



NEW MEXICO CORRECTIONS DEPARTMENT

Secretary
Alisha Tafoya Lucero

CD-120300 Educational and Vocational Testing	Issued: 10/07/83 Effective: 10/07/83	Reviewed: 12/31/21 Revised: 02/23/15
Alisha Tafoya Lucero, Cabinet Secretary		<i>Original Signed and Kept on File</i>

AUTHORITY:

- A. Policy *CD-010100*.
- B. Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.
- C. Federal Statute 34 CFR Part 300.
- D. NMAC 6.31.2.1.

REFERENCES:

- A. ACA Standard 2-CO-5B-01, *Standards for the Administration of Correctional Agencies*, 2nd Edition.
- B. ACA Standards 5-ACI-7B-01, 5-ACI-7B-05, 5-ACI-7B-07, 5-ACI-7B-08, 5-ACI-7B-09 and 5-ACI-7B-14, *Performance Based Standards and Expected Practices for Adult Correctional Institutions*, 5th Edition.
- C. Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 [34CFR 99.5(a)].
- D. New Mexico State Board of Education Regulations.
- E. *Federal Registrar*, Sections 300.515, 300.517, 300.560, 300.571, 300.572, 300.573 and 300.574.
- F. ACA Standard 2-CO-4A-01 and 2-CO-5B-01, *Standards for the Administration of Correctional Agencies*, 2nd Edition.

PURPOSE:

To provide guidelines for the Academic Assessment, Career Technical and High School Equivalency testing of inmates at state and private Adult Correctional Facilities in the State of New Mexico

To combine NMCD education policies and eliminate redundancy of policies that govern the academic, career technical, and high school equivalency testing for inmates housed in New Mexico Adult Correctional Facilities.

APPLICABILITY:

All staff involved in assessing the educational needs, academic levels, career technical testing and high school equivalency testing of inmates processed by the Reception and Diagnostic Centers (RDC), and State and Private Adult Correctional Facilities.

FORMS:

None

ATTACHMENTS:

None

DEFINITIONS:

- A. ACE: The American Council on Education is a major coordinating body for the nation's colleges and universities that collaborates with Pearson (publisher) on the implementation of the GED test and requirements.
- B. Individualized Program (Individualized Education Plan): An education plan developed by an IEP team that will formulate goals and objectives to allow an individual with an identified disability to have better access to the academic content.
- C. Alternate Site Manager/Transcripts Manager: Person in charge of the testing center when Chief GED or HiSET Examiner is not available. This person oversees the day-to-day operations of the center.
- D. Alternate Examiner: Person at each facility who has been trained and approved to administered the high school equivalency tests.
- E. Battery: Complete set of exams for a high school equivalency exam, TABE Test, or other test which consist of multiple sub-tests.
- F. Site Manager: The person at each Official GED/HiSET Testing Center who is responsible for managing the GED/HiSET testing programs and the person(s) ultimately responsible for each test administration.
- G. D&E: (Diagnostic and Evaluation) An activity within the RDC where qualified Behavioral Health Professionals performs pre-sentencing evaluation on individuals as directed by the courts.
- H. Exam: Refers to each one of the subtests that comprise an academic assessment, high school equivalency assessment or other tests which consists of multiple subtests.
- I. High School Equivalency Administrator: Person at NM Higher Education Department who oversees all approved Academic and High School Equivalency tests centers within their state of jurisdiction.
- J. Formats: Refers to GED, HiSET or other tests developed in a language other than English, and also special editions available in English (audiocassette, Braille, and large print).
- K. GED Examiner's Manual: Guidelines and regulations provided by PEARSON VUE GED for the establishment of a testing center and the administration of GED tests.
- L. Educational Testing Services (ETS) provide guidelines and regulations for HiSET testing, establishment of testing centers, and administration of HiSET tests.

- M. GED Tests: Tests of General Education Development for High School Equivalency. The policies and procedures for the administration of the GED are established by the Commission on Adult Learning and Educational Credentials of the American Council on Education.
- N. GEDTS: General Education Development Testing Service. Support agency for the GED testing Program at the Federal government level. The GEDTS endorses and abides by the National Council on Measurement in Education (NCME), *Code of Professional Responsibilities in Educational Measurement*.
- O. HiSet: High School Equivalency exam published and supported by the Educational Testing Service (ETS).
- P. NRS: National Reporting System
- Q. Percentile Score: Any of the 99 numbered points that divide an ordered set of scores into 100 parts, each of which contains 1/100th of the total. A score given as a percentile is representing the percentage of scores in a sample that falls below it.
- R. Predictor Test: Test administered to students to determine the student's readiness to complete and pass successfully the actual high school equivalency tests.
- S. Raw Score: Number of correct items / responses obtained by an individual on a given exam.
- T. RDC: Reception and Diagnostic Center. Activity where individuals remanded to the custody of the New Mexico Corrections Department are initially sent to undergo Classification, Medical, Behavioral Health and Educational Assessment before being transferred to the receiving facility.
- U. Standard Scores: Express the individual's distance from the mean in terms of the standard deviation of the distribution. High school equivalency provides standard score tables based on the results obtained from the normal population.
- V. Students: For the purpose of this document, the inmate students within the facilities who are enrolled in an educational program will be referred to as "the inmate students".
- W. TABE: Test of Adult Basic Education: commonly used to determine academic skill level, NRS level and college and career technical education preparedness.
- X. Testing Center: Location of a high school equivalency testing entity. It has certain identifying items: testing center number, name and address that are approved and registered by GEDTS, the American Council on Education, and the NM Higher Education Department.
- Y. Test Room: Room at each facility approved for GED/HiSET testing which shall follow the exam sponsors PEARSON VUE/HiSET, and NM Higher Education's specific criteria.
- Z. Test Site: State or private facility where actual testing is conducted.
- AA. Accommodations: Accommodations allow a student to complete the same tasks as their non-learning-disabled peers but with some variation in time, format, setting, and/or presentation.

The purpose of accommodations is to provide a student with equal access to learning and an equal opportunity to show what he/she knows and what they can do.

BB. *Modifications*: Modifications alter one or more of those elements on a given assignment/assessment. Modifications are changes in what students are expected to learn, based on their individual abilities.

POLICY:

- A. Inmates, whether housed in a state or privately-run institutions, shall be evaluated to determine their educational needs. Testing instruments/assessments will be determined by staff at RDC. .
- B. NMCD will conduct an academic and vocational screening to determine each inmate's educational and/or vocational needs. [5-ACI-7B-09] [2- CO-4A-01] [2-CO-5B-01].
- C. NMCD shall schedule and administer Academic Assessments, Career Technical Assessments and High School Equivalency testing under the conditions and requirements established by the New Mexico Higher Education Department, NMCD Reentry Division and the exam sponsor, accrediting entity or the exam publisher.
- D. NMCD will maintain the integrity of the testing materials by abiding by the publishers' guidelines and security requirements. (see attachment A for general test security guidelines)
- E. NMCD shall have a comprehensive education program; available to all inmates who are eligible that includes the following: [5-ACI-7B-01]
 - Educational philosophy and goals;
 - Communication skills;
 - General education;
 - Basic academic skills;
 - High School Equivalency Credential
 - Special education;
 - Vocational (career technical education) education; Postsecondary education; and other education programs as directed by the needs of the institutional population.
- F. Programs up to the completion of the high school equivalency credential are available at no cost to inmates. [5-ACI-7B-05]
- G. All test examiners shall be certified by the appropriate test sponsor/publisher. [5-ACI-7B-07]
- H. The NMCD Reentry Division shall govern the maintenance and handling of educational records and the student's rights to privacy and confidentiality shall be maintained in accordance with state and federal law. [5-ACI-7B-14]



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AUTHORITY:

Policy *CD-120300*

PROCEDURES:

The following procedures shall be used in the Academic, Career Technical and High School Equivalency testing process: Failure to comply with this policy or testing publisher's guidelines and or requirements can result in invalidation of an individual's test, invalidation of an entire test session, termination of testing privileges and or disciplinary action of responsible individuals.

A. Reception and Diagnostic Center (RDC): [2-CO-4A-01] [2-CO-5B-01]

1. NMCD State and D&E inmates shall be scheduled for academic assessment as soon after arrival to RDC as reasonably possible. Exceptions:
 - a. Inmates who previously have undergone appropriate RDC academic screening and assessment within the last 180 days (6 months).
 - b. Inmates who are placed in RDC Restrictive Housing Units (RHU) where academic testing cannot reasonably be performed in accordance with the publisher's guidelines.
 - c. Non-RDC inmates who are temporarily assigned as court hold, medical hold or some other Non-RDC purpose.
 - d. RDC inmates who are immediately housed or admitted to MHTC (Mental Health Treatment Center) may be delayed in testing until such time as the patient is stabilized and is reasonably able to participate in education testing.
2. Testing should be coordinated and supervised by the RDC Education staff on a basis consistent with the rate of RDC intake.
3. All test results and screening documents should be placed in the inmate's Education file and or entered in to the Offender Management System. This information shall be protected in accordance with state and federal law, NMCD and HED policies and practices and test publisher's guidelines. These documents include but are not limited to:
 - a. TABE 11/12 Locator test results (as recorded on the Education interview and Chrono).

- b. Education Interview and Chrono .
 - c. High School Equivalency verification status entered into the Offender Management System Narrative.
4. All RDC Education assessments and screenings shall be completed prior to the inmate's appearance before the RDC Classification Committee.
 5. Education files shall be transferred from RDC to receiving facilities by US Mail within 5 working days of the inmate's transfer.
 6. RDC Educational Screening process normally consists of:
 - a. Academic testing using the TABE 11/12 Locator Assessment.
 - b. Academic testing using the TABE 11/12 Word List for academically low functioning Individuals who are not capable of completing the TABE 11/12 Locator or are non-English speaking.
 - c. Complete the Reentry Division RDC Interview/Education Chrono.
 - d. Complete and process an Education Verification form for those individuals who claim to have a High School Diploma or High School Equivalency and no previous record exists. Record the date the verification was mailed or processed in the Offender Management System Narrative.
 7. Educational Testing:
 - a. After the inmate has been transferred from RDC and has arrived at the receiving institution, he/she shall proceed through an orientation process. At the receiving institution, an Education Registrar, Programs Manager or Designee shall ensure further academic testing, as needed per program requirement. The Registrar, assigned Test Administrator or Designee shall be responsible for the tests being kept, administered and scored in an appropriate, professional manner following the strictest adherence to the rules established by the publisher for each one of the tests administered.
 - b. The testing environment shall be such that it maximizes the validity of the test results. (See attachment A for general test environment guidelines)
 - c. The Education Registrar/Test Administrator or designee shall be responsible for explaining to students the nature of the test to be administered and the manner in which the test results will be used.
 - d. The Education Registrar, assigned Test Administrator or Designee supervises the administration and scoring of the tests and enters the results on the diagnostic form. If deemed necessary by the Registrar or Designee, the inmate may be referred to the Special Education Teacher for follow up.

- e. The Special Education Teacher will evaluate any inmate referred to him or her, and if appropriate, will prepare a special education referral packet for the Licensed Diagnostician and or Special Education Coordinator.
- f. The Education Registrar or other representative from the Facility Education Department shall attend or provide ILP information to the initial classification/ITAP/TAP committee meeting.

B. Licensed Diagnostician:

Licensed Diagnosticians administer tests to determine the need for special education services. All Diagnosticians working for the New Mexico Corrections Department or private contract facilities must hold a valid and current license from the State of New Mexico.

1. Upon referral, the Diagnostician will review the special education referral packet to ascertain that all the necessary documentation is in the file.
2. After the referral packet has been reviewed, the Diagnostician will inform the Special Education Coordinator of his or her findings and will set up a time to conduct the proper testing, if necessary.
3. Before any evaluation is done, the Diagnostician will explain the purpose of the testing and make sure that the Consent for Evaluation form has been properly signed.
4. The Diagnostician will keep all protocols and testing materials under secured conditions and will follow all the proper procedures concerning the administration, scoring and confidentiality of all the testing materials under his or her care.
5. After the testing has been conducted, the Diagnostician will write the psycho-educational report in a timely manner. He or she will notify the Special Education that the report is ready, and will provide said teacher with two copies of the report – one for the educational file of the inmate and another for the inmate's personal use.
6. The Diagnostician will attend the IEP meeting that has been set by the Special Education Teacher to explain his or her findings from the evaluation and provide some recommendations for the education plan of the student.
7. Once the report has been explained and all questions answered, the Diagnostician will fill out the appropriate IP Committee Assessment Report form and he or she will collect the appropriate signatures and other documentation necessary.
8. In case of a disagreement with the report, the Diagnostician will collect the dissenting statements and the supporting evidence and will document the event.
9. The Diagnostician will make him or herself available to all staff in matters concerning testing and the proper procedures for handling, administering, scoring and reporting.

C. Program Specific Testing Requirements:

Each academic, career technical, vocational, post-secondary, cognitive, or reentry program may have its own testing requirements. In these cases, testing requirements and periodicities are determined by the policy or other formal guidance governing that program as long as the following requirements are strictly adhered to.

1. Education Registrar, Programs Manager, Test Administrator or Designee shall be responsible for tests being stored, administered and scored in an appropriate, professional manner, following the strictest adherence to the rules established by the publisher for each one of the tests administered.
2. The testing environment shall be such that it maximizes the validity of the test results.
3. The Education Registrar/Test Administrator or Designee shall be responsible for explaining to students the nature of the test to be administered and the manner in which the test results will be used.
4. The Education Registrar/Test Administrator or Designee supervises the administration and scoring of the tests and records the results in OMP and per program requirement.

D. High School Equivalency Testing: The following procedures shall be utilized in the preparation and administration of the GED and HISET Tests.

1. Eligibility for Testing:

- a. All inmates students who do not have a verified high school diploma or high school equivalency credential must first take basic skills assessments to determine their current level of academic ability.
- b. Inmates students will be required to enroll in academic classes for instruction. Follow-up testing and observations will determine their readiness for HSE predictor testing.
- c. All inmate students who obtain TABE Score indicating NRS level 4 or higher are eligible to take the High School Equivalency predictor exam.
- d. An inmate student must take the entire battery of tests for each high school equivalency testing session. Any waiver must be approved by both Program Manager and Examiner if only one test is going to be given at a time and must be documented in OMP database. The entire battery of any high school equivalency must be completed before administering a retest for any failed subject module.

2. Eligibility for Retesting:

- a. The examinee may only re-take tests they failed.
- b. An examinee can only take the HSE Exam three times in a calendar year

- c. Retests can only be given after receipt of the official scores.
- d. Retests can only be conducted in the same format as the original tests, i.e. paper or computer based.
- e. Retests can only be given after 40 hours of documented classroom instruction.
- f. Retests must be conducted in accordance with publishers, NMSDE and NMCD guidelines

3. Predictor/Practice Testing:

- a. An inmate student who has met the criteria with a TABE score of 535 in both Reading and Math can be administered the predictor test by the certified test examiner at the facility where he or she is housed. The Examiner must use the approved Roster/Time log for Predictor Testing. The official predictor test provided by the test publisher of the associated high school equivalency exam is utilized to provide evidence of student readiness and qualification as a test candidate for the credentialing exam.
- b. The predictor test must follow the same guidelines that govern the Official High School Equivalency test. They must be strictly monitored to meet the criteria for administration, scoring and security.
- c. Inmate student scores on the official predictor tests must meet the test publisher guidelines for student readiness to be considered a candidate for the related high school equivalency exam.
- d. Once any inmate student has met the requirements to become a candidate for high school equivalency exam, he/she should be scheduled to complete the exam within a reasonable time frame.
- e. Predictor scores will be valid for a period of 90 days.

4. Test Session Preparation:

- a. Prior to initial testing all candidates for High School Equivalency Credential must complete any forms required by the test publisher.
- b. The certified examiner should have the testing room, seating chart, demographics, testing materials, time logs, and any other required items ready for testing 30 minutes prior to the first scheduled exam.

5. Under Age Testing:

- a. Any student who is qualified for high school equivalency testing and is under the age of 18 years must have an approved underage permission form completed before the tests can be administered. Any test administered before the permission form is complete will be voided.

- b. Efforts will be made to have the custodial parent sign the permission for testing form.
- c. The Warden of the facility or his/her designee will sign as the parent, if the legal parent or guardian has not been located or is unavailable.
- d. The Program Manager of the facility will sign as the representative of the school.
- e. The scoring site must receive the completed underage form before or at the time the completed test materials arrive at the site for scoring.

6. Test Administration:

- a. All inmate students will present their photo identification at the time they enter the testing room. The inmate students will enter one at a time and the examiner must check the identification badge to validate information on the roster. If the test is to be administered in a higher custody level facility that does not use photo identification badges, the photo from the escape flyer is to be used in its place. If there is no photo available at the time of testing, the inmate/student will not be permitted to test.
- b. The certified test examiner will furnish all testing materials. Inmate students will not be allowed to bring paper work of any kind, their own pencils or pens, electronic devices of any kind, head gear of any kind, or watches.
- c. All inmate students whose identification has been validated will be shown their assigned seat and receive the testing materials that he or she will need to complete the test in the area for which he or she has qualified. The examiner will then provide oral instructions using a designated script if applicable.
- d. All testing rosters and time logs are to be hand written in pencil and completed in the testing room as the testing session is in progress.
- e. All certified test examiners must follow testing procedures outlined in the GED PEARSON Manual, ETS/HISET Test Administration Handbook. Only certified test examiners will administer any high school equivalency exam.

7. Test Session Closeout: At the end of a testing session, before the examiner leaves the testing room, he or she double-checks all information on the roster, time-log if applicable.

8. Packet Preparation for Mailing: Follow all guidelines for envelope or package preparation as described in the ETS/HISET manual.

9. Packet Receipt and Preparation for Scoring: Roster/Time Log will be kept by the testing center in a secure area for 30 days.

10. Results Notification:

- a. Upon receipt of the test results at the facility the Programs Manager, Registrar, or

Certified Examiner, will notify examinees of their results. This will be done in person or through the inmate mail system. All examinees that complete their high school equivalency will be notified in person.

- b. Inmate students who successfully complete the high school equivalency credential may pursue vocational education or post-secondary courses, if available.
- c. Any inmate student wishing to participate in the graduation ceremonies must have a “Consent to Release” form complete and in their inmate education file.
- d. Recognition posters in the classroom must also have the “Consent to release” form in place in their file.

11. Record Keeping and Transcript Handling:

- a. The NMCD Education Department, through its high school equivalency credential program, will keep inmate student’s records in a computerized database. Records are maintained by Diplomasender.com in accordance with the state HSEC office.
- b. GED and HISET score reports are only offered through DIPLOMASENDER.COM.
- c. Any potential examinee previously tested at another school within the state of New Mexico will not be required to send for an "Official Transcript as all records are accessible through Diploma Sender. All potential examinees that previously tested outside of NM and did not complete the testing and wish to continue then all reports will be requested through GEDTS (GED MANAGER) for the GED and HISET will be requested through its proper channels.
- d. All previous passing scores that are not over three years old can be used.

12. Diploma Disbursement:

- a. Once diplomas are printed and signed, they are sent to the NMCD Reentry Division’s GED/HiSET Site Manager’s office.
- b. Inmate student records office personnel at the NMCD Reentry Division GED/HiSET office will locate (using OMP database) the inmate student receiving a diploma.
- c. After the location of the inmate student has been established, diploma packets will be sent to the respective facilities. Diploma packets shall include the original diploma, test history, and a 3-page carbonless diploma receiving form.
- d. Once the examinee completes and returns the diploma receiving form, he or she will receive the remainder of the diploma packet along with the pink page of the receiving form. The white copy should be placed in the inmate’s education file and the yellow copy is to be sent to the Chief Examiner.

13. Handling Restricted Materials: GED/HISET Examiners in the field will have a dedicated lockable storage container to store testing materials.

14. GED and HISET Testing Personnel:

- a. The Programs Manager at the facility may nominate an individual to become GED and HISET Field Examiner for the facility through Division Director or Designee.
- b. Each Test Administrator must maintain certification provided by the test publisher including any requirements for annual updates or recertification.
- c. Individuals instructing potential candidates for the HSEC Test, particularly as teachers in Adult Education (AE), or other HSEC preparation education program, cannot be nominated as Field Examiner or otherwise have any access to any HSEC testing materials.

15. NMCD Reentry Division's Training:

- a. Additional training will be dictated by the test publishers and the needs of the NMCD Reentry Division.

Testing Checklist

The following checklist is provided as general guidelines for academic testing. These guidelines and publishers specific testing requirements must be followed when conducting testing. In the event there is conflict between these guidelines and the publisher's guidelines, the publishers guidelines will take precedence.

Staffing Requirements	
	Examiners successfully complete training In accordance with publishers guidelines
	Test center staff are thoroughly familiar with the Test Directions/Instructions
	Examiners understand the scheduling and check-in processes.
	No staff member supporting the exam has a conflict of interest. (Such as testing their own students)
	The test session is adequately staffed.
General Testing Area Facility Requirements	
	A secure, locked storage area with restricted access is used to house testing materials.
	Testing rooms are separate from those where staff/others are working or conducting other activities.
	The testing area and testing rooms have adequate lighting.
	The testing area has a space that can be used for examinee check-in.
Testing Room Requirements	
	The testing rooms are equipped with correctly functioning clock(s) and chalkboard(s) or whiteboard(s).
	The testing rooms are set up properly for conducting an examination: A "Do Not Disturb" sign is posted, and wall posters or other materials that might provide clues to answers to test questions are not visible.
	Seating locations are positioned far enough apart that examinees cannot view or copy the answers of other examinees and the seating locations provide enough adequate work space for examinees.
	There is sufficient space for the Examiner to move between examinee workstations to monitor examinees and to distribute/collect materials.
	The Examiner is able to see all examinees throughout the testing session. Partitions, walls, furniture, and/or other obstacles are not positioned in a way that obstructs the Examiner's view.
Procedural Requirements-General	
	Only properly trained and authorized staff may handle test materials.
	Test center staff understand that test content, in whole or part, shall not be transcribed, photocopied, photographed, or otherwise reproduced in any way.
	Test questions or answers are never reviewed or discussed with examinees or others, or amongst test center staff.
	Previous versions of tests are never used as practice material.
	Secure test materials, including scratch paper, are never put into the trash. Scratch paper is securely destroyed. All testing materials should be securely stored or securely destroyed,
	Examinees are never allowed to be left alone with test materials or with any data that might be accessed on a computer.
	Discussion among examinees or sharing of answers is not permitted at any time. The Examiner carefully monitors examinees for this, moving quietly around the room periodically to observe examinees up close.
	Visitors or other unauthorized individuals are not permitted to enter the testing room while testing is in session.
	Inmate clerks and tutors are never permitted to handle, view, distribute, copy, or possess testing materials of any kind except as necessary to participate in formal testing themselves.
	Any breach or suspected breach of security is immediately reported to the Education Supervisor and the cognizant testing coordinator.
Procedural Requirements-Test Materials	
	During testing, desks are clear of all unauthorized materials at all times.
	Examiners clear calculator memory before and after testing.
	Materials used by examinees with allowable resources or special testing accommodations are inspected to ensure that the materials contain no notes or other means of providing the examinees with answers to test questions or the ability to remove secure test content.