



Program Statement

OPI: FPI
NUMBER: 5310.15
DATE: September 4, 1996
SUBJECT: Minimum Standards for
Administration, Interpretation,
and Use of Education Tests

Effective Date: September 10, 1996

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE. To place literacy, English as-a-Second Language, and other education program inmates in appropriate instructional levels and to assess their learning progress.

The provisions of this Program Statement do not apply to tests used in the classroom, such as teacher-made tests or specific tests for court-referred study cases. The administration of education tests for research purposes may be authorized only in accordance with the Program Statement on Research.

2. PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES. The expected results of this program are:

a. Education staff will have accurate test information for placing inmates in literacy and other education programs and for accessing their learning progress.

b. Education tests will be properly stored, administered, scored, interpreted, and reported.

c. Security and accountability for education test materials will be maintained.

3. DIRECTIVES AFFECTED

a. Directive Rescinded

PS 5310.10 Minimum Standards for Administration,
Interpretation, and Use of Education Tests
(02/20/90)

b. Directives Referenced

PS 1070.04 Research (10/16/95)
PS 5270.07 Discipline and Special Housing Units
(12/29/87)
PS 5300.17 Education, Training, and Leisure-Time Program
Standards (09/04/96)

PS 5350.19 Literacy Program, (GED Standard) (05/01/91)
PS 5350.21 English-as-a-Second Language Program (ESL)
(03/29/94)

4. STANDARDS REFERENCED

a. American Correctional Association Foundation/Core Standards for Adult Correctional Institutions: C2-4235, C2-4239.

b. American Correctional Association, 3rd Edition Standards for Adult Correctional Institutions: 3-4418, 3-4422-1.

c. American Correctional Association Foundation/Core Standards for Adult Local Detention Facilities: None.

d. American Correctional Association, 3rd Edition Standards for Adult Local Detention Facilities: None.

e. American Correctional Association, 2nd Edition Standards for Administration of Correctional Agencies: None.

5. PROCEDURES

a. Education staff shall administer the Adult Basic Level Examination (ABLE) Level 2 to newly sentenced inmates who do not have a high school diploma or its equivalent, within 90 days of their arrival to determine their appropriate instructional levels for placement in a literacy program. For the Spanish-speaking inmates, the Spanish Assessment of Basic Education/2 (SABE/2), Level 6, Spring Norm shall be used.

Education staff are allowed to use the remaining Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS) until the supply is exhausted. No duplication of any test booklets and answer sheets shall be made.

b. Education staff shall administer the ABLE test to inmates who do not have a verified high school diploma, or its equivalent, and return to a Federal correctional institution as parole or supervised release violators, within 90 days of their arrival to determine their appropriate instructional levels, unless the inmate's prior test scores are less than three years old and they are available from the SENTRY-based education transcript system or other verifiable sources.

c. Education staff shall also administer the ABLE test to inmates who do not have a verified high school diploma, or its equivalent, and return to a Federal correctional institution under a new sentence within 90 days of their arrival, to determine their appropriate instructional levels for placement in a literacy program. If their test scores are less than three years old and scores are available from the SENTRY-based education transcript system or other sources, immediate ABLE testing may not be required.

d. Although not required, education staff may administer the ABLE test to inmates who transfer from another Federal correctional institution or who return from community correction centers without first completing the mandatory literacy program period, to re-assess their instructional levels for timely placement in a literacy program.

e. Education staff may administer the ABLE test to assess the learning progress of inmates enrolled in the literacy program throughout inmates' enrollments. They are not required to administer post-ABLE tests to inmates when they withdraw from the literacy program after meeting the mandatory attendance requirement.

f. Authorized education staff shall administer the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) tests to limited English proficient inmates to determine their English language skills level as specified in the Program Statement on English-as-a-Second Language Program (ESL).

Inmates who score less than 225 on the CASAS Level C Reading Certification Test and 215 on the CASAS Survey Achievement Listening Test, Form B or C shall be required to enroll in an ESL program, as specified in the Program Statement on the English-as-a-Second Language Program.

6. TEST REQUIREMENTS FOR THE 6TH OR 8TH GRADE LITERACY PROGRAM STANDARDS

a. Where applicable, education staff may administer the ABLE test to inmates who were subject to the previous 6th or 8th grade literacy standards to determine their academic achievement at the 6th or 8th grade level for program completion purposes. Education staff shall not be required to give post-ABLE testing to otherwise eligible inmates who withdraw from the literacy program.

To maintain a uniform standard, only the ABLE test shall be used to determine academic achievement at the 6th or 8th grade.

b. The required ABLE subtests are: vocabulary, reading comprehension, spelling, language, mathematic computation and problem solving.

c. For Spanish-speaking inmates, the SABE/2 shall be used to assess inmates who were subject to the provisions of the previous 6th or 8th grade literacy standards to determine their academic achievement at the 6th or 8th grade level.

However, education staff are allowed to use the remaining CTBS tests until the supply is exhausted. No duplication of any test booklets and answer sheets shall be made.

d. The SABE/2 subtests are: word attack, reading vocabulary, reading comprehension, mathematics computation, mathematics concepts and applications, spelling, language mechanics, and language expression.

e. The CTBS subtests are: vocabulary, reading comprehension, math concepts, math computation, and math applications.

7. TEST PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITIES AND ADMINISTRATION RESTRICTIONS

a. The Supervisor of Education shall designate an education staff member or a contractor as the test coordinator. The test coordinator has the overall responsibility to coordinate the administration of the ABLE, CTBS, SABE/2, Official GED Practice Test, GED, and CASAS tests.

b. The Supervisor of Education shall serve as the Chief GED Examiner and he/she should be properly authorized by the General Educational Development Testing Services (GEDTS) and shall adhere to all GED test procedures to ensure test security and accountability.

c. The Supervisor of Education shall also designate Education or contract staff as alternate GED examiner(s) and ensure that the alternate GED examiners are properly authorized by the General Educational Development Testing Services (GEDTS) and meet the alternate GED examiner qualifications stated in the GED test manual.

d. The Supervisor of Education shall ensure that the alternate GED examiners are properly trained in GED test administration and security measures, and that they comply with all test guidelines and procedures established by the GEDTS.

e. The Supervisor of Education shall develop written testing procedures, schedules, and security measures to ensure the proper program accountability and to prevent security breaches.

f. Literacy program teachers shall not handle or administer the GED test. Only the Chief GED Examiner and alternate GED examiners are authorized to handle and administer GED test materials. However, at the discretion of the Supervisor of Education literacy program teachers are authorized to handle, administer, and score the ABLE test, SABE/2, CTBS, and the GED Official Practice Test.

g. The returning of official GED test materials back to the GEDTS for scoring or other purposes should be handled with extreme caution and they should be mailed to the GEDTS by certified mail to prevent security breaches.

h. When needed, authorized education staff may administer other appropriate aptitude and interest tests to inmates.

i. The Supervisor of Education shall designate an education staff or a contract staff as the CASAS test administrator. The CASAS test administrator shall be responsible for administering CASAS Level C Reading Certification Test and Survey Achievement Listening Test, Form B or C.

j. Under no circumstance shall ESL program instructors administer the CASAS Level C Reading Certification Test and Survey Achievement Listening Test, Form B or C, but they may administer the CASAS placement and other survey achievement tests.

k. When qualified contract staff are used to administer education tests, they must be properly authorized and they shall comply with all guidelines and procedures required by the test publishers and relevant Program Statements.

l. Education staff shall not allow inmates to administer, score, record, or interpret tests outlined in this Program Statement. Specifically, inmates are not allowed to enter test scores in individual progress charts or other tracking forms.

8. TEST REPORTING

a. The Supervisor of Education shall establish a system to ensure that all relevant education test scores are entered on the SENTRY-based education transcript system within two weeks of the test administration and they are maintained in accordance with the Program Statement on Education, Training, and Leisure Time Program Standards.

b. Copies of inmates' GED score report and/or GED certificate shall be forwarded to case managers to be placed in the inmates' central files.

9. ACCOUNTABILITY. An accountability system is vital to the valid administration, interpretation, and use of education tests. The Supervisor of Education shall ensure that a test accountability and inventory system is established to ensure:

a. All test materials are not abused, misplaced or stolen;

b. All official GED test booklets, essay topic cards, answer sheets, and other relevant test materials shall be stored in a fire proof safe to prevent any test security breaches;

All other test materials (the Official GED Practice Test, CASAS, ABLE, CTBS, SABE/2...etc.) can be stored in the same fire proof safe where GED tests are kept. However, the Chief GED Examiner (Supervisor of Education) and the alternate GED examiners shall be the only authorized staff to have the access to the safe;

c. In addition to the security measures outlined by the GED test manual, a monthly inventory is conducted to account for the official GED and CASAS test materials;

d. The examinee/examiner ratio and test security measures comply with the standards set by the test publishers to ensure validity and reliability of test results;

e. The testing coordinator maintains historical testing records for a minimum of three years (e.g. the number of GED tests administered, passed, CASAS tests administered, and passed) to allow for retrieving testing data which may not be available from the SENTRY Education Data System (EDS);

f. A system is established to verify that inmates, who take the GED test, do not have a high school diploma, or its equivalent. Inmates shall complete and sign a GED eligibility form prior to taking the GED test as required by the GEDTS.

g. All rules and procedures specified in this Program Statement and the test manuals are followed to prevent any test security breaches; and

h. Suspicion or occurrence of GED or CASAS test compromises is reported in writing immediately to the respective Regional Education Administrator and Central Office Education Administrator.

10. ASSISTANCE. Any questions regarding this Program Statement may be directed to the Central Office Education Branch at (202) 508-3909.

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Director