Ohio Aspire FY 2022 Assessment Policy

Introduction

Federal guidelines state that assessment procedures to fulfill the accountability requirements of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) must be valid, reliable, and appropriate. This document provides Ohio Aspire programs with guidelines for developing and implementing a comprehensive assessment policy for Adult Basic Education (ABE), Adult Secondary Education (ASE), and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programs, including workforce and family literacy programs.

The Ohio Aspire assessment policy guidelines include the selection and use of appropriate student assessment and procedures for:
- accurate student placement into appropriate program and instructional level;
- diagnostic information to guide instruction;
- pre and progress testing procedures to monitor progress toward goals; and
- certification of level and program completion.

These policy guidelines also include training and test security requirements for all staff who administer standardized assessments and use the results from these assessments.

The National Reporting System (NRS) is the accountability system for the federally funded adult education program. The Ohio Aspire Assessment Policy aims to ensure Ohio's success in meeting and exceeding the NRS goals for documenting student achievement identified in WIOA.

Note: For the purpose of aligning the Assessment Policy with definitions used in NRS reporting:
ABE   =   Educational Functioning Levels (EFL) ABE 1-4
ASE   =   ABE 5-6
ESOL/IELCE   =   ESL 1-6

Need for the Assessment Policy

Standardized, ongoing assessment of student progress is essential to ensure that all adult students become proficient in literacy and language skills. To ensure accuracy and consistency, Ohio Department of Higher Education Aspire Program (ODHE/Aspire) prescribes that programs use standardized assessments with proven validity and reliability and approved for use by the NRS.

> *Validity* refers to the extent to which the instrument measures what it intended to measure. To establish the content validity with respect to the requirements of the NRS, there must be evidence that the items/tasks of the instrument measure the skills associated with the EFL.

> *Reliability* refers to the degree of consistency in performance of 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.

Standardized assessment data are used to place students at appropriate levels of instruction; to diagnose student strengths and weaknesses; to monitor progress and to certify student mastery at specific levels of instruction or readiness to exit adult education. In addition, data drives program quality, professional development, and performance targets. Results from assessment provide the basis for the Local Program Desk Review. Uniform implementation of policy allows for comparability across programs within the state, especially since Ohio has implemented performance-based funding. Sound policy helps ensure standardization.

Purposes and Uses of Assessment

Aspire programs are encouraged to use a variety of assessments to assist in informing instruction. Standardized assessments, used to document student placement, progress, and level completion, are described in detail in subsequent sections of this document. In addition, ODHE/Aspire requires all programs to use student portfolios. The Aspire Portfolio System provides a framework for standards-based education. The use of informal assessments such as teacher-made tests, diagnostic assessments, unit tests, applied performance assessments and student observations is also encouraged in order to monitor learning and to inform instruction on an ongoing basis.

Standardized Assessment Overview

Appraisal and Locator Tests
An appraisal/locator test is used to help determine the appropriate pretest to administer.

Approved Locator Tests	ESOL	ABE/ASE
TABE CLAS-E		
Reading	✓	
Writing	✓	
Speaking	✓	
Listening	✓	
TABE 11/12		
Reading		✓
Math		✓
Language		✓

Initial test/Pretest
Initial assessments, or pretests, are the basis for placing students in entering EFLs. It is the baseline on which programs measure student learning gains.

Progress/Posttest
Any test given after the initial test is called a progress test or posttest. A student can have multiple progress tests. Level completion is determined by comparing a student's initial scale score with his/her scale score when reassessed with the same standardized assessment (progress test). If a student is not progress tested, level completion cannot be determined.

Approved Progress Tests	EFL	ESOL	ABE/ASE
TABE CLAS-E (paper forms A, B and online)			
Reading	1-6	✓	
Writing	1-6	✓	
Speaking	1-6	✓	
Listening	1-6	✓	
TABE 11/12 (paper and online)			
Reading	1-6		✓
Math	1-6		✓
Language	1-6		✓

For more information:

Appendix A - Assessment Charts for Placement, Progress and Posttesting
Appendix B - Timeframes for Pre- and Progress Testing
Appendix C - Progress Test Exception Form
Appendix D - Test Training Information
Appendix E – Remote Testing Guidance
Appendix F – Remote Testing Assessment Chart

For clarification and questions about the Assessment Policy, contact your ODHE/Aspire Program Manager.

OHIO ASPIRE ASSESSMENT POLICY

I. General Guidelines

    A.   An individual who may be served by Aspire services is an individual:
        1. who has attained 16 years of age; **AND**
        2. who is not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law; **AND**
        3. who –
            a. is basic skills deficient (generally demonstrated by an assessment, i.e. scoring below 12.9/level 6 completion on an approved assessment); **OR**
            b. does not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and has not achieved an equivalent level of education; **OR**
            c. is an English language learner.

    B.   All assessment information about reportable individuals and participants must be entered into the data management system, LACES.

    C.   Standardized assessments must be used for placement of ABE/ASE/ESOL students into EFLs and for progress testing.

    D.   New assessments may be added within a fiscal year. Programs will be notified if new assessments become available.

    E.   All Aspire programs must employ proper testing, scoring, and reporting protocols for the standardized instrument(s) being used.

    F.   All staff who administer standardized assessments must be trained in proper test administration practices for each instrument by an individual who is qualified and experienced with the assessment (see Appendix D: Training for Administering Assessments).

    G.   Training must include NRS policy, accountability policies, data collection process, definitions of measures and conducting and interpreting assessments. Staffs' assessment training must be documented in the online Professional Development (PD) system.

    H.   All programs must complete a Local Program Data Certification Checklist annually to verify they are following correct processes and procedures regarding NRS data quality standards. Local program data is monitored throughout the year by ODHE/Aspire Program Managers.

2. Guidelines for Administering Pretests

    A.   Programs should administer a locator test for guidance on the appropriate pretest to administer. The locator may not be used for placement or progress testing. If a locator is not used, programs must use alternative assessments to determine the appropriate placement test.

    B.   The TABE Word List may be used to help the test administrator determine whether to give the student the locator test or the TABE L.

    C.   All students must be pretested with an approved standardized assessment prior to enrollment. A participant is considered enrolled after receiving 12 hours of Aspire services.

D.   Programs are encouraged to record progress in all areas for which instruction is provided. LACES will automatically track in the subject that puts the student in the lowest level. However, programs may adjust the tracking subject. Level completion in any academic subject will count as a Measurable Skill Gain (MSG).

E.   Establishing a precise pretest score, or baseline, is imperative for accurate monitoring of student progress. Programs must follow test administration protocol regarding scoring. Scores are most reliable when they fall near the middle of the distribution of scores. Students whose scale scores are near the high end of the test may know more than the test allowed them to demonstrate. Similarly, scale scores near the low end may give little information about a student's skills. Therefore, a retest should be administered as soon as possible using a more accurate level test in order to establish a valid pretest score. At the higher end, the student should be given a higher-level test (e.g., TABE M to TABE D). At the lower end, the student should be given a lower level test (e.g., TABE A to TABE D). The retest is entered into LACES as the initial test.

F.   This requirement is being temporarily suspended. Programs will be notified when this is reinstated. See G and H: COVID-19 impact. Programs should determine whether to administer a new pretest to a student who has "stopped out" and has not attended consistently within the last 90 days. This decision should be based on when the student's last assessment was given and documented in the portfolio. Any student not receiving instruction for 90 consecutive days would need to be retested.

G.   Due to the impact of COVID-19, the most current student test scores that were administered January 1, 2021, or after may be rolled forward and reported in LACES as an initial test for FY 2022 for returning students.

H.   During the impact of COVID-19, a local program may use other assessment methods (diagnostic and formative assessments) to provisionally assign an EFL for the purpose of placing students into the NRS ONLY when an approved NRS test cannot be administered (OCTAE Program Memo 20-5). All students must have a provisional placement assigned if an NRS test (TABE 11/12, CLAS-E) was not able to be administered.

3. Progress Monitoring and Reporting

Approved Progress Tests	EFL	ESOL	ABE/ASE
TABE CLAS-E (paper forms A, B and online)			
Reading	1-6	✓	
Writing	1-6	✓	
Speaking	1-6	✓	
Listening	1-6	✓	
TABE 11/12 (paper and online)			
Reading	1-6		✓
Math	1-6		✓
Language	1-6		✓

A.   One way that a student can make a Measurable Skill Gain is to complete an EFL from pretest to progress test; therefore, teachers should aim to progress test all students after sufficient instructional hours. Progress testing is a good practice for the student and the teacher to use to monitor progress. ODHE/Aspire recommends that a minimum of 65% of students be tested for progress.

B.   Guidelines for Administering Progress Tests

    1.   When administering a progress test, sufficient instructional hours are required to assure valid test results. Follow publishers' recommended time frames for administering a progress test.

See details in Appendix B: Timeframes for Pre- and Progress Testing

Test	Recommended Number of Instructional Hours Between Pretest and Progress Test
TABE 11/12 Alternate Form	50 – 60 hours for ABE levels 1 – 4. 40 hours minimum 30- 60 hours for ABE levels 5 – 6
TABE 11/12 Same Level, Same Form	60 – 80 hours
TABE CLAS-E Alternate Form	50 - 60 hours. 40 hours minimum
TABE CLAS-E Same Form	60 – 80 hours

    2.   The same standardized assessment (e.g. TABE 11/12, CLAS-E) used for placement must also be used to demonstrate level completion.

    3.   Follow the test administration guidelines to determine the appropriate test form to be used for progress testing based on the student's EFL and test form used for pretesting.

    4.   Early progress test exception:
Early progress testing should be infrequent and based on subject area mastery. Departure from the program is not an acceptable exception. **Early testing should account for no more than 20% of progress tests per program within a fiscal year**. Monitoring by state staff will be ongoing.

C.   Scale scores are used to document level completion. Scale scores are more reliable than grade level equivalents for comparing student achievement. Scale scores also show when a student has small increments of gain which is helpful for students and teachers to see evidence of student learning.

D.   Programs must follow test administration protocol regarding progress monitoring. For a posttest, the test level should always be the same as the pre-test or the next level higher. A posttest must never be at a lower level when the purpose is to measure learning gains.

E.   Level completion is determined when the student's standardized test scale score meets or exceeds the highest end of an EFL. See Appendix A: Assessment Charts. LACES will automatically calculate level completion.

F.   In order to verify accurate instructional hours required for progress testing, precise student attendance records must be maintained. Student sign-in and sign-out time, to the quarter hour, must be kept in paper or electronic form for each class. Sign-in/out records must be available for review for the current program year.

G.   All pretest data, progress test data, and attendance hours for the month must be entered into LACES by the 10th of the following month for all students. More frequent entry of attendance is strongly encouraged. Attendance hours for each student are to be entered into LACES in weekly increments, using Monday's date as the attendance date. When a student takes a progress assessment, the date of the assessment and hours must be recorded as attendance hours in LACES. If a student takes an assessment during the week and does not return to the program, the assessment hours need to be entered for that date, separate from the weekly attendance (to ensure the assessment is recorded as occurring within the POP). LACES will automatically calculate the hours between assessments and the hours since the most recent assessment; therefore, accurate reporting of attendance hours is crucial.

Additional guidelines for pretesting ESOL students:

A.   Oral communication skills (speaking and listening) are taught simultaneously. Therefore, these skills should be assessed together. To track progress in oral communication, ESOL students must be assessed in speaking and listening. Use the TABE CLAS-E Total Listening and Speaking scale score for reporting.

B.   Literacy skills (reading and writing) are often taught simultaneously, but it is not as critical to assess them together. To track progress in literacy skills, ESOL students may be tracked in TABE CLAS-E reading or writing or tracked calculating a Total Reading and Listening scale score.

C.   It is a good practice to test English language learners' literacy and oral communication skills. Level completion in any skill area will count as a Measurable Skill Gain.

D.   For high-level ESOL students, determine at placement if the student should be designated ABE or ESOL. Based on placement information, the student will be coded as either an ABE student or an ESOL student in LACES for the program year. Use assessment results and student goals in making this determination. ESOL students who transition to ABE must be assessed with TABE 11/12.

4. Portfolio System

A.   All programs must utilize the Aspire Portfolio System. The portfolio is used to help students and teachers gauge learning and target instruction. The standards and benchmarks used in the portfolio system identify what Aspire students need to know and be able to do at each EFL.

B.   All students must have a paper or electronic portfolio, which is reviewed and updated at least every 90 calendar days. Documenting student work, showing subject area mastery, and following test publishers' guidelines, that includes sufficient intensity and duration of instructional hours, helps the instructor determine when a student has demonstrated ample progress to administer a progress test. Only the results of approved standardized assessments may be used to document level completion in LACES.

C.   All instructional staff must be trained in proper implementation of the Portfolio System. This training can occur through the Professional Development Network (PDN) or at the local level.

D.   Elements of the Aspire Portfolio System

Student Portfolio (non-secured) includes:	Administrative File (secured) includes:
(1) Individual Learning Plan (ILP) that includes: • Student name • Teacher/site name • SMART goals • Instructional implications from screenings and inventories (e.g., learning styles, interests, learning disabilities), if applicable. (2) Student work to document beginning, progress toward, and subject area mastery. (3) Early Progress Test Exception Form, if applicable	(1) Aspire Student forms (2) Standardized test scores (3) Release of Information Forms (4) Screenings, waivers, and inventories (e.g., learning styles, interests, learning disabilities), if applicable. (5) Any student-identifiable information

E.   Programs must retain the student portfolio and administrative file for one year after the student exits the program. For audit purposes, programs must retain individual student records in LACES for no fewer than three years or longer if required by the fiscal agent.

F.   At Workplace Education sites, programs may use a class portfolio in place of individual student portfolios.

5. Computer Literacy

A.   Computer literacy is not a stand-alone program. Technology, including computers, should be integrated into all components of programming. Students participating in computer literacy must be assessed using a standardized assessment and tracked in LACES in an academic basic skill area.

6. High School Equivalence (HSE)

A.   Testing assessments approved for an Ohio High School Equivalence Diploma include: GED and HiSET. TASC is not offered in Ohio.

B.   If Aspire funds are used to purchase official practice tests, students must:

1. be enrolled in an Aspire program; and
2. achieve a minimum scale score in EFL 3 or greater in the subject the student plans to test prior to issuing the free practice test. For example, to qualify for a free official practice test in Reading/Language Arts, Science or Social Studies, the student must have scored into Reading EFL 3, 4, 5 or 6 prior to issuing the free official practice test. To take a free official practice test in Math, the student must have scored in Math EFL 3, 4, 5 or 6 prior to issuing the free official practice test.

C.   The HSE test, Spanish version, is an acceptable test for earning an HSE credential and may be counted in LACES for the follow up outcome of Attained Secondary Credential.

7. Special Populations

A.   Students with documented disabilities who require accommodations may request assessment instruments in alternative formats and/or alterations in test administration procedures. A documented disability means that the individual can present a formal record of disability, such as a doctor's report or Individual Education Plan (IEP), which includes:

1. a diagnosis of the disability;
2. evaluation of the impact of the disability on areas of functioning; and
3. recommendations for specific strategies and accommodations in education required by the disability.

Resource: Transition of Students with Disabilities to Postsecondary Education

B.   Assessment accommodations shall follow test publishers' guidelines.

C.   The accommodations provided in assessment should be the same accommodations used during instruction.

D.   Typical assessment accommodations for students with a documented disability may include large print, extended time, audiocassette, calculator, private room, or break time.

E.   The accommodation must be specific to the disability and address only documented limitations. Inappropriate accommodations may lead to inaccurate test results.

8. Distance Education

A. All assessment policies apply to students enrolled in distance education programs. The ODHE/Aspire Distance Education policy is on the Aspire website Ohiohighered.org/Aspire.

Appendices

A. Assessment Charts

        TABE 11/12 Scale Score Benchmarks

        TABE CLAS-E Scale Score Benchmarks

B. Recommended Timeframes for Pre and Progress Testing

C. Early Progress Testing Form

D. Training for Administering Assessments

E. Remote Testing Guidance

F. Remote Testing Assessment Chart

TABE 11/12 Scale Score Benchmarks

ABE Level 1	ABE Level 2	ABE Level 3	ABE Level 4	ABE Level 5	ABE Level 6
TABE 11/12 scale score: Reading: 300-441 Math: 300-448 Language: 300-457	**TABE 11/12 scale score:** Reading: 442-500 Math: 449-495 Language: 458-510	**TABE 11/12 scale score:** Reading: 501-535 Math: 496-536 Language: 511-546	**TABE 11/12 scale score:** Reading: 536-575 Math: 537-595 Language: 547-583	**TABE 11/12 scale score:** Reading: 576-616 Math: 596-656 Language: 584-630	**TABE 11/12 scale score:** Reading Placement: 617 and above *Completion: 733 and above Math Placement: 657 and above *Completion: 735 and above Language Placement: 631 and above *Completion: 767 and above ** ODHE reserves the right to adjust completion scores.

TABE CLAS-E Scale Score Benchmarks

ESOL Level 1	ESOL Level 2	ESOL Level 3	ESOL Level 4	ESOL Level 5	ESOL Level 6
TABE CLAS-E Reading: 250-392 Writing: 200-396 Total Reading and Writing: 225-394 Total Listening and Speaking: 230-407	**TABE CLAS-E** Reading: 393-436 Writing: 397-445 Total Reading and Writing: 395-441 Total Listening and Speaking: 408-449	**TABE CLAS-E** Reading: 437-476 Writing: 446-488 Total Reading and Writing: 442-482 Total Listening and Speaking: 450-485	**TABE CLAS-E** Reading: 477-508 Writing: 489-520 Total Reading and Writing: 483-514 Total Listening and Speaking: 486-525	**TABE CLAS-E** Reading: 509-557 Writing: 521-555 Total Reading and Writing: 515-556 Total Listening and Speaking: 526-558	**TABE CLAS-E** Reading: Placement 558 - 587 Completion 588 and above Writing: Placement 556-611 Completion 612 and above Total Reading and Writing: Placement 557-599 Completion 600 and above Total Listening and Speaking: Placement 559-599 Completion 600 and above

Adult Education Assessments	Recommended Pre- and Progress Timeframes	Contact/Notes
TABE CLAS-E	Data Recognition Corporation│CTB recommends these pre-and post-test guidelines for TABE CLAS-E: **Alternate Form Testing:** 50-60 hours of instruction is recommended when testing with an alternate form (e.g.,. A1 to B1) for students who test into ESL Levels 1-6, with a minimum of 40 hours. Progams may also select the next level higher CLAS-E test (A2 to A3) while following the same recommended hours above for alternate form testing. **Same Form Testing:** 60-80 hours of instruction is recommended when testing with the same form (ie. A3 to A3). For additonal consideration: • DRC│CTB discourages random and frequent testing for TABE as it will not present valid gain scores and could create a practice effect, thus producing questionable or spurious scores. • Instructional intervention between testing periods is strongly recommended to maximize gain. • Proper use of the Locator Test as a determinant of appropriate content level testing is also strongly recommended and is an integral part of the testing process.	tabetest.com shelfcustomerservice@datarecognitioncorp.com 800-538-9547

TABE 11/12	Data Recognition Corporation│CTB recommends these pre-and post-test guidelines for TABE 9&10:	tabetest.com shelfcustomerservice@ datarecognitioncorp.com 800-538-9547
	Alternate Form Testing: 50-60 hours of instruction is recommended when testing with an alternate form (e.g., 11M to 12M) for students who test into ABE Levels 1-4, with a minimum of 40 hours.	
	For students testing into ABE Levels 5 and 6 30-60 hours of instruction is recommended.	
	Progams may also select the next level higher TABE test (M to D) while following the same recommended hours above for alternate form testing.	
	Same Form Testing: 60-80 hours of instruction is recommended when testing with the same form (e.g., 11M to 11M).	
	For additonal consideration:	
	- DRC│CTB discourages random and frequent testing for TABE as it will not present valid gain scores and could create a practice effect, thus producing questionable or spurious scores. - Instructional intervention between testing periods is strongly recommended to maximize gain. - Proper use of the Locator Test as a determinant of appropriate content level testing is also strongly recommended and is an integral part of the testing process.	

Early Progress Test Exception Form

If a progress test is administered before the publisher's recommended time frame, the program must have evidence of mastery in the student's portfolio and approval from the program administrator, **prior to testing**, to document the merit of an early progress test. Early progress testing should be infrequent and based on subject area mastery. Departure from the program is not an acceptable exception. **Early testing should account for no more than 20% of progress tests within a fiscal year**.

Student ID   _____

Date of last assessment   _____

Total fiscal year hours   _____

Student has demonstrated subject area mastery as documented through (check at least one):

Completed assessment and student work must be attached to this form

_____ Standards/benchmark level completion

_____ Curriculum assessment, including in-class or distance software

_____ Teacher- or program-developed assessment

Approval

Instructor name   _____

Instructor signature   _____

Date   _____

Aspire director signature _____

Date   _____

This form and related documentation must be kept in the student portfolio for instructional, program, and Aspire program manager review.

Test Name	Who is Responsible for Administering Training	Which Staff Should be Trained	Access	When Training is Conducted	Procedures for Ongoing Training
LACES Basics	Vendor, LiteracyPro Systems	Administrators and Data Entry staff	Online Synchronous training from the vendor and recorded module (Ohioaspire.org)	Ongoing	Online training module
Assessment Fundamentals	Professional Development Network (PDN)	Teachers	Online (Ohioaspire.org)	Ongoing	Staff development follow up through the PDN
TABE 11/12	Vendor, DRC/CTB	Each staff that will be administering the assessment	Online (Ohioaspire.org)	Ongoing	Online training modules
TABE CLAS-E	PDN	Each staff that will be administering the assessment	Online (Ohioaspire.org)	Ongoing	TABE CLAS-E Refresher Scoring Toolkit is available as a self-directed PD activity through the PDN

1. **Initial Placements**

   Aspire programs unable to administer TABE 11/12 or CLAS-E remotely to a distance education participant may exempt that student from NRS testing.

   Examples of remote testing exemptions include, but are not limited to:

   - Students who lack the necessary technical equipment (camera, internet, etc.) for remote testing to be effectively used
   - Students who do not have the language capability to take an online assessment.

   When students cannot be tested remotely, a provisional placement must be assigned. See 1H above.

2. **Best Practices for Remote Testing**
   - Providers must have a written standard operating procedure for remote testing which addresses test security, integrity, and protection of personally identifying information.
   - Testing proctors must be certified/trained to administer the specific assessment test, if applicable.
   - Providers must:
     - provide a pre-screening to verify student identity using local procedures.
     - orient students to remote online testing expectations.
     - ensure students have the technology tools needed to test at home per publisher guidance.
     - allow time for students to take practice tests on the publisher's website, if available, prior to entering the testing room session; and
     - plan ahead for how to respond to video or technical glitches and communicate plans clearly to students.
   - If testing more than one student at a time, the proctor must allow students into the remote testing room one at a time to verify the identity of each student and check the environment.
   - Students should wear headsets and/or earbuds for test security and optimal success

3. **Administering Virtual Testing**

   Aspire programs may implement virtual test proctoring using the assessments identified in this policy, in accordance with the test publishers' procedures for virtual testing (Appendix F: Remote Testing Assessment Chart).

Appendix F: Remote Testing Assessment Chart

Publisher/Test Approved in the Ohio Aspire Assessment Policy	Requirement 1 *The student who is testing can be properly identified*	Requirement 2 *Any approved test (i.e., any test determined suitable for use in the NRS) that is used is properly secured*	Requirement 3 *The virtual proctor can properly administer the test*	Mandatory Professional Development for Remote Testing for approved test administrators
DRC TABE 11/12 and TABE CLAS-E Online	Remote test proctoring will occur via any video conferencing program (i.e. Zoom, WebEx). Test administrator must identify the student using local procedures.	Remote Proctoring with TABE and TABE CLAS-E	Only trained TABE Test Administrators may proctor test sessions live via web platform.	Recommended to have participated in one of the TABE Remote Testing webinars or watch the recorded video before starting (available at TABETest.com)

Recommendations on remote testing requirements are based on guidance from U.S. Department of Education Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE) Program Memo 20-3, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act and COVID-19 – Frequently Asked Questions published on March 27, 2020 and found at https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/pi/AdultEd/octae-program-memo-20-3.pdf