

STACKABLE CERTIFICATES

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- 1. If a student comes in at orientation and scores above 10.0 do I: (1) need to administer two tests to give him the Basic Certificate and (2) go back to make sure he has mastered all of the competencies in Level 4 before giving the certificate?**

Yes, any Basic or Advanced certificate that is issued must have two assessments to verify achievement and documentation of the completion of the level benchmarks. This will add value to the certificates and give us the needed data we're trying to collect about test alignments. Remind your programs that not all students may want a certificate. But those that do must follow the guidelines.

- 2. Do the "two tests" have to be one NRS test and one supplemental test?**

The "two tests" can be one NRS test and one supplemental (such as Workkeys and COMPASS) but it can also be two NRS tests (for example, TABE and CASAS). We're trying to gather as much test comparison as we can on a variety of tests.

- 3. Do I need a pre and posttest on each test?**

No. As always, you need a pre and post on the NRS test that you are tracking in ABLELink for student achievement. But, you only need one test for comparison.

For example, if you give a TABE pre and post for NRS reporting and the student scores 12.9 in reading, language and math, to give the certificate a second test is needed. For the second test, you would need just one more set of test data from another NRS test or from a supplemental test listed in ABLELink. Remember the testing data for the certificate must include all three areas - reading, language/ writing, math and must be reported in ABLELink.

- 4. Why do we have to show mastery of the benchmarks, if two tests show level completion?**

Ohio ABLE uses a standards-based approach to education. The standardized tests cover many of the ABLE benchmarks but not all. We do not have an alignment of the tests with our ABLE standards and benchmarks, so in addition to the two tests, programs must document that the student has mastered all of the benchmarks before issuing a certificate.

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1. Which tests may I use to document skills for the Basic and Advanced Certificates?

Programs may use any of the tests on the chart on page two of this update document skills. One of the highlighted tests – TABE, CASAS, or WorkKeys – must be used as the required pre and post test for each student. The required test serves two purposes: (1) documenting student achievement for NRS reporting and (2) documenting completion of NRS level 4 to earn a Basic Skills Certificate or completion of level 6 for an Advanced Skills Certificate.

As the Stackable Guidance document states, “In order for the state to look at alignments among various tests, it is important that during this pilot year of the Stackable Certificate Initiative, ABLÉ programs use a minimum of two assessments; one assessment must be an NRS approved standardized test. Student performance on that test determines certificate completion. Scale scores from a supplemental assessment such as COMPASS, Accuplacer, or WorkKeys will be used to compare level completion. Programs may administer the supplemental test or acquire the data from a collaborating agency, such as a community college or adult workforce program, if available. The test must have been administered within the last 90 days to be valid.”

For more details, please see the attached Overview of Supplemental Assessments. Other supplemental tests referenced in that document are specific to ESOL or computer literacy and are not applicable for documenting skills for the Basic and Advanced Certificates.

2. What is the most cost effective way to obtain data on two different tests?

Two good ways are: (1) use tests that you already have access to or that your educational partners can provide and (2) use tests that do not require a lengthy training.

Remember, you do not actually have to administer the second test, if you have access to the test results. Test results from partners need to have been administered within the last 90 days.

For example, if you are using the COMPASS as the second test to verify the skills for a certificate, after the student has taken the test at the community college, ask him/her to provide you the test results. Another cost savings idea is to consider partnering with other ABLÉ programs in your region to share purchasing costs.

Test	Reading	English/ Writing	Math	Training required to administer
Accuplacer	✓	✓	✓	Contact College Board
ACT	✓	✓	✓	Contact ACT
COMPASS/ASSET	✓	✓	✓	Contact ACT
CASAS	✓		✓	One person in the program must attend a face to face training. Then that person may train staff in the program. Contact NWRC.
GAIN	✓	✓	✓	May attend face to face training or use the DVD training. Contact NWRC.
MAPT	✓		✓	Contact Massachusetts Department of Adult Education
PSAT	✓	✓	✓	Contact College Board
SAT	✓	✓	✓	Contact College Board
TABE	✓	✓	✓	May be trained by experienced TABE test administrator, use the DVD training, or attend a face to face training. Contact NWRC.
WorkKeys	✓	✓	✓	No formal training required. Must follow script in the test administration manual.