



## Statement Regarding COVID-Related Exemptions to NRS Testing and Temporarily Lifting 12-Hour Restriction for Students without a Pre-Test

June 11, 2020

Due to new requirements from the U.S. Department of Education, we are revising the requirements for what to enter in the COVID EFL Exemption in SiD. **Starting today, ABE programs will now need to select either COVID-ESL EFL Estimate or COVID-ABE EFL Estimate and enter a score (1-6) that relates to a provisional level in which the student will be initially assigned.** (Additional guidance is in the revised Statement Regarding Temporarily Lifting 12-Hour Restriction for Students without a Pre-Test, see below.)

On April 29, the Minnesota Adult Education Office at the Minnesota Department of Education sent out the *ABE Memo - Temporary Lifting of 12-hour Restriction*. On May 29, the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education (OCTAE) sent out revised requirements in an FAQ (part 3) on how state adult education programs need to handle students that cannot be tested due to COVID-related closures. That guidance requires that all ABE students that cannot be tested with an approved NRS assessment must be assigned a provisional level.

### Setting a Provisional Level

Local ABE programs must select a provisional level (1-6) when assigning a COVID ESL or ABE level estimate (AKA provisional level). The provisional level is the program's estimate on what level they initially place the student in. To determine the provisional level, the program may use either:

- Informal assessments that are content-driven or performance-driven such as locator tests, criterion referenced tests, or authentic assessments; and/or
- Crosswalks between informal assessment benchmarks to Educational Functioning Levels.

If a student with a provisional level in SiD tests later with an official NRS test, the provisional level will be replaced by the official NRS test score and level as the official pre-test level for the year.

### What if We Entered Students with the Previous "COVID EFL Exemption?"

The COVID EFL Exemption test option no longer exists and has been changed to COVID-ESL EFL Estimate in SiD. All students that were assigned the "COVID EFL Exemption" since May 1 have been reassigned to COVID-ESL EFL

Estimate, with a score of 1, meaning provisional ESL level 1. If that is not the provisional level wanted for the student, we strongly encourage programs to change the student's test option and/or reassign students to their estimated provisional level.

## Revising the Statement

Because of this change, we are also removing the Statement Regarding Temporarily Lifting 12-hour Restriction for Students without a Pre-Test from April 29, 2020, and adding the revised version here:

## Revised Statement Regarding Temporarily Lifting 12-hour Restriction for Students without a Pre-Test

*Original Version: April 29, 2020*

*Revised Version: June 10, 2020*

**Starting May 1, 2020, the Minnesota Department of Education's (MDE) Adult Education Office is temporarily lifting the 12-hour restriction in SiD for new students with no pre-test during the school closure period.**

## How Long this Exemption to the 12-Hour Restriction will Last

The Minnesota Department of Education's Adult Education Office will consider reinstating the 12-hour restriction for students without a valid pre-test when:

- In-person ABE programming and testing can resume again; and/or
- Remote testing options are approved and available for ABE programs and students.

In either situation, the Minnesota Department of Education and SiD Support Staff will give ABE programs one-month notice so ABE programs can make sure they can administer a valid pre-test to students that are enrolling and participating in ABE instruction.

## Students and Federal ABE Reporting

Students that are assigned provisional levels will be included in federal ABE reporting.

## Assessments

The MDE Adult Education Office approves and promotes remote testing options with CASAS, TABE and BEST Plus that adheres to test publisher requirements. Remote testing is a student taking the test at home on a computer or laptop with video proctoring and monitoring. As of June 10, BEST Plus, CASAS, and TABE have remote testing

options with computer-based testing available for local programs. (See the MDE ABE Statement Approving Remote Testing sent via email on May 14, 2020.)

## SiD Entry

For your new students that you cannot test and do not have a valid pre-test, create a “COVID-ESL EFL Estimate” or “COVID-ABE EFL Estimate” in the student’s assessment tab, depending on whether you are considering them an ESL-level or ABE-level student. (Formerly, this option was listed as COVID EFL Exemption.) This option will be in the list of available assessments. When entered into the student file, this exemption will allow you to enter 12+ contact and proxy hours.

1. **Make “COVID-ESL EFL Estimate” and “COVID-ABE EFL Estimate” available in the test options:** SiD users who enter test scores (not just each program but each user) must select the test so that it will be displayed in their Assessment drop down list of options. Instructions on how to do this can be found at the [SiD Help article “Select Displayed Tests Customize Your Test Menu”](https://mnabe.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/articles/225731967-Select-Displayed-Tests-Customize-Your-Test-Menu) (<https://mnabe.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/articles/225731967-Select-Displayed-Tests-Customize-Your-Test-Menu>). This needs to be done by each SiD user once.
2. **Choose and select “COVID-ESL EFL Estimate” or “COVID-ABE EFL Estimate” in students’ files for those that do not have a valid pre-test and that you are unable to test:** Select COVID-ESL EFL Estimate if the student is considered an ESL-Level student by the program. Select COVID-ABE EFL Estimate if the student is considered an ABE-Level student by the program. Then the COVID ESL/ABE EFL Estimate can be entered in each student’s record in the assessment tab.
3. **Enter a score of 1-6:** The “COVID-ESL EFL Estimate” and “COVID-ABE EFL Estimate” will have a score field that needs to be filled. The score will equal the provisional level. Add a score of 1-6 that correlates to the provisional level the program is selecting for the student.
4. **12+ hours can now be entered for students.**

SiD Support Staff have created help article that can be found [online](https://mnabe.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/articles/360044322412-Add-Edit-COVID-ESL-ABE-EFL-Estimates) at (<https://mnabe.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/articles/360044322412-Add-Edit-COVID-ESL-ABE-EFL-Estimates>).

## Questions?

If you have questions about this memo or other ABE policies, please contact Brad Hasskamp, Adult Secondary Credential and Education Policy Specialist at the Minnesota Department of Education, at [brad.hasskamp@state.mn.us](mailto:brad.hasskamp@state.mn.us).