

Assessment Policy
and Distance Education Guidelines

Arkansas Department of Career Education

Adult Education Division

Sixth Edition: 2010-2011

***Approved by the U.S. Department of Education
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Introduction

These guidelines are based on the federal manual “Implementation Guidelines: Measures and Methods for the National Reporting System for Adult Education” (September 2009) as well as Arkansas state adult education policies and procedures where noted. These guidelines are a summary of the key aspects of the federal manual which is available in its entirety online at: www.nrsweb.org.

I. National Reporting System for Adult Education Core Measures

The National Reporting System for Adult Education (NRS) is an outcome-based reporting system established to meet the requirements of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, Title II, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act. The NRS defines three types of core measures: **outcome measures**, **descriptive measures**, and **participation measures**. These core measures apply only to enrolled students (students receiving 12 or more contact hours). States report only enrolled students in the National Reporting System annual federal report. Arkansas also reports served students on the state level.

There are several optional secondary outcome measures in NRS. They are currently not required by NRS; however, they can be collected in AERIS and reported on the local and state level. Specific data are defined according to NRS requirements within this manual. A data dictionary is included in the Appendix.

Reporting Student Data in AERIS

All adult education and literacy programs receiving adult education federal and state funds from the Arkansas Department of Career Education, Adult Education Division must report student data for both served and enrolled students using the state student management information system, **Adult Education Reporting Information System (AERIS)**. All adults who receive any services from adult education and literacy programs are considered **served** students. Adults who receive services and have a completed Intake Form should be entered into AERIS even if they have not taken a pre-test. Students who have 12 or more contact hours within a program year (July 1 to June 30) are considered **enrolled** students by the NRS.

All student data must be entered into AERIS by the 15th of each month for the previous month’s data. All data must be approved by the 22nd of each month for the previous month’s data. In AERIS, only users with the role of a Local Education Agency (LEA) Administrator may approve data. Data entry personnel

should not be responsible for approving data. The local program director should approve all data. Data audits will be conducted by the Adult Education Division during on-site reviews to verify the accuracy of data in AERIS and to verify that correct assessment procedures have been followed.

According to Assurance #13 of the Adult Education Division Assurances, which is signed at the time of the adult education grant award, all programs that receive adult education funds agree to submit student data according to schedules set by the Adult Education Division. If programs are missing data in AERIS, 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. According to Assurance #25, the Adult Education Division 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.

II. Core Outcome Measure: Educational Gain

Definition: Learner completes or advances one or more NRS Educational Functioning Levels (EFL) from starting level, measured on entry into a program.

Applicable Population: All Enrolled Learners. This is the assumed goal of all adult education and literacy students. Therefore, this goal does not appear as a specific data field in AERIS. All student achievement of this goal will be recorded in NRS Table 4 and Table 4B.

Collection Procedure: Using one of the standardized testing instruments approved by the National Reporting System and the Adult Education Division, an individual learner's Educational Functioning Level (EFL) is determined within the NRS score ranges. The following pages of this manual contain the most recent NRS score ranges for each Educational Functioning Level for the approved testing instruments.

ALL TEST SCORES must be entered into AERIS by the 15th of the following month and approved by the 22nd of the following month. This also includes post-test scores in which students do not show educational gains. Students with both a pre-test and post-test will be recorded in **NRS Table 4B**, which is now a required table. All test scores need to be dated on the exact date the test was given. Test documentation must be available in the students' files and is subject to monitoring during site visits and program reviews.

Programs are required to meet 80% of the Core Indicators of Performance to be considered Effective and Efficient according to Arkansas Adult Education Program Policies: <http://ace.arkansas.gov/adult.html> .

National Reporting System for Adult Education

Educational Functioning Level Score Ranges

Adult Basic Education (ABE) and Adult Secondary Education (ASE) Levels

<p>1.1 Beginning ABE Literacy</p> <p>Test Benchmark: TABE (7-8; 9-10) scale scores: (grade level 0 -1.9)</p> <p>Reading 367 and below Total Math 313 and below Language 389 and below</p>	<p>1.2 Beginning Basic Education</p> <p>Test Benchmark: TABE (7-8; 9-10) scale scores: (grade level 2-3.9)</p> <p>Reading: 368-460 Total Math: 314-441 Language: 390-490</p>	<p>1.3 Low Intermediate Basic Education</p> <p>Test Benchmark: TABE (7-8; 9-10) scale scores: (grade 4-5.9)</p> <p>Reading: 461-517 Total Math: 442-505 Language: 491-523</p>
<p>1.4 High Intermediate Basic Education</p> <p>Test Benchmark: TABE (7-8; 9-10) scale scores: (grade level 6-8.9)</p> <p>Reading: 518-566 Total Math: 506-565 Language: 524-559</p>	<p>1.5 Low Adult Secondary Education</p> <p>Test Benchmark: TABE (7-8; 9-10) scale scores: (grade level 9-10.9)</p> <p>Reading: 567-595 Total Math: 566-594 Language: 560-585</p>	<p>1.6 High Adult Secondary Education</p> <p>Test Benchmark: TABE (7-8; 9-10) scale scores: (grade level 11-12.9)</p> <p>Reading: 596 and above Total Math: 595 and above Language: 586 and above</p> <p>Exit Criteria: Pass the GED Tests</p>

TABE = Test of Adult Basic Education
GED = General Education Development

NOTE: TABE 7 and 8 will be discontinued as of June 30, 2010.

National Reporting System for Adult Education

Educational Functioning Level Score Ranges

English as a Second Language (ESL) Levels

<p>1.7 Beginning ESL Literacy</p> <p>Test Benchmark: SPL Speaking 0-1 SPL Reading/Writing 0-1</p> <p>Oral BEST: 0-15 BEST Literacy: 0-20 CASAS (Life Skills): 180 and below BEST Plus: 400 and below</p>	<p>1.8 Low Beginning ESL</p> <p>Test Benchmark: SPL Speaking 2 SPL Reading/Writing 2</p> <p>Oral BEST: 16-28 BEST Literacy: 21-52 CASAS (Life Skills): 181-190 BEST Plus: 401-417</p>	<p>1.9 High Beginning ESL</p> <p>Test Benchmark: SPL Speaking 3 SPL Reading/Writing 3</p> <p>Oral BEST: 29-41 BEST Literacy: 53-63 CASAS (Life Skills): 191-200 BEST Plus: 418-438</p>
<p>1.10 Low Intermediate ESL</p> <p>Test Benchmark: SPL Speaking 4 SPL Reading/Writing 4</p> <p>Oral BEST: 42-51 BEST Literacy: 64-67 CASAS (Life Skills): 201-210 BEST Plus: 439-472</p>	<p>1.11 High Intermediate ESL</p> <p>Test Benchmark: SPL Speaking 5 SPL Reading/Writing 5-6</p> <p>Oral BEST: 52-57 BEST Literacy: 68-75 CASAS (Life Skills): 211-220 BEST Plus: 473-506</p>	<p>1.12 Advanced ESL</p> <p>Test Benchmark: SPL Speaking 6 SPL Reading/Writing 7</p> <p>Oral BEST: 58-64 BEST Literacy: 76+ CASAS (Life Skills): 221-235 BEST Plus: 507-540 Exit Criteria: Oral BEST 65+, BEST Literacy-none, CASAS 236+, or BEST Plus 541+</p>

BEST = Basic English Skills Test
 CASAS = Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System
 SPL = Student Performance Level

NOTE: Oral BEST will be discontinued as of June 30, 2010.

Standardized Testing Instruments

(Approved by the State Board of Career Education; Effective June 17, 2010)

Subject: Standardized Testing Instruments

POLICY: Only the following state, National Reporting System for Adult Education (NRS), and Division of Adult Education and Literacy (DAEL) approved standardized tests will be utilized for pre-test, post-test, and continued student assessment for adult education students: Test of Adult Basic Education; Basic English Skills Test, and Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (Life Skills Assessment for ESL only). Other NRS/DAEL-approved standardized testing instruments, forms and version may be used with the written approval of the Deputy Director of Adult Education. Different forms of the same test must be used for the pre-test and the post-test. Local programs will pre-test and place all students into an educational functioning level (EFL) at intake or shortly after intake, within the first 12 hours of instruction.

Post-testing of adult learners is to measure performance and completion of an educational functioning level. Within the fiscal year, students should be post-tested after a minimum of 60 hours of instruction, according to the test publishers' guidelines. Students should be assessed within 180 calendar days (defined as weekdays, weekends, and holidays) after the previous assessment to reflect a more current measurement of performance.

INFORMATION/RATIONALE: The levels of performance will be expressed in an objective, quantifiable, and measurable form and will show the progress of the state toward continuously improving in performance. According to the National Reporting System of Adult Education Implementation Guidelines, states must require local programs to measure educational gain with standardized assessments that are appropriate for measuring education gain within the NRS framework and conform to accepted psychometric standards for validity and reliability.

Guidelines for Pre-Testing and Post-Testing

All students (one hundred percent) who are registering for classes must be pre-tested. Pre-testing should be administered at intake or shortly after intake, but before the students receive 12 hours of instruction. For continuing students, AERIS will automatically roll over a student's last test score(s) from one program year to the next to determine the student's Entering Educational Functioning Level (EFL) for the new fiscal year. The roll-over student's last assessment(s) lowest EFL from the previous year will be the new starting EFL.

Programs must follow the test publishers' guidelines regarding test administration and must also follow the test publishers' guidelines in selecting the correct test level for each student's assessment. The Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) Locator Test (paper, audiocassette, or computer formats) must be used to determine the level of TABE to be administered: Easy, Medium, Difficult, or Advanced levels (E, M, D, or A). Programs may choose to use either the TABE Complete Battery or the Survey. Learners with very low reading skills who cannot complete the Locator Test should be administered the TABE Literacy Level (L).

The TABE is comprised of three content areas (Reading, Language, and Mathematics) and is appropriate for all levels of adult basic education and literacy students, from non-readers (Level L) up to learners who are preparing to take the General Educational Development (GED®) tests. The Basic English Skills Test (BEST) is appropriate for English as Second Language (ESL) students. The BEST tests are available for the listening/speaking content areas (BEST Plus) and reading/writing content areas (BEST Literacy). In addition to the BEST assessments, the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems (CASAS) is appropriate for English as Second Language (ESL) students. NOTE: when ESL students score above the Advance ESL NRS Level score range, then they should be given the TABE in order to be able to show educational progress.

Students do not need to be assessed in all of the areas. The local program must decide the skill areas most relevant to each student's needs or the program's curriculum and assess students in these areas. Assessments should also be in the area(s) in which instruction will be focused. At a minimum, native-English speaking students must be assessed in basic reading, writing, or math, and ESL students should be assessed in listening and speaking English as a second language or reading and writing English as a second language.

If the learner is functioning in different levels in different areas, the **lowest** functioning level will be the basis for the NRS **Entering** Educational Functioning Level placement. To determine educational gain, the learner should be assessed again, post-tested, after an instructional period with a **different form** of the same test. If the learner shows progress by moving up to the next higher EFL in any one of the content areas tested, the learner has made an educational gain. Sixty percent (60%) of all students who are pretested should be posttested in order to meet the negotiated core indicator benchmarks.

For example: a student's TABE Locator reading score indicates the appropriate level of testing is Level M. The student is then given the TABE **Form 9, Level M** reading pre-test. After a period of instruction (60 hours), the student needs to be given the TABE **Form 10, Level M** as a post-test.

Do not post-test with the same form, and do not post-test with a different level.

If the student shows gain, then the student may be tested in the future with a higher level TABE, for example Level D. One educational gain per year is sufficient for NRS core indicators and that advancement will be recorded in Table 4. If the student does not show progress, then the student needs to receive further instruction. After a second instructional period, the student may post-test a second time. The program needs to alternate the testing forms (TABE 9 and TABE 10) at each assessment.

To maintain accurate assessment and attendance data, tests need to be *dated* in AERIS on the exact date they were administered. Attendance needs to be *dated* in AERIS on a *weekly basis*. All assessment and attendance data need to be *entered* by the 15th of the following month and approved by the 22nd of the following month.

Other assessments, such as the Wide Range Achievement Test, Slosson Oral Reading Test, and Jordan Oral Screening Test, among others including teacher-generated assessments, may be given to help **inform instruction**; however they may **not** be used to place a student in an EFL or to determine educational gain or EFL advancement. If a student is not pre-tested and post-tested with an NRS-approved and state-approved testing instrument, educational gain cannot be determined for that student.

Exceptions to the 60-Hour Rule

Exceptions should be rare and limited. Post-testing shall occur after completion of an instructional period of at least **60 hours**. The only exceptions approved by the Office of Vocational and Adult Education/Division of Adult Education and Literacy (DAEL) are for the following students:

Adult Secondary Education (ASE) students may be post-tested with the TABE before the approved instructional period of 60 hours. The following must be in place when administering a post-test before the approved instructional period of 60 hours:

1. Exception and associated documentation of student progress is pre-approved by the local program Director or Coordinator;
2. The student must be assessed and enrolled in **Low ASE or High ASE**;
3. The student's follow-up goal in AERIS is either **Obtain Employment, Retain Employment, Obtain a GED, or Enter Post-Secondary Education/Training**; and
4. The student has **30 to 59** hours of instruction.

Adult Basic Education (ABE) students may be post-tested with the TABE before the approved instructional period of 60 hours. The following must be in place when administering a post-test before the approved instructional period of 60 hours:

1. Exception and associated documentation of student progress is pre-approved by the local program Director or Coordinator;
2. The student must be assessed and enrolled in **ABE Beginning**

Literacy, ABE Beginning Basic Education, ABE Intermediate Low, or ABE Intermediate High; and

3. The student has **50 to 59** hours of instruction.

English as Second Language (ESL) students may not be post-tested with the BEST Literacy or BEST Plus before the approved instructional period of 60 hours. There are no approved exceptions for testing ESL students before the students receive at least 60 hours of instruction.

Documentation of exceptions must be available for review during technical assistance visits, monitoring visits, and program audits.

The Adult Education Division will be monitoring the number of exceptions in AERIS in each program quarterly. If they do not appear to be rare and limited and appear to be circumventing the test publishers' guidelines, then the provider will have to develop a program improvement plan to correct the situation.

Definition of Eligible Individuals for Adult Education Services

According to the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, Title II, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act:

“The term ‘adult education’ means services or instruction below the postsecondary level for individuals--

(A) who have attained 16 years of age;

(B) who are not enrolled or required to be enrolled in secondary school under State law; and

(C) who--

(i) lack sufficient mastery of basic educational skills to enable the individuals to function effectively in society;

(ii) do not have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and have not achieved an equivalent level of education; or

(iii) are unable to speak, read, or write the English language.”

Therefore, individuals who have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (the GED® credential) and who score 12.9 (Grade Level Equivalent) on the pretest of the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) in all three content areas of Reading, Math, and Language are not considered eligible individuals for adult education services because they are not functioning below the postsecondary level.

Traditional vs. Non-Traditional Justification in AERIS

If a student wants to study and test in only one or two content areas of focus, these are called Non-Traditional 1 and Non-Traditional 2 justifications respectively in AERIS. The student will be pre-tested and post-tested in only one or two areas of focus. When a student pre-tests in all three areas (math, reading, and language arts), this is called the Traditional Justification of assessment in AERIS. If the student post-tests and one of the content area post-test scores is in the next higher EFL, the student will receive an educational gain in that content area which will be recorded for the student in Table 4. However, in the Traditional Justification, the student will need to post-test in all three areas before the justification can be changed from Traditional to Non-Traditional or before the student's test battery can be changed.

Special Populations

Students with Disabilities:

Students with documented disabilities will be granted reasonable accommodations upon request during testing and instruction. The audiocassette format of TABE (Survey, 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).

According to CTB/McGraw-Hill, publishers of the TABE:

Questions about Accommodations

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

A testing accommodation is a change made to the test administration procedure to provide equal access for students 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 students 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 students mark answers in test booklets rather than on separate answer sheets. Additional accommodation suggestions are available in CTB/McGraw-Hill's Assessment Accommodations Checklist (#53682); order online or call Customer Services at (800) 538-9547.

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, CTB 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 9&10 are available from CTB/McGraw-Hill and may be ordered by calling Customer Services toll-free at (800) 538-9547 or through our Web site at www.ctb.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, CTB/McGraw-Hill believes that information about instructional strengths and student 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.

According to the Center for Applied Linguistics, publishers of BEST:

Testing Accommodations for BEST Plus and BEST Literacy

According to the test publisher, programs administering BEST Plus and BEST Literacy are responsible for providing accessible services and for making sure that requests for accommodations are considered and handled in a manner consistent with applicable laws and regulations. Program and test administrators may provide and allow accommodation in test administration procedures or in the testing environment for individuals with disabilities, provided that the accommodation does not compromise the purpose of the test. Testing environment accommodations for either test might include frequent breaks or individual administration of BEST Literacy.

In the case of BEST Literacy, the purpose of the test is to obtain a measure of reading and writing in English. Permissible accommodations related to BEST Literacy test administration include the use of eyeglasses or magnifying glasses, earplugs, color overlays, or rulers.

The purpose of BEST Plus is to obtain a measure of listening and speaking in English. Permissible accommodations related to BEST Plus include the use of hearing aids. BEST Plus is not designed to assess the communicative language skills of hearing- or speech-impaired students, nor should it be used with visually impaired students, as some of the questions depend on a photographic stimulus.

It is not an appropriate accommodation for a test administrator to read BEST Literacy test questions to an examinee with sight impairment as BEST Literacy is a test of reading. Similarly, it is not an appropriate accommodation for a BEST Plus test administrator to allow an examinee to read the on-screen prompts as BEST Plus is a listening, not a reading, test.

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.

All programs must begin the process of screening for learning disabilities during student intake. The process, administered by trained personnel, includes the use of a validated learning disabilities screening tool (see Appendix), follow-up interview to review 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. Patti White, the state Disabilities Project Manager (479-232-5760, or 800-569-3539).

Sixteen and Seventeen-Year-Old Students:

Programs with students 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 students (<http://ace.arkansas.gov/adult.html>).

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. A bilingual Spanish/English Intake Form is included in the Appendix. Programs should assess ESL students with the Basic English Skills Test (BEST) or CASAS (Life Skills) as soon as possible at intake or shortly after intake, but before the students receive 12 hours of instruction. The Adult Education Division recommends that ESL students be given both an oral version and a literacy version of the tests, and then be placed according to the lowest EFL. The BEST Plus (an oral test) is a computer-adaptive test with multiple test versions built into the programming. A different form of the test is therefore given each time the student takes the computer-adaptive version. The BEST Plus also has three different print-based scoring versions. The BEST Literacy test was updated by the Center for Applied Linguistics in 2006 and is now available in three forms (B, C, and D).

Training and Other Assessments

Training on test administration is available from Arkansas Adult Learning Resource Center (AALRC) on a regular basis. Contact AALRC for the most current calendar of training events (501-907-2490, or 800-832-6242) www.aalrc.org. 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 CTB/McGraw-Hill:

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 CTB/McGraw-Hill Assessment Products and Services Catalog. TABE: www.ctb.com

Only trained personnel, who are *certified* by the Center for Applied Linguistics, may administer the BEST Plus assessment. Trainings on BEST Plus test administration will be given at the Arkansas Adult Learning Resource Center (AALRC) on a regular basis (501-907-2490, or 800-832-6242). Refresher courses on the BEST Plus will also be held at AALRC on a regular basis. It is recommended that BEST Plus examiners take a refresher course every one to two years.

The Center for Applied Linguistics does not require training to administer *BEST Literacy*. Program administrators, test administrators, and test scorers should thoroughly review the *BEST Literacy Test Manual - 2008 Edition* in order to become familiar with proper testing and scoring procedures. The *BEST Literacy Test Manual - 2008 Edition* provides comprehensive information about administering and scoring the three forms (B, C, and D) of the test as well as information for interpreting the results and technical information. BEST: www.cal.org/BEST

CASAS requires agencies to complete a training workshop before ordering and administering most tests. Training is available at the annual CASAS National Summer Institute in June, through regional training workshops, in a distance training format, at the CASAS San Diego office, and on-site at your agency. Training is necessary to maintain the integrity and quality of the assessment process. CASAS: www.casas.org

Teachers and other local staff will be involved in gathering, analyzing, compiling, and reporting data for NRS. Training on conducting assessment administration at AALRC will also include the following topics: NRS policy, accountability policies, the data collection process, and the definitions of measures. New staff members need to attend the appropriate training prior to administering assessments. Previously trained staff should attend refresher courses (every two to three years) to become familiar with any assessment updates.

III. Core Descriptive Measures

Core descriptive measures are self-reported at intake. Programs must collect the following information on ALL learners and enter the data in AERIS.

Demographic Measure #1: Race/Ethnicity

Definition: Learner’s ethnic category to which the learner self-identifies, appears to belong to, or is regarded in the community as belonging. The racial/ethnic categories are:

American Indian or Alaskan Native
Asian
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
Black or African American
Hispanic or Latino
White

NEW IN 2010: Learners may choose the option “Two or More Races.”

Demographic Measure #2: Gender

Definition: Whether the learner is male or female.

Demographic Measure #3: Age

Definition: Learner’s date of birth.

Demographic measures #1, 2, and 3 are reported in NRS Tables 1 – 3.

Student Status Measure #1: Labor Force Status

Definition: Whether the learner is employed, not employed, or not in the labor force. **All students will fall into one of these three categories:**

Employed – Learners work as paid employee in an unsubsidized job, work in their own business or farm, or who work 15 hours or more per week as unpaid workers on a farm or in a business operated by a member of the family. Also included are learners who are not currently working but who have jobs or businesses from which they are temporarily absent.

Unemployed – Learners who are not working, but are seeking employment, have made specific efforts to find a job and are available for work.

Not in the Labor Force – Learners who are not employed and not seeking employment (for example, a housewife or retiree who does not want a job or an inmate who is not eligible for parole for several years).

Collection Procedure: At intake, individual learner reports employment status.

Student Status Measure #2: Public Assistance Status

Definition: Learner is receiving financial assistance from federal, state or local government agencies, including Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), food stamps, refugee cash assistance, old-age assistance, general assistance, and aid to the blind or totally disabled.

Social Security benefits, unemployment insurance, and employment-funded disability are not included under this definition.

Collection Procedure: At intake, referring agency or individual learner reports public assistance receipt. The information on student status measure #2 is collected on a separate form at intake that does not contain the student's name. After the data is entered in AERIS, the sheet is removed and filed separately in a confidential folder.

Student Status Measure #3: Disability Status

Definition: Learner has a record of, or is regarded as having, any type of physical or mental impairment, including a learning disability, that substantially limits or restricts one or more major life activities, including walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, learning, or working.

Collection Procedure: At intake, referring agency or individual learner reports disability or program assesses disability. The information on student status measure #3 is collected on a separate form at intake that does not contain the student's name. After the data is entered in AERIS, the sheet is removed and filed separately in a confidential folder.

Student Status Measure #4: Rural Residency Status

Definition: Learner who resides in a place with a population less than 2,500 and outside an urbanized area. An urbanized area includes a population of 50,000 or more in a city and adjacent areas of high density.

Collection Procedure: At intake, learner's residency in a rural area is determined by learner self-report or documentation.

Student Status Measures #1, 2, 3, and 4 are reported in NRS Table 6.

Student Status Measure #5: Learner Reasons or Goals for Attending

Definition: Learner's self-identified reasons for attending the program. Additional goals may be collected on local level:

Educational Gains – Improve basic literacy skills—improve overall basic literacy skills. Improve English skills—improve overall skills in

the English language (e.g., speaking, reading, and writing). This is the assumed goal of every learner.

Obtain a job – Obtain full- or part-time paid employment.

Retain or improve current job – Upgrade skills to enable retention of current job; or obtain a job that has increased pay or benefits, higher level of responsibility, or that requires a higher level of skill, compared to current or most recent job.

Earn a GED certificate – Achieve sufficient skills to earn an Arkansas High School Diploma by passing the tests of General Educational Development.

Enter postsecondary education or job training – Achieve skills to enable enrollment in a postsecondary education program or job training program.

Collection Procedure: At intake, learner identifies goal(s) for attending the program or class within the above categories. The reasons should reflect how the learner is to be counted for core outcome measures.

All enrolled learners will be counted under Educational Gains in NRS Table 4.

IV. Core Participation Measures

Student Participation Measure #1: Contact Hours

Definition: Hours of instruction or instructional activity the learner receives from the program. Instructional activity includes any program-sponsored activity designed to promote student learning in the program curriculum such as classroom instruction, assessment, tutoring or participation in a learning lab.

Collection Procedure: Instructor or program staff will record the contact hours as they are provided. Note that time spent on assessment can be counted only if the assessment is designed to inform placement decisions, assess progress, or inform instruction. Time used to take the Official GED® tests (published by the American Council on Education) may not be counted as contact hours.

However, programs may count the time spent on taking the official GED practice tests (published by Steck-Vaughn) if the test results are used for diagnostic purposes to inform instruction.

Reporting Procedure: Hours of instruction can be dated daily or added up cumulatively in one week, but all hours need to be **dated** in AERIS on at least a **weekly basis**. Data do not need to be **entered** weekly, but all attendance and testing data need to be entered by the 15th of the following month and approved by the 22nd of the following month. This data is reported in NRS Table 4.

Student Participation Measure #2: Program Enrollment Type

Definition: Learner is enrolled in the following programs or institutions. The following are the NRS program enrollment types:

- Adult Basic Education Program (ABE)
- Adult Secondary Education Program (ASE) –
[ASE is also known as General Adult Education (GAE)]
- English as a Second Language Program (ESL)
- Family Literacy Programs
- Workplace Literacy Programs
- Program for the Homeless
- Correctional Facilities
- Community Corrections Programs
- Other Institutional Program (any other medical or special institution)

Collection Procedure: At intake, local program counts learner as entering the appropriate NRS program or class type.

Reporting Procedure: Programs create classes in AERIS under the following “Class Types” and register students in the appropriate classes.

This information is important for NRS Tables 6, 8, 9, and 10.

AERIS Class Type Choices:

- Career Pathways
- Community Corrections
- Correctional Facilities
- Distance Learning
- EL/Civics
- Family Literacy
- KeyTrain
- No Specialized Program
- One-Stops
- Other Institutional Settings
- Project Learner (prior written approval from ACE-AED must be granted)
- WAGE
- WorkKeys
- Workplace Literacy

V. Secondary Outcome Measures (Optional)

NRS does not require that states report the secondary optional outcome measures at this time. These measures include Work-based Project Learners, Employment Measures, Community Measures, Family Measures, and Student Status Measures. However, Arkansas adult education and literacy programs can collect this information and report it in AERIS (for example, under Secondary Reasons for attending adult education). ***This information is reported in NRS Tables 8 and 11.***

Student data on income level and other secondary student status measures are collected on a confidential sheet that will be separated from the student's Intake Form after the data is entered into AERIS (see Status Needs form in Appendix). ***This information is reported in NRS Table 6.***

VI. Distance Education

Definition: Distance education is a 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. Instructional time that a distance education student spends working with distance learning materials (and not in a face-to-face setting with a teacher) will be referred to as “proxy” hours. Teachers support distance learners through communication via mail, telephone, e-mail, face-to-face meetings on-site, or online technologies and software. For NRS reporting, programs must designate the student as either a distance education student or traditional classroom learner. The Arkansas model for distance education is a blended one that combines distance learning with limited face-to-face interaction. Intake, orientation, pre-test and post-tests will occur in a face-to-face setting. Distance education may also include face-to-face contact to provide additional support for the student. Instructors must assign work and set timelines for completion of assignments during a face-to-face meeting with the student or through communication via media.

Measurement of Contact and Proxy Hours: Distance education students must have at least 12 contact hours (face-to-face) to be counted for federal reporting. Proxy hours are to be documented by the instructor according to the approved Arkansas Adult Education Distance Education Instructional Hours Rubric.

Student rosters must be maintained by the distance education instructor containing the names of all enrollees. A record of all assignments made for a distance education student must be maintained by the instructor. Student logs must be kept by the instructor indicating the proxy hours awarded for distance learning for each completed lesson/assignment. In the reporting of proxy distance education hours, it is the completed number of instructional hours that determines the amount of hours entered into the state approved data management system.

Assessment and Reporting: All pre-test and post-test procedures, including proctoring, site, and administration, must adhere to the current Arkansas NRS for Adult Education Guidelines.

Qualifications of Provider: Only distance education programs approved by the Department of Workforce Education Adult Education Section shall be eligible to report distance education students and hours.

Student requirements:

- Grade level minimums: ABE High Intermediate (6.0-8.9) or ESL Low Intermediate as marked in student data management system by lowest TABE or BEST score
- Hours to maintain: 20 hours monthly
- Contact to maintain: weekly contact

Curriculum: Only resources listed below on the Arkansas Adult Education Distance Education Instructional Hours Rubric shall be used for distance education purposes. Credit of proxy hours shall follow the rubric guidelines for instructional hours awarded.

Adult Education Distance Education Instructional Hours Rubric

Curriculum	Criteria for Awarding Proxy Hours	Credit
Crossroads Café	Must pass unit test @ 70% or greater	10 hours per unit (total of 260 hrs)
English for All	Must pass unit test @ 70% or greater	6 hours per unit (total of 120 hrs.)
GED Connection	Video	1/2 hour per video (total of 19.5 hrs)
	Workbook: teacher determines % of work completed	Workbook: ≥75% of activities completed= 4 hrs per module; 50-74% = 2 hrs per module
	Internet Activities	1 hr. per activity (total of 43)
	Internet Module	3 hrs. per module (total of 15 hrs.)
	Printed Practice Tests	1 hr. per test (total of 22)
MHC GED Interactive Online	System tracked (preset period of inactivity prompt log out)	Recorded time in system
Aztec	System tracked (preset period of inactivity prompt log out)	Recorded time in system
Skills Tutor	System tracked (preset period of inactivity prompt log out)	Recorded time in system
Key Train	System tracked (preset period of inactivity prompt log out)	Recorded time in system