maintains records (sign-in sheets, certificates (if applicable), and the ESC Web online registration system) for all persons trained for each assessment conducted at AALRC. AALRC also maintains records of the trainers who conduct each workshop.

According to Data Recognition Corp (formerly McGraw-Hill/CTB):

Adult educators who have a general knowledge of measurement principles and are willing to abide by the assessment standards of the American Psychological Association may administer TABE. These professional standards require TABE administrators to follow specific guidelines, such as keeping tests in a secure place and administering them only as directed. For additional information, see the Purchaser's Qualification Statement in the back of the Data Recognition Corp Assessment Products and Services Catalog. TABE: www.datarecognitioncorp.com

TABE CLAS-E training will be given at the Arkansas Adult Learning Resource Center (AALRC) on a regular basis (501-907-2490, or 800-832-6242). Adult Educators may also complete training through publisher-provided materials.

1.10 ADDITIONAL NOTES ON ASSESSMENTS

Other assessments, such as the Wide Range Achievement Test, Slosson Oral Reading Test, Jordan Oral Screening Test, and teacher-generated assessments, may be given to help **inform instruction**; however, they may **not** be used to place a participant in an EFL or to determine the educational gain or EFL advancement. Only state-approved NRS assessments may be used to determine educational functioning levels. A participant must be pre-tested and post-tested with an NRS and state-approved testing instrument to ensure the educational gain can be determined.

Note: If a participant is given a test other than an NRS and state-approved testing instrument to help inform instruction, the time should be recorded as instruction.

SECTION 2. DATA QUALITY AND COLLECTION

2.1 DATA QUALITY

A program's reliable and valid data are essential to maintaining the integrity of NRS and Arkansas' data. The reported assessment data are used to measure not only the educational progress of participants but also the performance of all programs and the state.

The pre-and post-testing of participants using approved assessments is the method used to measure the completion of an educational functioning level. This data is used to assess a program's performance and used in future funding; therefore, the reliability and validity of data collection is essential.

In order to ensure all data is reliable and valid, programs must consistently administer assessments according to publisher and state guidelines as well as entering data accurately. Documentation of data entered, including assessments and scores, must be kept in participants' folders and accessible upon request. In addition, programs should have a system of quality control to catch potential errors.

2.2 COLLECTING AND REPORTING DATA

All adult education and literacy programs receiving federal and state funds through the Arkansas Adult Education Section must report participant data for both **reportable individuals** and **participants** using the state-approved data management system.

Reportable Individuals: Individuals who show intent to receive services from adult education and literacy programs and meet eligibility requirements, such as completing an intake form or meeting with program staff. *All Reportable Individuals should be entered into the database management system.*

Participants: Individuals who meet eligibility requirements and receive 12+ contact hours within a program year (Jul 1- June 30). *Individuals should be pre-tested with a state-approved assessment before they have acquired 12 hours of instruction.*

Data to be entered in the state-approved data management system include, but are not limited to:

- Demographic Information
- Attendance Hours
- Assessment Scores (pre and post-tests with or without an EFL gain and GED®s)
- Manual Outcomes for Follow-up Measures

In addition to following a clear model of data collection, local programs must establish policies and procedures for data collection that comply with State NRS requirements. The following section presents the policies and procedures that local programs need to have in place.

Staff Roles and Responsibilities for Data Collection

Every staff member in an adult education program plays a role in the data collection process. Intake staff collects student demographic data, teachers report attendance and may administer tests and report other outcomes, administrators must review and make decisions based on data tables, and administrative staff may be involved in checking forms and data entry. Each local program must have clearly written descriptions of the data collection process and the role of each individual in that process.

Standard Forms for Collecting Data

Staff must record information on intake and other data forms. Then, the administrative staff keys the information from these forms into the program database. Consequently, the program should use standard forms for data collection that include all the data elements and categories that are referenced in the database system. Staff should not need nor be allowed to enter their own codes or variables because this will cause data entry errors and hurt reliability and validity.

Error Checking and Quality Control Systems

Data collection is a complex activity—mistakes and missing data are inevitable. For example, staff may fail to complete forms fully because of high workload or simple oversight, or the required information may not be available when it is needed. The data collection system must have written procedures for checking data for completeness and accuracy at several points during the process. Data checking should follow a regular, prescribed schedule with clear deadlines. More than one staff person should be assigned to perform these data checking functions, and these functions should be made explicit in the staff job descriptions and throughout the program. Data checkers should review all data forms as soon as possible for completeness and accuracy and should receive error reports from the database to check immediately after data entry. To do their job, data checkers must have access to all staff—teachers, intake staff, counselors, and administrative staff—and the authority to obtain cooperation from them.

Ongoing Training on Data Collection

Staff must understand and follow data collection procedures to ensure valid and reliable data. To this end, training should be provided to staff to clarify their roles and responsibilities and to highlight the importance of data collection. The program should provide this training to all staff, and training should be offered several times during the year, if possible, to accommodate new staff and to allow existing staff to take follow-up training. Regularly scheduled staff meetings or in-service trainings on data issues also provide staff with opportunities to discuss problems and issues that arise during data collection. Addressing these issues promptly helps the program avoid more serious data problems later.

Student-level, Relational Database System

To use data for program improvement, staff must be able to look at outcomes and demographics for individual students according to such variables as the number of instructional hours received, length of time of enrollment, the teachers and classes enrolled, and the student's educational functioning level. This type of analysis requires a database that stores information by individual students and links the different pieces of data for each student in reports or other output—a system known technically as a relational database.

Clear and Timely Data Entry Procedures

The written procedures for data entry should specify at least one role to enter the information from data collection forms into the program's database. All staff members should know this person's role, and s/he should have the authority to request clarification and to resolve errors. In addition, data entry should be scheduled at frequent, regular intervals, such as weekly or monthly. Without frequent data entry, the program may have a significant backlog of information, and staff may not be aware of errors and missing data on forms until it is too late to correct them. Part of the data entry procedures should include a prompt, organized way to identify and resolve errors. For example, soon after data are entered, staff should be able to print out an error report for review. Staff should then use the error report to resolve missing data issues and correct errors as soon as possible after data entry.

Timely or Direct Access to Database

Local program staff members must have access to data for use in program improvement and management. The data management system has the capability for local program staff to access their data in useful ways.

Regular Data Reviews

The program's data collection procedures should include a regular data review by staff soon after entry into the database. Regular data reviews allow staff to identify errors, missing data, and other anomalies that don't make sense. Data reviews are also useful as a staff development opportunity to examine problems and issues in support of program improvement. Data can help staff understand issues such as the impact of instructional arrangements, learner retention, and learner progress. This will not only foster program improvement, but it may also improve data quality, as staff recognizes the importance of data collection to produce accurate and valuable information.

2.3 GUIDELINES FOR ENTERING DATA IN THE STATE-APPROVED DATA MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

- All participant data must be entered by the 10th of each month for the previous month's data.
- All participant data must be **reviewed and verified** by the 17th of each month for the previous month's data.
- All attendance and assessment scores must be dated (not necessarily entered on) the exact date of the corresponding documentation, which must be accessible and available upon request during desk audits and onsite visits/reviews.
 - Attendance must be recorded via dated sign-in sheets with the **participants' first and last names, times in and out in the participants' own signatures. (Ink is required)**
 - Attendance for Distance Learning classes must be documented through Distance Learning approved methods (i.e. software records, textbook exercises, etc....)

Note: Programs are required to have a written Data Entry Process that includes step-by-step procedures and specific checks and balances to ensure the accuracy of data.

Freeze Date

- **Freeze Date:** This is the date by which programs should have all data entry completed for the current fiscal year and the date that you would create fiscal year summary records.

Freeze Date Explanation:

The Data Freeze removes a program's ability to create FY Summaries for the reporting year. The Data Freeze Date is set by the state office. The time between the Data Freeze and Rollover provides the state office time to review and verify the data on the NRS reports. After the Data Freeze, programs can continue to enter data in LACES for the reporting year, but it will not be reflected on the NRS reports.

Note: All data for a program year must be entered and reviewed by August 1. No further data entry will be possible. According to the Adult Education Section, Assurances signed at the time of the adult education grant award, all programs that receive adult education funds agree to submit participant data according to schedules set by the Adult Education Section (see #13). If programs are missing data in the state-approved data management system or have data with errors or deviations, they will be notified by a program advisor and will be required to correct the problem within one month. The Adult Education Section may reduce funding or terminate agreements in part or whole if it has been determined that a program has failed to comply with the assurances (see #33).

SECTION 3. PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

One method to measure the effectiveness of instruction in adult education programs is standardized assessments. Attaining a Measurable Skill Gain (MSG) is a performance indicator measured at the program and state level.

3.1 MEASURABLE SKILL GAINS (MSG)

An MSG is attained when:

1. A participant completes or advances one or more NRS Educational Functioning Levels (EFL) with a state-approved post-test in any of the subject areas.
2. The participant receives a secondary school diploma or equivalent within the program year.

For IET and Workplace Literacy Participants ONLY (MSG Type 3, 4, or 5)

3. The participant receives a post-secondary transcript.
4. The participant progresses towards a milestone.
5. The participant passes a technical/occupational knowledge-based exam.

The **EFL is set by the first pre-test in the first Period of Participation in the program year (PY)**. The entering EFL cannot be changed within a PY.

All NRS participants are recorded on **Table 4** when they have 12+ contact hours and a pre-test and on **Table 4B** when they have 12+ contact hours, a pre-test, and post-test.

Programs must post-test a minimum of **65%** of participants who have pre-tested.

Note: Post-test rates can be determined by dividing the total number of participants on Table 4 by the total number of participants on Table 4B.

Programs are required to meet each of the negotiated benchmarks related to MSGs including the average as determined by OCTAE to be considered Effective and Efficient:

3.2 PERIODS OF PARTICIPATION

A Period of Participation (PoP) begins on the day of enrollment and ends when a participant has not received or scheduled services from any Adult Education program for 90 days and has no intention or plans to return or receive additional services. An MSG, or lack of, is reported for each Period of Participation, and at least once per program year on the federal tables. *The **exit date** is not determined until 90 days after the last date of services. A participant is not separated in the data management system until 90 days have elapsed and the **participant has no scheduled services**.*

A second (or third) PoP begins when a participant returns to any program after 90 days of receiving no services and completes another 12 hours of attendance.

A “rollover” participant whose PoP crosses program years does not need to re-qualify to be considered a participant in the new PY. To be a participant in the new program year, an assessment must be rolled over or administered.

Example 1: Participant A attends a program, achieves an EFL gain, and separates after receiving no services for 90+ days. *(Please note some columns have been removed for example purposes only.)*

EFL Name (A)	Total Number Participants (B)	Total Attendance Hours (D)	Number who achieved at least one educational functioning level gain (E)	Number who attained a secondary school diploma/ equivalent (F)	Percentage Achieving Measurable Skill Gains (I)	Total number of Periods of Participation (J)	Total number of Periods of Participation with EFL Gain (K)	Total number of Periods of Participation achieving secondary school diploma/ equivalent (L)	Percentage of Periods of Participation with Measurable Skill Gains (M)
Level 3	1	45	1	0	100%	1	1	0	100%

Example 2: Participant A returns to the same program after 90 days and begins a 2nd PoP and achieves a GED. (Please note some columns have been removed for example purposes only.)

Note: Table 4 will only reflect one MSG per participant; therefore, a participant may appear in Column E after making an EFL gain and then shift to Column F after attaining a secondary diploma. Column H (as shown on Table 4 in LACES) reflects the 1st PoP only.

EFL Name (A)	Total Number Participants (B)	Total Attendance Hours (D)	Number who achieved at least one educational functioning level gain (E)	Number who attained a secondary school diploma/ equivalent (F)	Percentage Achieving Measurable Skill Gains (I)	Total number of Periods of Participation (J)	Total number of Periods of Participation with EFL Gain (K)	Total number of Periods of Participation achieving secondary school diploma/ equivalent (L)	Percentage of Periods of Participation with Measurable Skill Gains (M)
Level 3	1	45	1	0	100%	2	1	1	100%

Example 3: Participant B attends a program, does not achieve an EFL gain and separates after receiving no services for 90+ days; Participant B returns after 90 days and begins a 2nd PoP and achieves an EFL gain. (Please note some columns have been removed for example purposes only.) **Note:** Columns K, L and M reflect all Periods of Participation.

EFL Name (A)	Total Number Participants (B)	Total Attendance Hours (D)	Number who achieved at least one educational functioning level gain (E)	Number who attained a secondary school diploma/ equivalent (F)	Percentage Achieving Measurable Skill Gains (I)	Total number of Periods of Participation (J)	Total number of Periods of Participation with EFL Gain (K)	Total number of Periods of Participation achieving secondary school diploma/ equivalent (L)	Percentage of Periods of Participation with Measurable Skill Gains (M)
Level 3	1	45	0	0	0%	2	1	0	50%

An MSG from post-testing or HSE achievement may be achieved in a PoP based on post-testing in a subsequent PoP under the following scenarios:

1. A participant exits, has enough hours to posttest (according to assessment policy guidelines) but does not complete a posttest. The individual returns to the program and is tested on entry. This test may be used as the pretest for the 2nd PoP and an EFL gain (if achieved) is applied to her/his 1st PoP.
2. A participant exits, does not have enough hours to post test, and is not post-tested. The participant returns and begins a 2nd PoP and is tested after receiving enough instructional hours (combined from the 1st and 2nd PoPs) to posttest and achieves an EFL gain. The test serves as the pretest for the 2nd PoP and the EFL gain may be counted for the 1st PoP. For the participant to achieve an EFL gain the 2nd PoP, s/he will require another posttest after the required number of instructional hours.

3. A participant exits and is not post-tested. The participant returns and achieves a HSE, with or without additional instructional hours. The MSG will be applied to all PoPs.

Note: The PoPs in the above scenarios must be within the same Program Year. MSGs cannot be applied to a prior program year.

Note: The State's Table 4 reflects unduplicated statewide data while a local program's Table 4 reflects a singular program's data. Therefore, Table 4 will reflect a participant's attendance, MSGs, and PoPs across the state, including what s/he did at other programs. Table 4 will reflect only the participant's attendance, MSGs, and PoPs within that program. A program's Table 4 is used in the funding process and performance evaluation.

3.3 FOLLOW-UP MEASURES

Follow-up Measure #1: Employment 2nd Quarter

Definition: Number of participants who exited during the reporting period who are employed during the second quarter after exit. Employment is working in a paid, unsubsidized job or working 15 hours or more per week in an unpaid job on a farm or business operated by a family member or the participant. The exit quarter is the quarter when instruction ends; the learner terminates or has not received instruction for 90 days, and is not scheduled to receive further instruction. A job obtained while the participant is enrolled can be counted for entered employment and is reported if the participant is still employed in the second quarter after exit from the program.

Applicable Population: All participants who exit during the program year. Exclusions to this follow-up measure are outlined in OCTAE Memorandum 17-2 Tables A and C (see page 23 for a full description).

Federal Reporting: States report the total number of *participants* who are employed two quarters after exiting the program and the total number of *participants* who exit during the program year. –Second quarter employment rate is computed by dividing these numbers.

Follow-up Measure #2: Employment 4th Quarter

Definition: Number of participants who exited during the reporting period who are employed during the fourth quarter after exit. Employment is working in a paid, unsubsidized job or working 15 hours or more per week in an unpaid job on a farm or business operated by a family member or the participant. The exit quarter is the quarter when instruction ends; the learner terminates or has not received instruction for 90 days and is not scheduled to receive further instruction. A job obtained while the participant is enrolled can be counted for entered employment and is reported if the participant is still employed in the fourth quarter after exit from the program.

Applicable Population: All participants who exit during the program year. Exclusions to this follow-up measure are outlined in OCTAE Memorandum 17-2 Tables A and C (see page 23 for a full description).

Federal Reporting: States report the total number of *participants* who -are employed four quarters after exiting the program year and the total number of *participants* who exit during the program year. The fourth quarter employment rate is computed by dividing these numbers.

Follow-up Measure #3: Median Earnings

Definition: Median Earnings of participants who are employed in the second quarter after exit and who exited during the reporting period. Median earnings are the midpoint of wages between the lowest and highest wage in the second quarter.

Applicable Population: All participants who exit during the program year and are employed the second quarter after exit. Exclusions to this follow-up measure are outlined in OCTAE Memorandum 17-2 Tables A and C (see page 23 for a full description).

Federal Reporting: States report median earnings of participants employed in the second quarter after exit.

Follow-up Measure #4: Credential Attainment

Definition The percentage of those participants enrolled in an education or training program (excluding those in OJT and customized training) who attained a recognized **postsecondary** credential or a **secondary** school diploma, or its recognized equivalent, during participation in or within one year after exiting from the program

Attained a Secondary School Diploma/Recognized Equivalent AND Enrolled in Postsecondary Education or Training OR Gain Employment

Definition: Participants who obtain a secondary school diploma, or recognized equivalent, and enroll in postsecondary education or training OR employment within one year of exit.

Applicable Population: All participants who exit during the program year who did not possess a secondary credential at entry and who were enrolled in a secondary level (assessed at ABE Level 5 or 6 as measured with an approved NRS assessment). Exclusions to this follow-up measure are outlined in OCTAE Memorandum 17-2 Tables A and C (see page 23 for a full description).

Federal Reporting: All participants who did not possess a secondary credential at entry who enrolled in a secondary level program at some point during the program year who exit from adult education during the program year and who obtained a secondary diploma and either enrolled in postsecondary education or a training program or were employed within a year of exiting.

Attained a Post-Secondary Credential

Definition: Participants attained a state-recognized postsecondary credential while enrolled or within one year of exiting the reportable program year.

Applicable Population: All participants who were dually enrolled in a post-secondary or training program, such as an Integrated Education and Training (IET) program who exit the postsecondary education or training program during the program year. Exclusions to this follow-up measure are outlined in OCTAE Memorandum 17-2 Tables A and C (see page 23 for a full description).

Federal Reporting: All participants who exit during the program year and who dually enrolled a postsecondary or training program leading to a postsecondary credential.

Follow-up Measure #5: Indicators of Effectiveness in Serving Employers

Definition: The total number of establishments, as defined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Quarterly Census of Earnings and Waged program (QCEW), that received a service, if it is ongoing an activity, are continuing to receive a service or other assistance during the reporting period.

Applicable Population: The total number of establishments, as defined by BLS QCEW, located within the state during the reporting period.

Federal Reporting: Retention with the same employer and employer penetration rate are the two approaches being piloted in Arkansas, which started in 2018-2019 PY. Based on information received from Department of Labor and Department of Education, a single approach will be determined from previous FY data.

3.4 COLLECTION FOR FOLLOW-UP MEASURES

The entered employment measure must be collected from participants who leave the program by the end of the second and fourth quarter after they exit. A job obtained while the participant is enrolled can be counted for the entered employment measure, but it is still measured and reported in the second and fourth quarter after the participant exits. The Post-Secondary follow-up measures may include participants who enter postsecondary education/training up to the end of the *next* Program Year (June 30).

Core Outcome Measures, Participant Population and Collection Times as reflected on Table 5

Core Outcome Measure	Participant Population to Include	Time Period to Collect Measures
2 nd Quarter employment	All participants who exit during the program year.	Second quarter after exit quarter*
4 th Quarter employment	All participants who exit during the program year.	Fourth quarter after exit quarter*
Median Earnings	All participants who exited during the program year and were employed in the second quarter	Second quarter after exit quarter*
Attained a Secondary School Diploma/Recognized Equivalent <u>and</u> Enrolled in Post-Secondary Education or Training OR Employed within one year of exit	All participants who exited during the program year who were enrolled in secondary program at the ninth-grade equivalent or higher.	Within one year of program exit*
Attained a Post- Secondary Credential	All participants who exited during the program year and who were dually enrolled in a post-secondary program (i.e. IET program).	While enrolled or within one year of program exit*
Indicators of Effectiveness of Serving Employers	The total number of establishments located within the state during reporting period.	1. Retention with the Same Employer. 2. Employer Penetration Rate

**For all measures, exit quarter is the quarter when the learner completes instruction or has not received instruction for 90 days and has no instruction scheduled. The exit date will reflect the date the participant last attended or received services. A job obtained while the participant is enrolled can be counted but must be reported and measured during the first quarter after exiting the program if the participant remains employed in that quarter.

Quarterly Periods for Collecting and Eligibility for Employment 2nd Quarter and 4th Quarter after Exit

Exit Quarter	Collect Entered Employment by the End of:
First Quarter (July 1–September 30)	Third Quarter and First Quarter, Next Program Year
Second Quarter (October 1–December 31)	Fourth Quarter and Second Quarter, Next Program Year
Third Quarter (January 1–March 31)	First Quarter, Next Program Year and Third Quarter, Next Program Year
Fourth Quarter (April 1–June 30)	Second Quarter, Next Program Year and Fourth Quarter, Next Program Year

Exclusions:

*Participants are **excluded** from Accountability Measures if*

- The participant exits the program because he or she has become incarcerated in a correctional institution or has become a resident of an institution or facility providing 24-hour support such as a hospital or treatment center during the course of receiving services as a participant;
- The participant exits the program because of medical treatment, and that treatment is expected to last longer than 90 days and precludes entry into unsubsidized employment or continued participation in the program;
- The participant is deceased;
- The participant exits the program because the participant is a member of the National Guard or other reserve military unit of the armed forces and is called to active duty for at least 90 days; or,
- A Title II AEFLA participant, who is a criminal offender in a correctional institution, receives services under sec.225 of WIOA. When these participants remain incarcerated after exiting from the program, they are **excluded** from the calculation of the following WIOA indicators of performance only:
 - Employment rate – 2nd quarter after exit; Employment rate – 4th quarter after exit; Median earnings – 2nd quarter after exit; and Credential Attainment
 - *All sec.225 participants are **included** in the Measurable Skill Gains indicator. (Table 4)*

SECTION 4. DISTANCE EDUCATION POLICY

This policy defines distance education for adult education programs in Arkansas and provides guidelines by which programs can report adult learners' distance education hours to the National Reporting System (NRS). The goal of this policy is to describe the types of activities and the distance-learning platform the state has mandated for distance education and outline the requirements and procedures for reporting distance education activities to NRS.

4.1 ADMINISTERING DISTANCE EDUCATION CLASSES

Adult education programs must follow the steps and processes outlined below to teach, design coursework, and report distance education classes and related participant attendance in the state-approved data management system.

Definition of Distance Education

The United States Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE) defines distance education for Adult Education programs in the National Reporting System Implementation Guidelines as:

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.

Distance education, especially delivered through networked computer technologies or other high-tech delivery methods, can provide adults with a convenient and effective way to increase their language, reading, writing, and math skills, and helps them develop the skills needed to fully participate in the 21st Century workplace. While access to networked computer technology has been a significant barrier for adults interested in distance education, it is less of a factor today due to the increased accessibility of smartphones, tablets, and computers that have broadband Internet connections in their homes.

Increasingly, employers expect, even require, employees to have the ability to use standard computer technologies and productivity software and possess the skills to use these tools to communicate, collaborate, and solve problems. By participating in distance education, adults have the opportunity to develop skills using these tools, making them better prepared to enter into or advance within the modern workforce.

Another benefit of offering distance education is the opportunity to reduce or reallocate program costs, especially during times of fiscal limits and reduced budgets. By providing motivated and prepared adult learners opportunities to participate in distance education, often independently and at their own pace, programs may be able to devote more resources to participants who need classroom or individualized support.

4.2 INSTRUCTION

Resources for Technical Assistance and Professional Development

For the local programs to administer distance education services, directors and instructors will be required to receive state-provided training along with continued professional development. Trainings will include face-to-face meetings, conference calls, webinars, as well as submission of an independent assignment. Trainings will focus on the designated competencies expected for overseeing and/or delivering distance education programs. The Arkansas Adult Education Section will provide information to local programs about required training to be certified to conduct distance education classes. Additional training, including periodic recertification trainings for existing distance educators, may be required and will be communicated to all participating programs at the beginning of the fiscal year.

Integrating distance education opportunities into a program's services requires thorough planning and professional development. Teaching in a distance education format requires different skills and competencies than those required in an exclusively face-to-face, classroom-based program. Program staff may request further technical assistance and training from either the Arkansas Adult Education Section or the Arkansas Adult Learning Resource Center.

A detailed description of each resource is listed at <https://dws.arkansas.gov/wp-content/uploads/updated-19-20-dl-resources.docx> under the *Policies* tab.

Training and Professional Development Requirements

Initial Distance Learning (DL) Certification will be as follows:

1. Successful completion of the Distance Learning and Technology Training
2. Successful completion of an online technological skills assessment with a passing score
3. CANVAS training
 - a. Teachers who wish to design their own courses in Canvas and submit them for approval to be used as a standalone distance learning class must also attend Canvas training.

Distance Learning (DL) Continued Certification

1. Participation in a minimum of two (2) "Quarterly DL Conference Calls"
2. Participation in at least one DL training/professional development (state-provided workshops, webinars, conferences, etc.)
 - a. Contact the Distance Learning Liaison to verify that a non-state provided training meets the requirement.

Directors and teachers who do not complete the above pieces of training will not be DL certified until they have completed the required training and earned a passing score on the skills assessment.

Best Practices

In both roles, those designated to design and develop the course and those who will only be teaching are required to use best practices for course designers and online instructors. Best practices for design and development include:

1. Maintaining consistency throughout the course (Pages should mirror each other)
2. The use of media used should help support the learning process and not distract
3. Incorporating the following pages:
 - a. Home page (Includes a picture of the instructor, description of the course, and expectations)
 - b. Syllabus – Assignment weeks or days, a brief description of each assignment, and due dates
 - c. Discussions (An introduction discussion as the first assignment in the course)
 - d. Modules for each week the course is in session
4. Include photographs of the instructor and invite participants to do the same.
5. Citing of sources.

Best practices for online instruction best practices include:

1. Being present and involved with participants at all times.
2. Creating a supportive online course community
3. Sharing a set of very clear expectations for your participants and for yourself as to (1) how you will communicate and (2) how much time participants should be working on the course each week
4. Asking for informal feedback on "How is the course going?" and "Do you have any suggestions?"
5. Preparing Discussion Posts that Invite Questions, Discussions, Reflections, and Responses
6. Focusing on content resources, applications, and links to current events and examples that are easily accessed from learner's computers
7. Planning a good closing and wrap activity for the course

4.3 DISTANCE LEARNERS

Definition of Adult Education Learners

Each adult basic education participant will be identified in our reportable educational system as one of two types of learners:

Traditional learners: Traditional learners are participants who receive a majority or 51% of their instruction through traditional, face-to-face instruction.

Distance learners: Distance learners are participants who receive a majority or 51% of their instruction through approved distance education services.

Note: For NRS reporting purposes, a participant will only appear on Table 4C if 51% of attendance hours are entered under distance learning classes.

Identify Each Participant as a Traditional or Distance Learner

A participant is classified as a distance learner if the majority of the participant's hours earned in a program year are derived from his or her participation in distance learning activities. However, a participant's hours in both distance and classroom activities must be reported in the state-approved data management system.

Qualifications to enroll in Distance Learning Coursework

Distance education will not be the right approach for every adult education learner. There are certain competencies that are required prior to any participant enrolling in distance education. For adults to be successful using distance education, they require the appropriate language, reading, mathematics, and writing skills that will enable them to follow written directions, work independently, and communicate effectively. The selected distance education curricula must also be appropriate for the targeted learner population both in content and level of technical complexity. In order for a participant to be approved for distance education, they must successfully pass the *distance learning survey and complete a distance learning agreement* prior to being admitted into distance learning classes. Additional evaluation to determine the participant's computer skills and ability to work independently on online coursework through the state-supported Learning Management System (LMS), may also be included to evaluate a participant's suitability for Distance Learning.

The following personal competencies should be considered when evaluating the appropriateness of distance education for adult learners. While these competencies are not as easily measured as reading, math, and language skills, they may be ascertained through a thorough and comprehensive intake/interview process.

*A level of academic maturity

*Motivation

*Self-direction

*Time management and organizational skills

*Network of support

*Telephone and Internet access

*High comfort level working with computer software

Requirements to enroll in Distance Learning Coursework

Grade level minimums: There is no set minimum grade level for participants to participate in Distance Education Classes; however, participants must earn at least six (6) face-to-face hours, which may be virtual, before beginning Distance Learning. Hours may include, but are not limited to, orientation, intake, instruction, testing, etc.

Hours to maintain: 25-40 hours monthly

Contact to maintain: Weekly

Note: Participants who are 16/17 years old may participate in Distance Learning Classes as long as they meet the requirements outlined in the current Arkansas Adult Education Program Policies.

Required Technological Knowledge

The following technological knowledge should be considered when evaluating the appropriateness of distance education activities mediated by technology.

- Demonstrated ability with the use of basic technology, such as sending and replying to e-mail, using a Web browser, downloading, opening, and saving electronic files, and filling out Web-based fields and form
- Regular access to computer technology with Internet access through the use of a personal or publicly available computer
- Active E-mail account that is checked regularly

4.4 ASSESSMENT OF DISTANCE EDUCATION LEARNERS

All potential distance education participants must be given an approved assessment and meet all of the policy guidelines as identified in the Arkansas Assessment Policy & Distance Education Guidelines.

All assessments must be administered in a proctored setting. Pre-tests must be administered within the *first twelve hours of instruction*. Post-tests must be administered according to the testing specifications of the assessment as identified by the test publisher.

4.5 APPROVED DISTANCE EDUCATION HOURS

There are two types of participant contact hours that may be counted for reporting purposes: face-to-face hours and proxy hours.

Contact Hours

Contact hours are defined as time spent interacting with the learner. Contact hours for distance education participants can be a combination of actual face-to-face contact and contact by telephone, video, teleconference, or other online communication where participant and program staff are able to interact and through which learner identity is verifiable. A distance learner may be reported in the NRS data system once six (6) face-to-face hours have been completed.

1. FACE-TO-FACE

Face-to-face interaction includes participant intake & orientation, assessment, goal setting, counseling, and classroom-based skills training.

2. PROXY HOURS

Proxy hours are defined as the time distance education participants spend engaged in approved distance education activities as part of the coursework required in their Canvas classroom. The hours for each approved activity are calculated using one of three models:

Clock-time: This model assigns contact hours based on the elapsed time that a learner is connected to or engaged in an online or standalone software program that tracks time.

Learner Mastery: This model assigns a fixed number of hours of credit based on the learner's demonstrated mastery of the content of a lesson. This model requires previous engagement by the participant on curriculum and materials related to the test. A high percentage of correct responses on the mastery test earn the credit hours attached to the material.

Teacher Verification: This model assigns a fixed number of hours of credit for each assignment based on the teacher's determination of the extent to which a learner engaged in, or completed, the assignment.

Canvas courses designed by teachers to be used for distance learning must include:

1. Welcome page with the instructor's name and contact information
2. Syllabus with course expectations/outline
3. Program specific Distance Learning policy and Distance Learning Contract
4. At least 2 modules, divided by week, lesson, unit, etc. depending on the nature of the course
5. Links to all required material for each module (documents, PowerPoints, external URLs, videos, etc.)
6. Detailed lesson descriptions with clear, student-centered learning objectives
7. Documentation of how Proxy Hours will be awarded for each lesson:
 - Clock Time
 - Teacher Verification*
 - Learner Mastery**
8. [College and Career Readiness \(CCR\)](#), [Employability](#), [Digital Literacy](#), and [Financial Literacy Standards](#) (embedded)

For courses to be considered for approval, the Program Name, Instructor Name, and Course Name should be sent to the Distance Learning Liaison over email. Upon approval via email, instructors should keep documentation of course approval to be provided when requested by the Distance Learning Liaison, program advisor(s), Program Coordinator, Associate Director, and Director of the Adult Education Section.

*When determining the amount of time an assignment/module/course is worth using the Teacher Verification method of calculating Proxy Hours, determine the amount of time it would take the instructor to complete an assignment, double that time, and then round to the nearest quarter hour.

Example: If an assignment takes the instructor 47 minutes to complete an assignment, the instructor would take their time (47 minutes), double it (94 minutes; or 1 hour and 34 minutes), and round to the nearest quarter hour (90 minutes; or 1.5 hours). That assignment would then be worth 1.5 hours upon student completion.

**When using the Learner Mastery method of calculating Proxy Hours, clearly document how learner mastery will be assessed in the lesson description (certain percentage on a quiz, grade on an assignment, number of correct problems solved, etc.). See guidance regarding determining the amount of time an assignment/module/course is worth, above.

4.6 ACCOMMODATING LEARNERS WITH DISABILITIES OR OTHER SPECIAL NEEDS

Learners with professionally certified documentation, issued prior to program registration, who self-disclose a given physical, mental, or emotional disability must be provided appropriate accommodations for participating in a distance education program.

If a learner self-identifies a disability, it is the responsibility of the distance education program to provide reasonable accommodations. Programs may not deny or prevent access to services based on a learner's disability. Under certain conditions, the program may be required to absorb the costs related to the accommodation(s). By not providing appropriate accommodations for individuals with documented disabilities programs, could be in violation of federal law.

***NOTE:** Arkansas Rehabilitation Services is available to assist with some costs related to accommodations.*

When designing coursework, the designer must attempt to use videos that are closed captioned enabled. In addition, any audio file should have a transcript provided as well.

4.7 APPROVED DISTANCE EDUCATION REPORTING

Report All Distance Learner NRS Required Data in State-Approved Data Management System

All participant hours earned using a Distance Learning Resource must be marked "Instruction-Distance Learning" in the state's data management system. A participant is classified as a distance learner if the majority of contact hours earned in a program year are derived from proxy hours. Non-proxy and proxy contact hours will be recorded in separate fields in the NRS Web-based data system. The designation of the participant's status as a classroom or distance learner will be made at the end of the year when a participant's proxy and non-proxy hours are compared. If a learner has 51% of the instructional hours reported as proxy, he or she will be identified as a distance learner. The participant's hours in both distance and classroom programs will be included in the NRS reports.

With the reporting of distance education activities, two NRS tables are available. Both of these tables will be generated demonstrating the program's performance each fiscal year specific to distance education activities. Descriptions of these tables follow.

Table 4C reports educational gains for distance learners. This table is identical to Table 4 with the exception that only participants identified as distance education learners (i.e., those who have a majority of hours as proxy hours) will be reported. No traditional participants will be reported on this table.

Table 5A reports follow-up outcomes for distance learners. This table is identical to Table 5 with the exception that only participants identified as distance education learners will be reported. No traditional participants will be reported on this table.

Additional reports on distance learning hours may be generated by local programs. In the state's data management system, an "All Hours" report filtered for distance learning hours can be generated to calculate all distance learning hours earned by students regardless of the percentage of face to face or distance learning hours.

Distance Education Auditing Requirements

For auditing purposes, programs must keep documentation proving a participant's distance learning achievements and proxy hours claimed. Some acceptable measures of documentation include:

- Printed participant screenshots
- Printed software-generated reporting tables; and
- Teacher-signed participant logs.

The documentation must:

- List the specific module(s) the participant completed or mastered;
- Show that a participant completed and/or mastered the module according to standards; and
- Include date of completion.

In the case of an audit, if a program cannot provide the distance learning documentation for proxy hours entered, the program may be required to pay back state and federal money earned through the undocumented proxy hours.

Arkansas Adult Education Section

Telephone: (501) 682-1970 Fax: (501) 682-1706

Web site: <http://dws.arkansas.gov/adulted>

Arkansas Adult Learning Resource Center (AALRC)

Telephone: (501) 907-2490 Fax: (501) 907-2492

Web site: <http://www.aalrc.org/>

Appendix A: Assessment Charts

National Reporting System for Adult Education Educational Functioning Level Score Ranges

Adult Basic Education (ABE)		
<p>Level 1</p> <p>TABE 11/12 scale scores*</p> <p>Reading: 300-441 Total Math: 300-448 Language: 300-457</p>	<p>Level 2</p> <p>TABE 11/12 scale scores</p> <p>Reading 442-500 Total Math: 449-495 Language: 458-510</p>	<p>Level 3</p> <p>TABE 11/12 scale scores</p> <p>Reading: 501-535 Total Math: 496-536 Language: 511-546</p>
<p>Level 4</p> <p>TABE 11/12 scale scores:</p> <p>Reading: 536-575 Total Math: 537-595 Language: 547-583</p>	<p>Level 5</p> <p>TABE 11/12 scale scores:</p> <p>Reading: 576-616 Total Math: 596-656 Language: 584-630</p>	<p>Level 6</p> <p>TABE 11/12 scale scores:</p> <p>Reading: 617-800 Total Math: 657-800 Language: 631-800</p>

*Refer to publisher guidelines for more accurate score ranges determined by Form (11/12) and Version (L, E, M, D, A)

TABE or TABE Online = Test of Adult Basic Education (Standard or Online format)

English as a Second Language (ESL) Levels					
Level 1 SPL 0-1		Level 2 SPL 2		Level 3 SPL 3	
TABE CLAS- E***	Reading: 250-392 Writing: 200- 396 Listening: 230- 389 Speaking: 231- 425	TABE CLAS-E	Reading: 393- 436 Writing: 397- 445 Listening: 390- 437 Speaking: 426- 460	TABE CLAS-E	Reading: 437- 476 Writing: 446- 488 Listening: 438- 468 Speaking: 461-501
Level 4 SPL 4		Level 5 SPL 5-6		Level 6 SPL 6	
TABE CLAS-E	Reading: 477- 508 Writing: 489- 520 Listening: 469- 514 Speaking: 502- 536	TABE CLAS-E	Reading: 509- 557 Writing: 521- 555 Listening: 515- 549 Speaking: 537-567	TABE CLAS-E	Reading: 558-588 Exit Criteria: 589+ Writing: 556 -612 Exit Criteria: 613+ Listening: 550- 607 Exit Criteria: 608+ Speaking: 568-594 Exit Criteria: 595+

SPL = Participant Performance Level in Reading, Speaking, and Writing

*****TABE CLAS-E = Test of Adult Basic Education Complete Language Assessment – English. Refer to the publisher’s scoring materials for individual subject area score ranges for SPL.

REFERENCES

1. PROGRAM MEMORANDUM OCTAE 17-2 Johan E. Uvin /s/ Deputy Assistant Secretary, Delegated the Duties of the Assistant Secretary. December 19, 2016
2. NRS IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE. December 2017.
http://www.nrsweb.org/foundations/implementation_guidelines.aspx
3. Department of Education. Federal Register/Notices. Pages 89920- 89922. Vol. 81 No. 239. Tuesday, December 13, 2016.
4. NRS State Assessment Policy Guidance (508). Updated July 20, 2016.