Adult Education Services

Blended & Virtual/Distance Learning Policy
PY 2021-2022

Contents

ADE-AES Educational Technology Overview

Our Mission

The Educational Technology unit of Arizona Department of Education - Adult Education Services (ADE-AES) supports WIOA state-funded adult education programs and instructors with technology integration, blended learning, virtual/distance education, and digital literacy by facilitating professional development and offering guidance specific to each unique program.

Introduction to Blended Learning & Virtual/Distance Learning

Blended learning is an andragogical strategy that connects and compliments traditional in-class learning experiences ('contact hours') with out-of-class digital components ('proxy hours'). The benefit of the out-of-class portion of blended learning is flexibility in when, how, and where students access the online components. Virtual (or distance) education is where students and instructors are separated by geography, time, or both for 50% or more of the instructional period. A student's status as a participant in blended learning or virtual/distance learning may change at any point based on the percentage of proxy contact hours.

To help facilitate blended and virtual learning, WIOA state-funded programs may utilize online curricula that have been acquired by the state at no cost to the program. Programs may select alternative online curriculum from the list of approved online curricula; or, if instructors have passed the required Teacher Verification Model training, they may source other suitable curricula deemed to be educationally sound through a rigorous evaluation process. This includes curricula that instructors themselves have created.

Recording Attendance in the State Data Management System

State-funded adult education programs must keep an auditable record of in-class and out-of-class attendance using the state data management system. This attendance may be recorded in the state data management system as a cumulative monthly total (by default), or, on a more frequent basis if so desired. Time spent on asynchronous online learning outside of class, referred to as 'proxy hours,' can be reported via one of three National Reporting System (NRS) proxy models:

- **Clock Time Model** describes recording usage of **state-approved online curricula** (see page 7) that automatically tracks student usage and can generate reports showing that student's usage over a period of time. Adult education programs enter that time into the state data management system in the 'proxy hours' field.

- **Learner Mastery Model** describes recording usage of **state-approved online curricula** (see page 7) that allocates a fixed number of hours based on passing a test (typically 70% or higher). The fixed number of hours will be recorded in the state data management system in the 'proxy hours' field when the student passes the test.

- **Teacher Verification Model** is where a teacher, upon completion of state-required training, can use their professional judgment and prior experience to determine the time required for students to complete assigned online work (if the assigned work does not have its own means to track time). The estimated hours to complete the assigned work will be recorded

in the state data management system in the 'proxy hours' field for students who show evidence of satisfactory completion.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, a digital component is not necessary. Hard-copy assignments, such as worksheets, may earn proxy hours for students who do not have access to technology.

Setting Up Classes in the State Data Management System

When setting up a new class in the state data management system, pay close attention to the 'class format' which impacts the type of attendance data that can be entered for that class. All participants must have at least 12 hours of contact with the program* before they can be counted for Federal reporting purposes. The class format options** are as follows:

- **Blended Learning** – used for classes that combine synchronous live instruction (contact hours) and asynchronous learning (proxy hours) to be completed outside of class time.

  In-person contact time is not required to obtain the initial 12 hours of contact.Contact hours for distance learners can be a combination of actual contact and/or contact through telephone, video, teleconference, or online communication, where participant and program staff can interact and through which participant identity is verifiable.

  ***Distance Education & Face-to-Face class format options will be visible but should not be selected.*

Monitoring

All hours entered into the state data management system must adhere to Arizona state guidelines and will be **subject to audit** by the Educational Technology and/or the Program Operations and Compliance units. It is imperative that all hours entered into the state data management system have documentation to substantiate the amount reported. That may include sign-in/sign-out sheets, online curriculum usage reports, evaluations of specific online curricula, and teachers' written notes. All documentation must be kept in an auditable format, either hard-copy or digital, and be available upon request by ADE-AES.

Acceptable Evidence of Contact Hours (synchronous instruction)

- **Direct instruction (live in-person) -** Sign-in/sign-out sheets recording student attendance hours must exactly match student attendance hours that are entered into the state data management system. If a student signature is missing for either the sign-in or sign-out field, attendance for that student on that day cannot be entered into the state data management system until their signature is obtained. These attendance sheets must be kept on file for a minimum of 5 years after the current grant contract ends.
- **Instruction at a distance (live virtually) -** Evidence for these hours will include documents verifying interactions such as webinar attendance logs, chat logs, or written records detailing specific time/date and length of contact. Records and logs must be kept on file for a minimum of 5 years after the current grant contract ends.

Acceptable Evidence of Proxy Hours (asynchronous instruction)

- **Clock Time Model and Learner Mastery Model -** Records will be audited by comparing reports generated by the specific state-approved curriculum with data entered into the state data management system's 'proxy hours' field. The data in the generated reports must reflect the proxy hours entered into the data management system. Exceptions must be justified. Generated reports must be kept on file and provided upon request for a minimum of 5 years after the current grant contract ends.

- **Teacher Verification Model -** Records will be audited by reviewing evidence of:
  - instructor completion of the Blended Learning Certification course (found on the EMS),
  - a submitted Resource Evaluation Form for the source(s) of the earned proxy hours entered into the data management system,
  - and evidence of the student's satisfactory completion of the assignment.

  Evidence must be kept on file for a minimum of 5 years after the current grant contract ends.

Assessment

WIOA compliance requires all state-funded adult education programs to administer all assessments to learners, including participants enrolled in Distance/Virtual Learning **in a proctored environment, either remote or in-person. Assessments must be administered by trained test administrators and must follow the process outlined in the Assessment Policy for PY 2021-2022.** Assessments that are not conducted by ADE/ASE-trained test administrators in a secure environment, **either in-person or remote,** are not allowed for NRS reporting. **An exception to this is establishing a provisional Educational Functioning Level (EFL) using an approved provisional assessment.** All valid assessments administered to WIOA Title II participants must be entered in the State data management system.

An initial assessment (given within the first 12 hours of attendance) and progress tests in the subject(s) that instruction will be given, to determine the learner's Measurable Skill Gain (MSG) following these guidelines:

- **TABE 11 & 12 Online**
  - **ABE levels 1-4 -** Plan to progress test once a student has more than 40 hours of contact and at least one month has passed since their prior test.

  - **ASE levels 5 & 6 -** Plan to progress test once a student has more than 30 hours of contact and at least one month has passed since their prior test.

- **TABE CLAS-E Online**
  - **All ELAA levels -** Plan to progress test once a student has more than 50 hours of contact and at least one month has passed since their prior test.

Please see the Assessment Policy for additional information regarding remote proctoring.

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Note: Due to remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic, we are more easily accessible via email than by phone.

Glossary

Blended Learning - Learning that connects content via two different learning modalities (contact hours + proxy hours).

Clock Time Model - Assigns proxy contact hours based on the elapsed time that a learner is connected to, or engaged in, an online or stand-alone software program that tracks time.

Curricular Resources - Learning material aligned to the state's adult education content standards that are used by instructors and students.

Digital Literacy - the skills associated with-
(A) using technology to enable users to find, evaluate, organize, create, and communicate information; and
(B) developing digital citizenship and the responsible use of technology.

Instruction at a Distance - Any substantial synchronous live contact made with a student that supports their success from a distance to include but not limited to: delivering instruction, tutoring, mentoring, and motivating. Professional judgement is used to determine whether the contact was substantive enough to document in the state data management system.

Learner Mastery Model - Assigns a fixed number of proxy contact hours based on the learner passing a test on the content of each lesson.

Proxy Hours - Any out-of-class (asynchronous) hours of instruction adhering to either the Clock Time Model, Teacher Verification Model, or the Learner Mastery Model.

Teacher Verification Model (TVM)- Assigns a predetermined number of proxy contact hours for each assignment based on teacher determination of the extent to which a learner engaged in, or completed, the assignment.

Virtual/Distance Learning (DL) Students - For federal reporting purposes, a student is classified as a DL student if over 50% of attendance hours are 'proxy hours,' as opposed to 'contact hours.' Student status as a classroom or DL student may change at any point based on the percentage of proxy hours. Both the student's face-to-face and proxy hours will be included in the annual NRS report, according to the NRS Guidelines for Distance Education. Final determination of a student's status is determined at the end of the fiscal year for reporting purposes.

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Approved Online Curricula

This list is subject to change as curricula get added/removed based on its alignment to NRS requirements, the Arizona Adult Education Content Standards, and other criteria.

Learner Mastery Model			
Curriculum	**Proxy Hours Criteria**	**Proxy Hours Reporting**	**Validation by**
NROC LMS Courses	Learners must meet a 70% proficiency or greater for all unit quizzes to earn reportable hours.	Each Topic: 0.5 hours/topic	NROC & ADE/AES
Reading Skills for Today's Adults	Learners must complete the supplemental activities and earn a 70% or higher on the assessment. Teachers will keep records of students' work demonstrating completion and mastery.	1.5 hours/passage using PDFs Each Passage includes completion of: ➔ Passage reading ➔ Pre-questions ➔ Post-questions and ➔ Supplemental activity OR 0.75 hours/passage using Wakelet Each Passage includes completion of: ➔ Passage reading ➔ Quizlet vocabulary activities ➔ Google Form of comprehension questions	Literacy Minnesota & ADE/AES
USA Learns	Learners must meet a 70% proficiency or greater for all units to earn reportable hours.	Course 1: 3 hours/unit Course 2: 3 hours/unit Practice English & Reading:1 hour/unit USA Learns Citizenship:1 hour/unit	California Department of Education (CDE) & ADE/AES

Clock Time Model
All of the below software utilizes 'Time On Task' to report proxy hours. Links included for information only.

ALEKS (MHC) - https://www.aleks.com/

Arizona Career Readiness Credential (ACRC) - https://acrc.az.gov/

Aztec Software - http://www.aztecsoftware.com/products-services/high-school-equivalency

BurlingtonEnglish - https://www.burlingtonenglish.com/

Edmentum (Previously named PLATO) - https://www.edmentum.com/

EdReady - https://nroc.org/what-we-offer/edready/

ESL ReadingSmart - http://welcome.eslreadingsmart.com/

Essential Education - https://www.essentialed.com/products/

Khan Academy - https://www.khanacademy.org

Learning Upgrade -

McGraw-Hill HSE Achieve - https://www.mheducation.com/prek-12/segment/adulted.html

Odysseyware - https://www.odysseyware.com/

Rosetta Stone - https://www.rosettastone.com/k12/home/

SkillsTutor - https://www.paxenpublishing.com/skillstutor/

Teacher Verification Model
Any other online curricular resources that have been vetted by an instructor who has completed the required ADE-AES Blended Learning Certification course can be utilized for proxy hours. Curricular resources can include existing resources found through internet searches, resources compiled into a single location within a learning management system (LMS) or webpage, and resources created by the instructor.

Appendix A: Digital Literacy Guidance

The resources below are in response to the National Skills Coalition's "Digital Skills in Pandemic Times: How State Policymakers Can Help Workers and Businesses Adapt in a Changing Economy" recommendation document.

1. ***Issue guidance on how state agencies and local partners can support digital inclusion via existing federal programs:***
   - Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds can be used for digital inclusion per the [Office of Family Assistance Q & A](#).
   - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training (SNAP E&T) funds can be used for digital inclusion per [guidance in April, 2020](#). Reach out to the Food and [Nutrition Service (FNS) Southwest Regional Office](#) for more information.
   - The U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration (ETA) has clarified that federal workforce grant recipients may use grant funds "to purchase supplies[1] or equipment[2] to assist in providing program services and training in a virtual setting" per [guidance in Spring 2020](#).
   - Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funds may be used for digital literacy per [Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE)](#).

2. ***Encourage the use of existing Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funds and state adult education funds for digital skill-building***
   - Purchase [Northstar Digital Literacy](#) for program.
   - Pay teachers to develop lessons and/or professional development that incorporate the International Society for Technology and Education (ISTE) [Standards for leadership, teachers, and students](#).
   - To address equity, purchase devices such as the RACHEL, Study Buddy, or other tools found on the [Digital Tools for Different Access Scenarios](#) for those without internet/device access.
   - Purchase assistive technology and accessories such as keyboards for phone, smart pens, screen readers, etc.

3. ***Ensure that digital literacy skill-building is an explicitly permitted use of state Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) funds.***
   - Collaborate with Title I Partners to ensure digital literacy is specifically addressed.

4. ***Facilitate partnerships between education and workforce providers and the public library system to support digital skill-building.***
   - State Land Department's Statewide [Map of Public Wifi Hotspots](#)
   - A Tucson Based Group is Mapping [Wifi and Food Distribution Sites](#) for Their Communities:
   - AZ Library Wifi Hotspot Lending Program Update: recently awarded funding for 16 libraries to start or continue lending programs, and with the CARES Act stimulus

funding are in the process of awarding additional funding for hotspot lending. Reach out to your local library to see if they are a participant of this program.
- Arizona Libraries Digital Inclusion Resource Hub
- AZ Library Tech Access Phoneline: Get free tech help with anything from computer issues, finding free wifi hotspots, to using your smartphone to access email and other apps.

5. ***Analyze existing datasets to understand whether existing digital learning methods produce equitable outcomes for learners.***
   - Local providers are required to explain how they plan to analyze the success of digital literacy instruction in the Digital Literacy section of the AES-required Technology Plan submission.

[1]Definition: Supplies via Electronic Code of Federal Regulations
[2]Definition: Equipment via Electronic Code of Federal Regulation