


**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
Federal Bureau of Prisons**



**PROGRAM STATEMENT
Minimum Standards for Administration,
Interpretation, and Use of Education Tests**

Approved by	 William K. Marshall III Director, Federal Bureau of Prisons
DPI	RSD
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Summary of Changes

Program Statement Rescinded:

- 5310.15 Minimum Standards for Administration, Interpretation, and Use of Education Tests (9/4/1996)

Changes:

- Defines terms and responsibilities of the Education Services Branch (ESB), Regional Offices, and institution staff.
- Establishes the utilization of the ESB page of the Federal Bureau of Prison's (Bureau) intranet site as the main resource for updated guidance on the administration, handling, interpretation, use, and procedures for education tests.
- Outlines the roles and responsibilities of the Test Administrator, Chief Examiners, and Examiners for standardized testing in the Bureau.
- Removes specific references to Bureau inmate management systems and their codes. Staff must now refer to the ESB page of the Bureau's intranet site for guidance regarding these systems and required education codes.

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

To place literacy, English as a Second Language (ESL), and other Education program student inmates in appropriate instruction levels, measure learning progress, and certify completion of education programs in the Bureau.

a. **Program Objectives.**

- Authorized Education staff will properly handle, store, administer, score, interpret, and document education test results.
- Security and accountability for education test materials will be maintained to ensure test validity and to prevent test irregularities and/or test compromises as defined by the test publisher(s) and listed on the Education Services Branch page of the Bureau's intranet site.
- The Education Services Branch will provide training to Education staff to ensure proper test administration.
- Inmates participating in the literacy and English as a Second Language (ESL) programs will be placed in appropriate instructional levels, their learning progress will be formatively assessed, and they will complete the program's summative assessment.

b. **Institution Supplement.** None.

2. DEFINITIONS

English as a Second Language (ESL). A Bureau-approved program that leads to English language competency in the eighth grade.

Examiner. Institutional staff authorized by the ESB to administer literacy certification exams at the institutional level. May also be referred to as an institutional Test Administrator.

High School Equivalency (HSE). An alternate program of coursework completion equivalent to a comprehensive curriculum required to earn a high school diploma.

Learning support needs. Any type of academic, cognitive, mobility, or physiological difference limiting an individual's ability to learn or to complete a task at the same level or rate as their typical peer.

Literacy Program. A Bureau-approved program designed to help inmates develop foundational knowledge and skills in reading, math, and writing expression and to prepare inmates to get a HSE credential.

Special Education. Intervention practices designed to address the needs of inmates identified with an educational disability.

Special Education Teacher. A teacher with specialized training who plans, develops, instructs, and facilitates individual services for inmates with learning support needs, working collaboratively with teachers to ensure delivery of Accommodations, Interventions, and Modifications (AIM) strategies and the Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports (MTSS) process.

Test compromise. Test compromise refers to any act or situation where the security, integrity, or fairness of a test is compromised. Examples and additional guidance can be found on the Education Services Branch page of the Bureau's intranet site.

Test irregularity. A test irregularity, most often uncontrolled, refers to any deviation from the standard procedures or protocols established for administering a test. It is any significant occurrence that impairs a test candidate's ability to perform. Examples and additional guidance can be found on the Education Services Branch page of the Bureau's intranet site.

3. AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES

The following Bureau components are responsible for ensuring consistent establishment of the education testing program delivery and resource allocations.

a. Education Services Branch (ESB)

- Providing guidance and direction regarding education tests to agency leadership as well as regional and institution staff.
- Providing oversight of education tests to ensure proper administration and use.
- Developing education policy and procedures.
- Developing procedures to collect, analyze, interpret, and utilize data to inform program decisions.
- Developing and providing staff training related to educational test administration and use.
- Serving as the ESB Test Administrator(s), an appointed collateral duty in which an ESB staff member serves as the jurisdiction's authorized liaison with the test publishers.
- Serving as the exclusive authority to authorize any staff member to serve in the role as Examiner.
- Monitoring and reporting literacy and ESL program outcomes to internal and external stakeholders.

b. Regional Education Administrators (REA).

- Providing regional oversight of education tests in Bureau institutions to ensure proper administration and use.
- Assisting ESB with institutional staff training and on-site visits to institutions.

c. Institutions.

- **Supervisor of Education (SOE).** The Supervisor of Education will serve as the Chief Examiner and will designate Education staff as Examiners. The Chief Examiner is authorized by the ESB Test Administrators to administer educational tests. Their responsibilities include managing the administration of various educational tests,

managing testing sessions, ensuring compliance with testing standards and procedures, training Examiners, reviewing test results, and resolving any issues related to test administration. Additionally, they are responsible for developing a plan outlining the test procedures and security measures as required by the test publisher. Overall, the Chief Examiner maintains the integrity and effectiveness of the educational testing program.

- **Temporary Chief Examiner.** Ordinarily, this temporary collateral duty is utilized at the Warden’s discretion and is responsible for overseeing the administration and evaluation of educational tests. The Temporary Chief Examiner must meet the same ESB requirements as a Chief Examiner.
- **Examiner.** An authorized Education staff member assigned and appointed by the SOE to administer educational tests according to test manuals and procedures outlined on the Bureau ESB intranet site, maintaining accurate test files, and documenting inmate education test scores in the applicable Bureau inmate management system.

4. STAFF TRAINING

For literacy and ESL standardized testing, all new Chief Examiners and Examiners must complete the required training before they handle and administer standardized tests and materials. Standardized tests are assessments administered and scored in a consistent or “standard” manner across all administrations. These tests are designed to measure a wide range of skills and knowledge in a uniform way, ensuring the conditions under which the tests are administered and the scoring procedures are the same for everyone.

After initial training, all certified Chief Examiners and Examiners will complete training annually and must pass an annual certification test, if applicable. Staff will be provided adequate time to complete all required training during duty hours. Training will also include a thorough review of Education policies and procedures in accordance with Program Statement **Education, Training, and Leisure Time Program Standards**.

5. TEST PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITIES AND ADMINISTRATION

The SOE or ASOE will have oversight of standardized tests used for placement, achievement, and the certification of program completion. In the event both the SOE and ASOE positions are vacant or there are other extenuating circumstances, the institution will contact Central Office ESB for further guidance.

The SOE will designate authorized Education staff as Examiners who will maintain responsibility for coordinating the administration of standardized tests in accordance with the guidance provided on the ESB page of the Bureau’s intranet site. Each institution must have at least one additional Examiner in addition to the Chief Examiner. If this requirement cannot be

met, the SOE will consult with the ESB for additional guidance.

The SOE will ensure all Examiners pass the annual certification test, if applicable, and attend the initial and annual training, as well as any subsequent trainings or information sessions provided by ESB.

To ensure program accountability, fidelity, and to prevent test irregularities and compromises, the SOE will develop a plan outlining testing procedures and security measures with elements designed to safeguard testing materials, including policy and procedure references, oversight responsibilities, Examiner appointment/training/revocation procedures, test handling and administration guidelines, document retention, contingency plans for test irregularities and compromises, testing schedules, and score reporting procedures. This plan must be reviewed and acknowledged annually by the Chief Examiner, Examiners, Education staff, Captain, Associate Warden with oversight of Education, and Warden.

Education staff involved in literacy or ESL instruction will not conduct certification test inventories or administer literacy or ESL certification tests. Only appointed Examiners are authorized to conduct certification test inventories and administer certification testing materials. After consultation with the REA and ESB, contractors may be authorized to administer certification tests. Special Education Teachers, school counselors, and volunteers are not permitted to be appointed as Examiners at any time. However, where applicable, authorized Education staff will administer other aptitude, interest, and job readiness tests to inmates.

The Chief Examiner or designee will conduct and document a monthly inventory of all testing materials in the HSE and ESL safe. A list of these materials can be found on the ESB page of the Bureau's intranet site.

Education staff will not allow inmates to administer, score, record, or interpret tests outlined in this program statement. Inmates are also not allowed to enter test scores in individual progress charts or other tracking forms, reports, and systems.

The SOE will establish the criteria for referring inmates for certification tests. Additionally, the SOE will post HSE and ESL test schedules and ensure they are visible to literacy and ESL program students.

At the discretion of the Warden and the SOE, institutions will provide education testing services to inmates housed in restrictive and Special Housing Units (SHU). For any test events scheduled outside of the approved test center, institutions must contact ESB for consultation.

The Special Education Teacher will follow guidance for the handling, administration, scoring, interpreting, and reporting of scores provided on the ESB page of the Bureau's intranet site to administer assessments to students who exhibit traits of learning disabilities or dyslexia or have

been identified by documentation as having traits of learning disabilities or dyslexia. In the event of a vacant Special Education Teacher position, guidance is provided on the ESB page of the Bureau's intranet site.

Additional guidance regarding tests for inmates with learning support needs is available in the Program Statement **Management of Inmates with Disabilities**.

The SOE or designee must maintain all HSE testing accommodations request materials and accompanying reports for three years. All documentation must be stored in a secure, fireproof storage container or safe, and only authorized Education staff, as determined by the SOE or designee, will have access. Additional requirements are outlined on the ESB page of the Bureau's intranet site.

6. PROCEDURES

Prior to enrolling inmates in the literacy and ESL programs, Education staff will administer the approved Bureau placement test to any qualifying inmate with education needs to determine their instructional levels. A qualifying inmate is defined in Program Statements **Literacy Program** and **English as a Second Language (ESL) Program**.

Placement tests are assessments designed to evaluate an inmate's current level of knowledge or skill in a specific subject area to determine the most appropriate level of instruction or coursework. These tests help Education staff place inmates in classes or programs that match their abilities and learning needs, ensuring they receive the appropriate level of challenge and support. Examples include Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) and Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems (CASAS) placement tests.

Education staff will administer the approved Bureau literacy placement test to initially designated inmates who do not have a verified high school diploma, or its equivalent, within 90 days of their arrival to determine their appropriate instructional level. Inmates returning to custody who have prior test scores less than three years old and are available from the applicable Bureau inmate management system or other official verifiable sources do not require an additional placement test.

Authorized Education staff will administer the approved Bureau ESL placement test to inmates with limited English proficiency to determine their English language skills level as specified in Program Statement **English as a Second Language (ESL) Program**.

Inmates will be referred for ESL placement testing based on the following criteria:

- English is not the inmate's native or first language.
- Use of a translator/interpreter to complete the Presentence Investigation Report (PSR) as

indicated in the PSR.

- Inability to complete the education interview in English or read and understand information at initial screening.

Authorized Education staff will follow test procedures on the ESB page of the Bureau's intranet site to administer achievement tests to HSE and ESL program inmates to assess and/or reassess the learning progress throughout an inmate's program enrollment. All tests and subtest scores will be entered into the applicable Bureau inmate management system.

Achievement tests are standardized assessments designed to measure an inmate's knowledge or proficiency in a specific subject or area of learning. These tests evaluate how well an inmate has understood and retained information taught in an educational setting, typically covering areas in mathematical reasoning, reasoning through language arts, science, social studies, and other academic subjects. Examples include TABE and CASAS achievement tests. Achievement tests must be administered throughout an inmate's enrollment to track progress and determine readiness for the certification test. A certification test will not be given if an achievement test has not been administered within the past six months of enrollment.

Placement and achievement tests may be administered by authorized Education staff other than Examiners at the discretion of the SOE.

HSE and ESL Certification tests are assessments designed to evaluate an inmate's knowledge, skills, and competencies and certify the inmate meets the required standards and qualifications. Examples include GED and CASAS certification.

HSE Examiners will administer the approved Bureau HSE certification test to literacy program inmates for literacy program completion. Education staff will provide inmates with an official HSE certificate and transcript when they pass the HSE certification tests. When an inmate passes the test, the SOE or designee will use the credential date on the transcript for entering test transactions in the applicable Bureau inmate management system to include updating the education attainment status of the inmate.

ESL Examiners will administer the approved Bureau ESL certification test to ESL program inmates for program completion. Education staff will provide inmates with a certificate when they pass the certification test. When an inmate passes the test, the SOE or designee will use the testing date for entering test transactions in the applicable Bureau inmate management system to include updating the education attainment status of the inmate.

7. TEST INTEGRITY, SCORE REPORTING, AND PROGRAM ACCOUNTABILITY

The SOE will establish a system to ensure all relevant standardized education test scores are entered in the applicable Bureau inmate management system within two weeks of receipt of final

test scores and they are maintained in accordance with Program Statement **Education, Training, and Leisure Time Program Standards**.

Official and unofficial copies of the HSE credential and transcript will be presented to the inmate along with instructions on how to acquire ownership of their HSE online account upon release from the Bureau. These instructions can be located on the ESB page of the Bureau's intranet site.

Copies of the inmate's HSE credential and transcript will be sent to the inmate's Unit Management team to be placed in the Inmate Central File.

An accountability system is vital to the valid administration, interpretation, and use of education tests. The SOE will have a test accountability and inventory system established to ensure:

- Test content and materials are not exposed to unauthorized staff or to non-tested inmates.
- All printed certification tests and related materials are stored in a secure, fireproof safe to prevent any test irregularities and compromises. Only HSE and ESL certification test materials can be stored in this safe, to which only the Chief Examiner and authorized Examiners have access. The ESB Test Administrator(s) and REAs are authorized to access and open the safe designated for storing all official testing materials for staff assists and site visits.
- All standardized, norm-referenced testing tools, including but not limited to any test books, examiner's manual, technical manual, online scoring and reporting program, test record, response booklet, and audio recording devices, must be stored in a secure, fireproof storage container or safe. This material will not be in the same safe that holds the HSE and ESL certification test materials.
- The Chief Examiner or designee will conduct and maintain documentation of a monthly inventory of all ESL certification tests, compact discs (CDs), and testing materials, including any test administration manual.
- The examinee/examiner ratio and test security measures comply with the standards set by the test publishers to ensure reliability and validity of test results. At a minimum, two Examiners must always be present during HSE and ESL certification testing sessions.
- All new SOEs preparing to become a Chief Examiner will ordinarily be trained by regional, and/or ESB staff (i.e., SOEs, ASOEs, REAs, and/or ESB staff). When extenuating circumstances exist preventing the SOE from attending the training, the SOE will contact the REA and ESB for authorization to be trained by a local, approved Examiner.
- The Examiner maintains historical testing records to include testing schedules and inmates scheduled for HSE and ESL testing sessions, and the number of HSE and ESL tests administered and passed for a minimum of three years. This allows for the retrieval of testing data that may not be available in the applicable Bureau education data system and official HSE and ESL reports from the ESB page of the Bureau's intranet site.
- All inmates must bring their government-issued identification card the day of testing for

inmate identity verification prior to taking the HSE or ESL certification test.

- Upon completing the HSE and ESL certification test, inmates will be given a program completion assignment in the applicable Bureau inmate management system and awarded an incentive in accordance with Program Statement **First Step Act Assessments, Programming and Incentives**.
- All rules and procedures about test security and procedures are specified in this program statement; those posted on the ESB page of the Bureau's intranet site and outlined by the HSE test publisher must be followed to prevent any test irregularities and compromises.
- Suspicion and/or occurrence of HSE or ESL test irregularities and compromises are reported immediately/within one hour to the respective REA and Central Office Education Administrator.
- When test irregularities and/or compromises occur, all appropriate test publisher(s) forms must be completed, and incident reports must be written in accordance with the Program Statement **Inmate Discipline Program**. Additional guidance and test publisher forms related to test irregularities and compromises are located on the ESB Page of the Bureau's intranet site.

REFERENCES

Program Statements

Education, Training, and Leisure Time Program Standards
English as a Second Language (ESL) Program
First Step Act Assessment, Programming and Incentives
Inmate Discipline Program
Literacy Program
Management of Inmates with Disabilities

ACA Standards

Performance-Based Standards and Expected Practices for Adult Correctional Institutions (5th Edition): 5-ACI-3D-04, 5-ACI-3D-05, 5-ACI-5E-02, 5-ACI-5E-03, 5-ACI-7B-01, 5-ACI-7B-02, 5-ACI-7B-03, 5-ACI-7B-04, 5-ACI-7B-05, 5-ACI-7B-06, 5-ACI-7B-07, 5-ACI-7B-08, 5-ACI-7B-09, 5-ACI-7B-10, 5-ACI-7B-11, 5-ACI-7B-12, 5-ACI-7B-13, 5-ACI-7B-14, and 5-ACI-7B-15

Performance-Based Standards and Expected Practices for Adult Local Detention Facilities (5th Edition): 5-ALDF-5A-02, 5-ALDF-5A-09, 5-ALDF-6B-02, 5-ALDF-6B-03, 5-ALDF-6B-05

Standards for the Administration of Correctional Agencies, 2nd Edition: 2-CO-3C-01, 2-CO-5B-01, 2-CO-5C-01, 2-CO-5F-01

Records Retention Requirements

Requirements and retention guidance for records and information applicable to this program are available in the Records and Information Disposition Schedule (RIDS) on the Bureau's intranet site.