



Statement Ending COVID-Related Exemption from NRS Testing

August 11, 2021

Since May 1, 2020 Adult Education programs in Minnesota have been able to use the COVID EFL Exemption in SiD to enroll new students and record their contact hours without administering an NRS-approved pre-test (CASAS, TABE or BEST Plus). Because federal accountability targets and testing expectations continue and because restrictions related to the pandemic have significantly decreased, including the end of the peacetime emergency declared by the governor of Minnesota, **the COVID EFL Exemption option will be ending during the current 21-22 program year.**

Timeline for Ending of COVID-EFL Exemption in SiD:

The ending of the COVID-related exemption will follow this timeline:

August 1, 2021: All Adult Education programs are strongly encouraged to begin planning for NRS pre-testing of all new students, using either in-person or remote testing options. Programs should also begin to plan for NRS pre-testing for any currently enrolled students who have the COVID EFL Exemption.

August 1 - September 30, 2021: The COVID EFL Exemption may continue to be assigned to new students, if it is not possible to administer an NRS pre-test.

October 1, 2021: The COVID EFL Exemption can no longer be assigned to new students. After this point, SiD will allow no more than 12 contact hours to be entered for a new student unless they have a valid NRS pre-test.

October 1, 2021 - April 30, 2022: Programs may continue to serve students who enrolled prior to October 1 and have the COVID EFL Exemption in their record. Contact hours will not be blocked after 12 for these students, so attendance can continue to be entered as normal. The expectation is that programs will work to administer an NRS pre-test to these students as early as possible during this time period.

If a student in this scenario does not receive an NRS pre-test before April 30, their contact hours between May 1, 2021 and April 30, 2022 will not count for federal ABE funding for fiscal year 2023. Their hours will still count for state ABE funding for fiscal year 2023.

July 1, 2022 and beyond: The COVID EFL Exemption will no longer be allowable for any student, new or continuing, and going forward all students must have a valid NRS assessment. If a continuing student does not have a valid NRS pre-test on July 1, 2022 then only 12 contact hours can be entered for that student until a pre-test is administered.

Questions?

If you have questions about this memo, please contact Jodi Versaw, ABE Program Quality Specialist at the Minnesota Department of Education, at jodi.versaw@state.mn.us.

If you have any questions about SiD, the state ABE database, please contact the SiD Support Team at SiDsupport@literacymn.org.

If you have any questions about NRS testing, please contact the Adult Education Assessment Support Team at martha.olsen@gmail.com