

**WIOA Region 5 (South Central and Southwest)
Policy Letter #5 –2020**

Effective Date: **October 1, 2020**

Purpose: To provide guidelines for the use of assessments in case management for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity and State Dislocated Worker programs and other state/federal funded programs as appropriate (including Pathways to Prosperity grants).

Background: The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act requires an objective assessment of the academic levels, skill levels (including literacy, numeracy, and English language proficiency), abilities (including skills gaps), and service needs of each participant.

Policy/Procedure: DEED (Assessment Requirements Policy-1/23/18) requires all participants to complete assessments prior to approval of training. The service provider must document assessments on the Individual Employment Plan (IEP), enter them in Workforce One, and place official results in the case file.

All participants in credentialed training must have:

- An official math and reading assessment.
- A skills gap assessment performed by a case manager.
- Skills and interest assessments for all participants to appropriately gauge participant career paths.
- Proof the case manager crosschecked the participant's skills with the typical task list for the employment goal, to identify skills gaps or provided other evidence of a typical skillset for the employment goal.
- Participants must complete the assessments and the service provider must record the score on the IEP prior to the start of any training in order to ensure that a participant has the basic skills needed to succeed in their educational plans.

Exceptions: those who have earned an Associate’s Degree or higher do not need to complete a math and reading assessment.

Definition

Math and Reading Assessments: Standardized academic assessments that meet the guidelines of the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) – Adult Basic Education (ABE) Office, or the Minnesota State System. MDE– ABE has approved the use of the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) for English Language Learners and ABE students and the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) for ABE students. MDE-ABE will approve the use of the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) on a case-by-case basis. Minnesota State has approved the use of the Accuplacer and the ESL Accuplacer for course

placement. Other official assessments that translate math and reading scores to a grade level may be used.

Official Assessments

Official assessments are standardized, formal, objective, and measurable. Interviews are not official assessments, and should only be used to supplement other assessments. Case Managers can use an in-depth interview to identify employment barriers and job goals, but it is not considered an official assessment.

Note: Any approved assessment can be used to determine the Basic Skills requirement/eligibility enrollment. However, for Measurable Skills Gain, only National Reporting System (NRS) approved assessments and scoring mechanisms are authorized for use.

Procedure

Service providers must include the official assessment results in the participant's file. Service providers must record the grade level equivalency, not overall total score, for math and reading assessments. Service providers may select one assessment to use for all participants or use a variety of different assessments available to the participant based on sensibility with career/training goals, or based on participant preference.

Objective Assessment

All participants must receive an objective assessment for the purpose of identifying appropriate services, career pathways for participants and appropriate employment goals. The assessment should include consideration of the participant's:

- work history,
- education/academic levels and basic skills (including literacy, numeracy, and English language proficiency),
- occupational skills and abilities,
- interests,
- aptitudes (including interests and aptitudes for non-traditional occupations),
- obsolete skills or skill gaps,
- family or other caregiving needs,
- need for any accommodations,
- support service needs (including transportation or housing needs), and
- legal assistance to reduce job search barriers.

Method of Objective Assessment

The service provider will choose the most appropriate way to conduct the Objective Assessment of the participant. Methods will include at least one of the following:

- structured interviews,
- performance tests (e.g. skill and/or work samples),
- observational assessment,
- interests and/or attitude inventories,
- career guidance instruments,
- aptitude tests, and/or
- basic skill assessments (math and reading skills test).

Objective assessment is an on-going process. The service provider must review any additional information about a participant as it becomes available and adjust the IEP as appropriate.

Skills Assessments

Every participant in pursuit of training (see MN DEED Credentials and Training Policy) who has attained less than an associate's degree must take a basic skills assessment (math and reading). The results of their standardized skills assessment must be documented in the participant's case file or IEP prior to beginning the training.