

# National External Diploma Program in Virginia

## Guidelines



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## The National External Diploma Program® – Overview

The National External Diploma Program (NEDP®) is an approved adult secondary option in Virginia. The program, which leads to an adult high school diploma, is administered by Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems (CASAS). The Virginia Department of Education's (VDOE) Office of Adult Education and Literacy (OAEL) works in collaboration with CASAS and the Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center (VALRC) to provide technical assistance and training support to organizations that operate NEDP programs throughout the state.

Adults who have acquired high school-level skills through life experiences demonstrate their abilities in a series of simulations that parallel job and life situations. All NEDP clients undergo evaluations against a criterion of excellence instead of through comparison to others, take responsibility for acquiring instruction by using existing community resources, and achieve mastery of all the competencies required as well as an occupational or specialized skill.

This guide is designed to serve as a resource for NEDP programs supported by Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) funding and General Adult Education (GAE) state funding, including continuing NEDP programs, programs considering starting an NEDP program, and programs that are in the initial stages of NEDP training and implementation. This guide will be revised as necessary to reflect program updates and upgrades as delineated by CASAS policy and procedures. Additional information on the NEDP can be found at [www.nedp.org](http://www.nedp.org).

### Components of the NEDP

1. **Diagnostic** - Clients demonstrate that they possess high school-level skills through standardized assessments in writing, reading, and math. They also self-assess their familiarity with the skills measured in the Generalized Assessment portion of the program and their ability to use technology, identify an individualized competency (skill that shows their readiness to transition to employment, training, or higher education after graduation), and complete the Occupational Information Network (O\*NET) Interest Profiler (IP).
2. **Generalized Assessment** - Participants demonstrate their high school-level abilities by applying them in simulated, academic, workplace, and life contexts. They must demonstrate mastery of 70 competencies in three foundational content areas and seven functional life skill content areas, all of which are aligned to the College and Career Readiness Standards.
3. **Individualized Assessment** - Clients have several options for proving that they possess a college- or career-ready competency such as verification of employment, possession of an occupational license, proof of recent career training, etc.
4. **Portfolio Review** - When a competency area has been found to fully demonstrate mastery, that area is reviewed by another certified NEDP staff member who verifies successful demonstration.

## Characteristics of Successful NEDP Clients:

1. Are at least 18 years old and not enrolled in public school,
2. Possess strong non-academic skills such as self-direction, time management, and resourcefulness,
3. Can demonstrate high school-level academic skills,
4. Prefer showing what they know and can do through performance rather than by testing
5. Prefer flexibility in scheduling in-office meetings,
6. Tend to perform better when activities are not timed,
7. Have experience with internet use and basic understanding of word processing, spreadsheets, and presentation software,
8. Are high school equivalency completers (adults who have earned a General Educational Development [GED], High School Equivalency Test [HiSET], or Test Assessing Secondary Completion [TASC] credential and want to earn a diploma through NEDP).

Throughout the National External Diploma Program, adults are assessed in academic, work readiness, and life skills including:

Foundation Skills and Core Subjects	21 <sup>st</sup> Century Themes in Context	Self-Efficacy Skills
Reading and Writing	Cultural Literacy	Self-Assessment
Mathematics	Civic Literacy and Community Participation	Learning to Learn
Information and Communication Technology	Health Literacy	Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
Listening and Speaking	Financial Literacy and Consumer Awareness	Goal Setting and Time Management
Media Literacy	21 <sup>st</sup> Century Workplace	Self-Direction
Geography, History, and Science	Learning to Learn	Working Independently

## Eligible NEDP Providers

Adult education providers, including local adult education programs, community-based organizations, American Job Centers, work force centers, libraries, and community colleges, may establish an NEDP Site, providing that a local school division formally agrees to issue an adult high school diploma to those successfully completing the requirements of the National External Diploma Program.

Prospective sites must complete the steps outlined in the “Becoming an NEDP Provider” section.

## State Support

Section [8VAC20-30-20](#) (Minimum Requirements for Adult High School Programs) of the *Virginia Administrative Code* states that “An adult high school diploma shall be awarded to an adult student who demonstrates through applied performance assessment full mastery of the National External Diploma Program Competencies, version 5.0, January 2013, a CASAS program, as promulgated by the American Council on Education and validated and endorsed by the U.S. Department of Education.”

## **Program Ownership**

The NEDP is a program of CASAS that is the policy-making and administrative body for the NEDP. The federally registered service mark, NEDP, is owned by CASAS and may not be used except by those certified to provide NEDP. The CASAS is the sole owner of all copyrights and other intellectual property embodied in the National External Diploma Program and NEDP materials.

## **NEDP Implementation**

### **Local School Division Approval - Diploma Granting Authority**

New NEDP Sites can be established by a variety of providers statewide, including local adult education programs, community-based organizations, American Job Centers, work force centers, libraries, and community colleges.

New NEDP Sites must establish a formal partnership with an accredited Virginia diploma-granting school division that agrees to award an adult high school diploma to NEDP graduates according to the following:

1. A local diploma-granting agency (usually a local school board) must commit to grant an adult high school diploma to NEDP graduates who demonstrate all NEDP competencies with one hundred percent mastery. A Letter of Agreement between the agency and the local diploma-granting agency must be sent to CASAS prior to attending New Site Training (see Appendix A).
2. An adult high school diploma will be awarded to graduates of the NEDP. This diploma is a Virginia accredited diploma.
3. For all NEDP graduates, the accredited diploma-granting school division must follow the records retention procedures specified by the state and/or local guidelines. Accredited Virginia high school diploma-granting agencies must store copies of transcripts in accordance with state and/or local guidelines.

## **Implementation Policies and Procedures**

The NEDP is a competency-based assessment program that must be implemented in its entirety to ensure its validity. No alterations, additions, or deletions to the program are allowed by CASAS. Each site within Virginia must use the NEDP in its entirety. An implementation checklist can be found in Appendix B.

The NEDP is administered in accordance with CASAS guidelines, the national standards outlined in the NEDP New Staff Training Manuals as well as in the official NEDP Policy Manual, NEDP Program Manuals, NEDP Policy Memoranda, and other CASAS written directives. Advisors, Assessors, and Site Administrators are required to implement the program according to the guidelines established in these documents. In addition, NEDP Sites within Virginia are required to follow local and state policy and regulatory requirements relating to safety; security; documentation maintenance; and protection of private, sensitive, and personally identifiable information.

## Becoming an NEDP Provider: Site Requirements and Guidelines

### Preliminary Phase:

1. Research NEDP through presentations, Virginia NEDP Guidelines, and the NEDP Web site ([www.nedp.org](http://www.nedp.org)).
2. Contact the VALRC NEDP Specialist to schedule a preliminary consultation meeting. To prepare for this meeting.
  - a. Begin discussions with diploma-issuing school division(s).
  - b. Gather program data to prepare for a conversation about a sustainability plan (see Appendix B).
3. The superintendent or designee of the school division agreeing to issue the adult diploma to NEDP completers will formalize this agreement in writing (see sample agreement in Appendix A). This agreement must be sent to CASAS and copies sent to the VALRC NEDP Specialist and the OAEL Adult Secondary Specialist.
4. Ascertain that CASAS’s site requirements have been met, and submit the following to CASAS:
  - a. Completed “Information Required from New NEDP Agency Prior to Training” document
  - b. Signed site license agreement
  - c. Site license fee
5. Upon final approval from CASAS, the prospective site may proceed with planning for implementation training.

### Implementation Training Phase

1. Request New Site Implementation Training.
2. While awaiting training, complete the following online CASAS training modules at [www.casas.org](http://www.casas.org) to certify to administer CASAS tests. There is no cost for these modules.
  - a. Appraisal Training
  - b. Implementation Training (*Beyond Implementation* training is for recertification every two years after the initial appraisal and implementation trainings)
  - c. At least two staff at each site must be trained to assess the CASAS Writing Prompt. It is recommended that three or more staff members certify to assess the written prompt; they do not have to be NEDP Advisors or Assessors.
3. All NEDP trainees complete the following training modules on an “as needed” basis.

Training	Time/Format	Training Objectives
Module One - Overview and Client Intake	Three hours, webinar or face-to-face	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the history and philosophy of NEDP</li> <li>• Appropriately use NEDP terminology</li> <li>• Become familiar with the NEDP program model</li> <li>• Distinguish roles of NEDP staff and certification requirements</li> </ul>

Training	Time/Format	Training Objectives
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Log in to the NEDP online assessment system and set up sites and staff and enroll clients</li> <li>• Conduct client intake activities, including the NEDP Information Session</li> </ul>
Module Two - Diagnostic Phase	Three hours, webinar or face-to-face	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Locate and use NEDP implementation materials used in diagnostic phase</li> <li>• Articulate the intent of the NEDP Individual Competency framework to assist with client choice</li> <li>• Use NEDP software to document completion of diagnostic scores</li> </ul>
Modules Three and Four - Generalized Assessment and T Trainer	One-day face-to-face training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define Performance Assessment</li> <li>• Use NEDP software to administer Generalized Assessment</li> <li>• Use NEDP software to document Individualized Assessment</li> <li>• Build skills in consensus moderation</li> <li>• Practice T Trainer Competency evaluation</li> <li>• Prepare for In-Office appointment</li> <li>• Use NEDP software to administer Generalized Assessment</li> <li>• Continue practice of T Trainer Competency evaluation</li> <li>• Continue to build skills in consensus moderation</li> </ul>
Module Five - Post-Task Assessment and Portfolio Review	Three hours, webinar or face-to-face	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to build skills in consensus moderation</li> <li>• Conduct Post-Task Assessment</li> <li>• Prepare for Portfolio Review</li> <li>• Review Advisor/Assessor roles</li> <li>• Complete Advisor/Assessor certification requirements</li> </ul>

## NEDP Site and Training Fees

Fees for establishment and management of the NEDP program sites are the responsibility of the program providing the NEDP. Those sites eligible for federal and state funding may use funds (including AEFLA and GAE) and program income in accordance with policy, regulations, and guidelines contained within the OAEL *Operational Guidance Manual for Virginia Adult Education and Literacy Programs*. For specific guidance visit the OAEL Web site at [http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/adulted/program\\_policy\\_guidance/index.shtml](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/adulted/program_policy_guidance/index.shtml).

All NEDP sites are required to pay an annual site fee established by CASAS. Site fees provide for national CASAS program oversight. All NEDP sites must sign an official NEDP Site Agreement each program year and pay the annual site fee to remain active. Contact CASAS (858-292-2900) for current fees.

The VALRC will provide training for new staff in existing programs each year. For this training, the VALRC will cover the cost of the trainers and the training site. It will be each program's responsibility to cover costs associated with individual staff members, including purchase of training manuals, travel, meals, overnight stays, and compensation for staff members.

New sites that do not yet have two staff members certified to score the writing diagnostic instrument may have the first five writing prompt responses scored by certified state trainers at no additional fee.

The first portfolio review for each newly trained Assessor must be conducted by a certified state trainer. The program is responsible for the cost of this review.

## Staff Requirements

The CASAS requires the following to become and remain an active NEDP provider:

1. A minimum of three Advisor/Assessors are required to be trained and certified for each new site; however, five Advisors/Assessors are recommended so that possible staff turnover will not necessitate an additional training within the first year.
2. One Advisor/Assessor will be designated as the NEDP coordinator and lead Assessor. Often it is desirable, but not required, that this person be a full-time employee in order to meet the responsibilities and demands of the program. Other staff may be part-time employees, depending on the projected client enrollment.
3. Each NEDP provider in Virginia is required to designate a primary and secondary contact for communication with CASAS. All policy and procedure notices and requests for information will be submitted to the primary and secondary contacts. The primary and secondary contacts have the responsibility to share all information provided by CASAS with other NEDP staff, especially those items pertaining to changes or clarification of policies and procedures.
4. All Advisors/Assessors must hold at least a baccalaureate degree and be able to evaluate writing and critical thinking demonstrations.



Because NEDP is an assessment program, Advisors/Assessors may not instruct any candidate assigned to them in the Diagnostic or Generalized Assessment Phases of the program.

5. Staff hiring must be done in accordance with all Virginia and local requirements. In the event that three trained Advisor/Assessors are not on staff, CASAS should be notified and an agreement should be reached on how to continue. Possible remedies may include:
  - a. Operate temporarily with less than three trained staff until a new staff member(s) can be trained. The client portfolios can be reviewed by staff from another site or, in some cases, the staff may serve as both Advisor and Portfolio Reviewer to the same client; however, prior approval from CASAS/NEDP is required.
  - b. Form a partnership with another NEDP Site to help provide support to satisfy all the requirements of the program.

To become a certified Advisor/Assessor, an NEDP Assessor-in-training must:

1. Completely evaluate a portfolio on which the Assessor-in-training served as Assessor and have this portfolio successfully reviewed by a State Trainer, and
2. Receive recommendation from the State Trainer that the Assessor-in-training be certified. In some cases, a review of a second portfolio will be required before certification is recommended.

## Facilities

The NEDP diagnostic tools and assessments must be administered in accordance with prescribed testing procedures and under the most favorable conditions possible. The NEDP Site requires suitable facilities to ensure confidentiality and privacy during meetings with Advisors and Assessors and during the administration of various NEDP instruments.

Suitable facilities include, but are not limited to, the following features:

1. Office space with private areas for meetings and testing.
2. Office entrances and meeting spaces that allow for client confidentiality.
3. Office space that is structured so that Assessors/Advisors can meet with and monitor the assessment of at least three clients simultaneously.
4. Office space that is quiet and has good lighting and ventilation.
5. Offices that have secure storage space for NEDP materials, client portfolios, and other files, equipment, and instruments.

## Prerequisites for Client Enrollment into NEDP

An Information Session, conducted by intake staff or an NEDP Advisor, outlining the requirements of the program prior to beginning the NEDP is required of all participants in the program. The NEDP Web site ([www.nedp.org](http://www.nedp.org)) contains information session resources, including flow charts and an outline of the information session.

The CASAS and OAEL strongly encourage agencies to administer the CASAS Employability Competency System (ECS), Form 130 Appraisal, to ensure that the level C and D tests given in the Diagnostic Phase are appropriate for the client. Clients who score lower than the C or D level on the appraisal in both Math and Reading are not eligible to enter NEDP. These clients should be pre-tested at the appropriate level and referred to a skill-building Adult Basic Education (ABE) program until they are performing at the C or D level in both Math and Reading.

Clients whose appraisal scores are at the C or D level in Reading and Math may be entered into NEDP to begin the Diagnostic Phase of the program.

Note that CASAS states that appraisal tests are not appropriate substitutes for NEDP Diagnostic instruments measuring basic skills in Math, Reading, and Writing. Sites must use the approved appraisal/placement assessments required within the state.

The appraisal may be waived for clients who transfer from another instructional program (i.e., High School Equivalency or ABE) and have valid, current test scores of 8<sup>th</sup> grade or higher in both Reading and Math in another state-approved testing system.

For more information on CASAS Appraisals, please review the NEDP Policy Manual.

## Diagnostic Phase

The Diagnostic Phase of the NEDP introduces the client to the skills needed for assessment and allows clients to evaluate personal strengths and weaknesses with a prescriptive analysis of the skills needing improvement. In keeping with the open information philosophy of the program, the Diagnostic Phase of the program informs the applicant of all competencies and skills measured in Generalized Assessment along with the level of preparation necessary for success. In addition, the applicant's occupational and specialized skills are explored so that an appropriate recommendation for training or other individualized skill demonstration can be made.

During the Diagnostic Phase, the client is assigned to an NEDP Advisor who administers all diagnostic instruments as outlined in the NEDP Training Materials, the NEDP Policies and Procedures Manual, and specifically in the NEDP Test Administration Manual for NEDP Diagnostics. Diagnostic instruments may be administered in any order chosen by the advisor and client. The client is required to complete all open and closed instruments in the Diagnostic Phase prior to beginning Generalized Assessment. These include:

1. The NEDP Registration Agreement, along with the state, regional, or local intake or enrollment form
2. Score of 230 or higher on CASAS Math form 35C, 36C, 37D, or 38D
3. Score of 236 or higher on CASAS Reading form 85C, 86C, 185C, 186C, 187D, or 188D
4. Writing diagnostic with a score of three or higher by two certified writing Assessors
5. Self-Assessment of Competencies (SAC)
6. Self-Assessment of Technology Skills instrument
7. Individualized Competency Diagnostic Instrument (ICDI) - client and Advisor should determine the client's individualized competency
8. The Occupational Information Network (O\*NET) Interest Profiler (IP) and paperwork

Even clients who perform at the C or D level on the appraisal may not earn the necessary cut scores on the first attempt at a diagnostic test; however, a high appraisal score makes it likely that the client will need only minor remediation to achieve the cut score. If basic skills are found to be deficient, a competency form is completed to identify areas of weakness, and a referral to an appropriate learning resource can be made at this time.

The recommended time interval before retesting is dependent upon a number of factors, including the client's overall test performance, the amount of time the client has to devote to remediation activities, and other factors. To increase the chances for success, the client should learn the identified skills before retesting. After a second unsuccessful attempt at a diagnostic test, CASAS recommends that the client wait for three months from the date of the first test administration to be retested. This will allow time for more intensive remediation. The advisor should alternate test forms so that the candidate is not retesting with the same test form.

## Generalized Assessment Phase

During the Generalized Assessment Phase, clients are required to demonstrate 100 percent mastery of 70 high school-level competencies determined by CASAS. These competencies are demonstrated by a series of computer-delivered assignments, completed at home, and verified through in-office evaluation meetings with an NEDP-trained Assessor. The client must also demonstrate an occupational or advanced academic skill (individualized competency).

An NEDP Assessor activates the Web-based competency areas for the client, meets with the client for In-Office Checks, evaluates the competencies, and gives feedback to the client during the Generalized Assessment Phase. The NEDP Assessor may not concurrently serve as an instructor or tutor to a client and may not be the same person who served as that client's Advisor during the Diagnostic Phase of NEDP. Each Assessor must administer and evaluate the Assessments according to the established national criteria found in the Generalized Assessment Manual and the assessment guidance pop-ups in the Web-based program.

The Generalized Assessment and Individualized Assessment criteria are detailed in in the NEDP Training Materials, the NEDP Policies and Procedures Manual, and specifically in the NEDP Program Manuals (Generalized Assessment Manual and Individualized Assessment Manual).

If the client does not demonstrate all competencies on his or her first attempt, additional opportunities to demonstrate the competencies are provided during Post-Task Assessment (PTA). The Assessor follows the guidelines specified in the NEDP Program Manuals to ensure that the client achieves 100 percent mastery of all of the competencies in any competency area before submitting that competency area for portfolio review. Virginia NEDP programs may submit competency areas that have been found to completely demonstrate mastery for review without waiting for all competency areas to be completed.

## **Portfolio Review**

Portfolio review is an integral part of NEDP reliability. The purpose of the portfolio review is to provide an independent validation that all competencies are demonstrated according to the criteria established in the NEDP Generalized Assessment Manual. The portfolio review also ensures that the entire portfolio is complete, including documentation of all diagnostic instruments and the Individualized Assessment.

## **Portfolio Reviewer Qualifications**

The portfolio reviewer must be able to complete a “cold” portfolio review, evaluating each answer as though it has not already been assessed as demonstrating mastery. Therefore, the reviewer:

1. May not be the Assessor who completed the Generalized Assessment Phase with the client portfolio
2. May not be the Advisor who completed the Diagnostic Phase of the client portfolio unless approved by CASAS
3. Should not be a person who has served as an instructor or tutor for the client
4. Must be a certified Assessor for whom at least one completed portfolio has been verified by a state NEDP trainer

It is not recommended that programs designate a person whose only responsibility is to conduct portfolio reviews. If the primary role of a staff member is portfolio review, CASAS recommends that this staff member also serve in the roles of Advisor and Assessor for a minimum of one client per year. This effort is intended to assist in keeping skill levels and a thorough understanding of the program in its entirety current and effective.

## **Portfolio Review Procedures**

Portfolio review for each competency area may be conducted when all of the activities and In-Office Checks in that area have been assessed as demonstrating mastery. Additionally, demonstration of the individualized competency and completion of all diagnostic instruments must be verified before the entire portfolio is deemed complete and the client is eligible for graduation.

## **Portfolio Review for New Staff at New Agencies**

The first portfolio review for each Assessor-in-training must be conducted by an NEDP-certified State Trainer. After the first portfolio has been successfully completed, the newly-trained Assessor will become certified and may conduct portfolio reviews for other Assessors and may have eligible Portfolio Reviewers validate subsequent portfolios.

## **Portfolio Review for New Staff at Existing Agencies**

The first portfolio completed by a new Assessor-in-training must be reviewed by an NEDP-certified State Trainer, but it may be reviewed first by an experienced, certified staff member prior to sending it out for the external review. When an internal NEDP staff has conducted a preliminary review, given feedback, and found that all items demonstrate mastery, the portfolio of the new Assessor-in-training is then sent to an NEDP-certified State Trainer who is external to that agency. This process provides feedback to both the new staff member completing Generalized Assessment and to the agency regarding portfolio review procedures. In addition, an Assessor-in-training at an existing site may conduct a portfolio review, but an experienced staff member must also conduct the portfolio review and validate the new staff member's assessment. This allows the client to receive one coordinated review. After the first portfolio has been successfully completed, the newly-trained Assessor will become certified and may conduct portfolio reviews for other Assessors and may have eligible Portfolio Reviewers validate subsequent portfolios.

## **Portfolio Review for Experienced Staff at Existing Agencies**

The portfolio is submitted for review by competency area to another certified Assessor.

Any items found by the Reviewer to be deficient in demonstrating mastery will be marked as ND (not demonstrated) and returned to the Assessor, who will provide feedback to the client and instructions to redo any required items. The Assessor will then re-evaluate the work and submit back to the Reviewer for final review. This process continues until every item has been found to demonstrate mastery by the Portfolio Reviewer.

## **Mediation and Consensus**

When a client response requires further discussion between the Assessor and Reviewer, the Reviewer marks "mediation needed" instead of assessing the item as D or ND. The Assessor and Reviewer then discuss whether the client's response fulfills the requirements of the NEDP guidelines to demonstrate mastery, and a demonstration status is jointly determined.

If the Assessor and Reviewer disagree on whether a client's response demonstrates mastery after an attempt at mediation, the NEDP staff should review the item and reach group consensus as to whether the item does or does not demonstrate mastery. If the group cannot reach consensus, the NEDP staff at CASAS should be contacted.

Once the entire portfolio is determined to be complete (including the diagnostic instruments and individualized competency), the Portfolio Reviewer signs and dates the Portfolio Review Form. The client provides documentation of how his or her name should appear on the diploma, and the Site Coordinator is informed that the client is eligible for graduation.

## Program Completion

After all requirements for the program are met, it is the Site Coordinator's responsibility to ensure that the portfolio is complete and that all the following required items are stored as part of the NEDP graduate's permanent record:

1. ID verification – The person receiving the diploma is the person who completed the program.
2. Transcript – An official, signed copy of the Virginia NEDP transcript should be printed and stored with the client's record. The Virginia NEDP transcript, modified to include site and diploma-issuing agency information, is provided by CASAS.
3. Diploma – An official, signed copy of the diploma should be printed and stored with the client's record.
4. Outcome Data – The client is marked as graduated in the NEDP Web-based system, with the graduation date and any follow-up goals (employment, training, etc.) that the client has achieved.

See "Record Retention Requirements" for additional information on retaining client graduation records.

## Accommodations

When administering NEDP assessments, NEDP Sites are required to follow the NEDP Assessment Accommodations Policy as documented. The complete NEDP Accommodations Policy is published under separate cover on the [NEDP Web site](#).

Assessment accommodations provide an opportunity for all test takers to demonstrate skills and abilities. The accommodations alter test administration procedures without changing what the test measures. The policy guidelines address methods for administering NEDP assessments using accommodations for clients with documented disabilities.

The NEDP Assessment Accommodations Policy provides NEDP applicants and candidates with guidelines for using assessment accommodations in compliance with the *Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)* of 1990. In no way do the guidelines diminish the high standards set for the NEDP but are intended to improve access to adult programs and achieve employment outcomes for learners with disabilities. Other legislation addresses provisions related to assessment accommodations for learners with disabilities, including the accountability standards outlined in the *1998 Workforce Investment Act (WIA)* that incorporate the *Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998*. Section 504 in the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973*, the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*, and the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* reauthorized in 2004 all ensure equal access for all learners in education programs, including learners with disabilities.

## Records Retention

Each NEDP provider must follow these guidelines for record retention:

1. Retention of records must meet the requirements of state and local laws, policies, and procedures.
2. Records of applicants and candidates must be kept confidential.
3. Graduates' permanent records, as defined in the NEDP Program Manuals, must be maintained at the site permanently after graduation according to NEDP national policy. Sites must also abide by any records retention procedures specified by local, state, and/or federal guidelines.
4. If an applicant or candidate exits NEDP before earning a diploma, the client's portfolio shall be closed and maintained for a period of time that is consistent with state and/or federal policy.
5. Although NEDP providers may decide when to disable a client's log-in to the Web-based system and when to exit a client from the system, it is recommended that after 90 days of inactivity, the client will be made unable to access the system before meeting with the Assessor for a reexamination of programmatic expectations and client goals.

## Advisor/Assessor Roles, Responsibilities, and Certification Requirements

### Advisor/Assessor Certification

To become a certified Advisor/Assessor for the NEDP, the following requirements must be met:

1. Possess a baccalaureate degree or higher.
2. Complete all four modules of the NEDP New Staff Training.
3. Complete any additional training sessions designated by CASAS (e.g., Initial Appraisal and Implementation test certification).
4. Have one client portfolio (assessed as completely demonstrated) verified by CASAS-certified State Trainer.
5. Serve in the role of advisor with a minimum of one client and complete the Diagnostic Phase.
6. Serve in the role of Assessor with a minimum of one client and complete the Generalized Assessment Phase, including all follow-up after the portfolio review.
7. Satisfy any additional requirements of Advisors/Assessors specified by the state or local school divisions.
8. Fulfill all the responsibilities of Advisors/Assessors outlined in the NEDP training manuals.

In addition, CASAS recommends that all new staff members complete at least one portfolio review of another staff member's completed portfolio before being certified. The portfolio review process is a good way for staff members to learn from peers and maintain inter-rater reliability.



To be recognized as a certified Advisor/Assessor with CASAS, a certified CASAS State Trainer must complete and sign a form verifying that the Assessor-in-training has met all of the above requirements. After this form is complete, CASAS will provide a certificate recognizing the staff member's Advisor/Assessor status.

The CASAS also recommends that Advisors/Assessors be proficient with the skills delineated in the Technology Skills Self-Assessment Checklist. This document lists all of the technical skills clients should be able to demonstrate in the course of the NEDP program.

### **Maintaining Active Status as an Advisor/Assessor**

To remain an active Advisor/Assessor, individuals are required to:

1. Attend all required refresher training sessions required by CASAS.
2. Continue to demonstrate all responsibilities of an Advisor/Assessor.
3. Work as an Advisor with a minimum of one client each fiscal year.
4. Work as an Assessor with a minimum of one client each fiscal year.

If the above requirements are not satisfied, the Advisor/Assessor may have to complete additional training to renew active Advisor/Assessor status.

### **Responsibilities of NEDP Staff Members**

All NEDP Staff Members must:

1. Agree to follow the official NEDP Policies and Procedures as stated in the NEDP Policies and Procedures Manual, NEDP Program Manuals, NEDP Policy Memoranda, the NEDP Site Agreement, and other CASAS written directives. These documents set out the policies and procedures governing the implementation of NEDP and must be followed to protect the consistency and validity of the NEDP.
2. Administer assessment instruments in accordance with prescribed testing procedures and under the most favorable conditions possible.
3. Ensure that site facilities permit the participation of adults with disabilities and adhere to NEDP accommodations policies.
4. Conduct all oral In-Office Checks in private.
5. Protect the privacy of all applicants and candidates consistent with the *Freedom of Information Act* (FOIA) as amended. The site's confidentiality policy must require that applicant and candidate files are stored in locked file drawers or cabinets. Access to an individual applicant or candidate's files should be restricted to staff members with legitimate reasons for requesting access to an individual's records.
6. Treat contents of all activities and In-Office Checks as confidential and not disclose these activities to anyone outside of the NEDP.
7. Provide no instruction of any kind to NEDP clients and refrain from making direct references to specific NEDP tasks or In-Office Checks during outside instruction.



## **Responsibilities of NEDP Advisors, Assessors, and Site Coordinators**

The roles and responsibilities of NEDP Advisors and Assessors are described in detail in the NEDP training manuals. In general, these roles and responsibilities are as follows:

### **Advisor Responsibilities:**

1. Introduce program processes to prospective applicants, the public, and others through information sessions.
2. Obtain demographic data on all applicants through the NEDP registration agreement form.
3. Administer all Diagnostic Instruments.
4. Score (or oversee the scoring) and evaluate the CASAS Reading and Math Diagnostic Instruments, complete remediation forms as required, and provide learning recommendations.
5. Interpret writing diagnostic test results and provide learning recommendations according to NEDP Policies and Procedures.
6. Identify possible learning resources.
7. Assist the client in identifying the Individualized Competency.
8. Facilitate clients' entry into the Generalized Assessment Phase.
9. Ensure that all diagnostic paperwork is orderly and complete before client enters Generalized Assessment.

### **Assessor Responsibilities:**

1. Provide procedural information to assist client in navigating the Web-based assessment system.
2. Activate competency areas.
3. Conduct In-Office Checks after Generalized Assessment activities have been submitted.
4. Evaluate activities and In-Office Checks completed by clients using the assessment manual and guidance pop-ups.
5. Provide evaluation results to the client along with instructions on how the Post-Task Assessment will be conducted.
6. Conduct and evaluates Post-Task Assessment.
7. Organize and implement the Individualized Assessment process, culminating in documented demonstration of the Individualized Assessment.
8. Review and approve portfolios completed by other Assessors, following portfolio review procedures and guidelines.

### **Site Coordinator Responsibilities**

1. Share appropriate communication (e.g., NEDP Newsletter and Policy Memos) from CASAS, VALRC, and VDOE with NEDP staff.
2. Ensure that all components of program completion have been conducted for NEDP graduates.

3. Ensure that primary contacts attend the biannual NEDP state meetings. Encourage secondary contacts to attend the meetings as well.
4. Report in-office contact hours accrued in the Web-based system (found in “Agency Hours” report) to local data specialist for National Reporting System (NRS) reporting.
5. Maintain an adequate amount of program materials and Web Enrollment Units.
6. Enter staff members and clients into the NEDP Web-based system.
7. Conduct and document regular in-house NEDP staff meetings.
8. Verify and deliver the yearly statistical report on the status of program participants to CASAS upon request.
9. Maintain program administrative files.
10. Maintain client records.

## **Data Maintenance and Submission**

The NEDP Sites using state or federal funding must report data elements as required by the OAEL Operational Guidance Manual and in accordance with NRS. For further information contact the Data, Monitoring, and Evaluation Specialist at OAEL.

The NEDP is an approved distance education curriculum in Virginia. Hours accrued performing in-home activities may be counted as distance learning hours, provided that these hours are not also being counted as contact hours. In-Office Checks are reported as contact hours, not proxy hours, and should be designated as contact time in the NRS.

In Fiscal Year 2015-2016, NEDP providers entering clients into the state Management Information System (MIS) will be able to show Educational Functioning Level gain from the pre-test level, ABE Intermediate High or Adult Secondary Education (ASE) Low, to ASE High when the achievement from the Diagnostic to Generalized Assessment Phase is documented in the system.

## **Remaining an Active Site**

Each NEDP Site must sign an official NEDP Site Agreement each year, pay the annual site fee, and maintain the minimum staff requirements as listed above to remain active. The site must continue to follow all implementation procedures and ensure the reliability and validity of the NEDP. The ASAS will notify OAEL annually of state NEDP Site status.

1. The CASAS will disseminate all communication to the NEDP agencies through the primary and secondary contacts, including policy and procedure notices and requests for information. The agency has the responsibility to communicate this information to all NEDP staff members and to update OAEL staff as required.
2. Each NEDP Site must conduct regular meetings with staff to ensure that the program is being consistently implemented in a standardized manner according to the NEDP Policies and Procedures.

3. It is the responsibility of each NEDP Site to advertise and regularly conduct NEDP information sessions for the public. Regularly scheduled information sessions conducted in accessible locations is a local NEDP Site responsibility.
4. Each NEDP Site must agree to maintain communication with CASAS and OAEL. The NEDP Site must keep all site-specific and personnel contact information up to date with CASAS and submit the Yearly Statistical Report, client data, and other required information as required. In addition, operational sites must provide data as required to OAEL. Requested reports must be submitted in a timely manner.
5. Each NEDP Site must continue to conduct the program in accordance with established Virginia and NEDP policies and procedures. The OAEL and/or CASAS staff may conduct NEDP Site-Monitoring Desk Audits or visits.
6. Each NEDP Site must have at least three active staff members to remain an active site. Sites may operate temporarily in a partnership with another site to maintain the requirement of three staff members if given special permission by CASAS.
7. To remain an active staff member, Advisors/Assessors must serve at least one client in Diagnostics and one client in Generalized Assessment each year.
8. Each site must have two certified writing diagnostic (CASAS Written Prompt) Assessors. These writing Assessors do not have to be NEDP-trained Advisor/Assessors, but they must be certified through the CASAS training and certification process to assess the Written Prompt.

# Appendices

# Appendix A: Diploma-Granting Documentation

Prior to sending staff members to the New Site Training, the prospective site must provide to CASAS a letter of confirmation that the local school division awarding the adult high school diploma will be issued to all NEDP graduates. This letter must be on the applicable school division letterhead from the local school division. A copy of the diploma-granting documentation should be attached. Upon approval from OAEL, a formal site approval may be addressed by CASAS.

A template for this letter can be found [here](#).

# Appendix B: Sustainability Plan

It is highly recommended that programs create a sustainability plans that address the following questions:

1. Who will be the program's NEDP staff and how will the roles of Advisor/Assessor/Portfolio Reviewer be distributed?
2. How will NEDP staff members be compensated for their responsibilities?
3. How will NEDP staff members manage their time as Advisors and Assessors?
4. Who will collect NEDP-related data?
5. What is the program's plan for training additional and replacement staff?
6. How will the program's NEDP be funded?  
Initial startup cost considerations should include:
  - a. Staffing
  - b. Facility rental costs, including utilities, if appropriate
  - c. Training and follow-up certification costs including New Site Training, Portfolio Reviews, Site Visits, and Evaluation Workshops
  - d. New site package for training materials
  - e. Additional assessment costs for the first year
  - f. CASAS annual site fee (There are no state fees or licenses associated with the establishment of an NEDP Site other than those required by county and local laws and regulations.)
7. How will the program leverage regional resources?
8. What grant funding can be used?
9. How much will clients be charged for participation?
10. Is this charge for a limited time? Is this charge for a limited time?
11. How will the program create/provide instructional opportunities for NEDP clients?
  - a. Will classroom instruction be aligned with NEDP competencies? If so, how?
  - b. Will distance education be available to NEDP clients? If so, how? Will the distance education curriculum used be approved by the state for submission of hours to the NRS?
12. Whom will the program serve?
  - a. How many localities will the NEDP serve?
  - b. Will the school division be willing to issue diplomas to adults residing outside of the locality? If the school division will award diplomas to adults outside of the jurisdiction, will it be limited to the adult education region?
13. How will new clients be identified?
14. What outreach strategies will the program use to let the public know about the program?
15. How many clients will be in the initial cohort?
16. How many clients does the program hope to serve in the first year?
17. What is the plan for the program's NEDP growth?
18. How will the staff stay in touch with clients who are in the program?
19. Does the program have sufficient technology to support NEDP?

20. How will the NEDP impact local and regional partnerships?
  - a. Who will sign the transcript for graduates? (The NEDP transcript has space for two signatures; generally one signature is the school leader and the second is the signature of the director of the NEDP agency.)
  - b. How will the program communicate with local employers about NEDP?
  - c. How will the program communicate with core WIOA partners about NEDP?

# Appendix C: Virginia NEDP Assessment Guidelines

1. All clients enrolled in NEDP must be pre-tested within the first six hours of instruction. Any CASAS level C or D test may be used to determine that the NEDP client has achieved the required “cut score” to move into Generalized Assessment. Refer to the [Assessment Policy for Virginia Adult Education and Literacy Programs](#) for the current CASAS forms approved for testing.
2. Newly enrolled clients must complete the CASAS Appraisal and the CASAS Math and Reading tests within the first six hours of instruction.
  - a. Newly enrolled clients must complete the CASAS appraisal in Reading and Math to indicate readiness for a C- or D-level CASAS diagnostic test.
  - b. Clients whose appraisal scores are below a C level are not to be given the C- or D-level CASAS pre-test. These learners should be referred to an ABE class and given the appropriate pre-test for entry into that class.
  - c. Clients should not be entered in the “Diploma Course Enrollment” tab until they show readiness for the C- or D-level CASAS tests.
3. Clients transferring to NEDP from another adult education program (ESL/ABE/GED) may already have a valid test score from an approved assessment. In this case, the CASAS appraisal may be substituted by the valid test score to indicate readiness for the C- or D-level CASAS pre-test. The following scores indicate readiness to take the CASAS C- or D-level tests.

<b>Test</b>	<b>Total Math</b>	<b>Reading</b>
TABE	SS 508 (Grade Equivalent 6.0)	SS 519 (Grade Equivalent 6.0)
*GAIN	Whatever is equivalent to the lowest score of Intermediate High EFL or 6.0 Grade Equivalent	Whatever is equivalent to the lowest score of Intermediate High EFL or 6.0 Grade Equivalent

\*General Assessment of Instructional Needs

A score of 230 in Math and 236 in Reading on the C- or D-level CASAS test, along with satisfactory completion of the other diagnostic requirements, will enable the learner to move from the Diagnostic to Generalized Assessment Phase of NEDP. No other test may be substituted for the CASAS test to show readiness to begin Generalized Assessment.