



Program Self-Evaluation and ACLS Monitoring Tool

**Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
Adult and Community Learning Services**

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The mission of ACLS is to provide each and every adult with opportunities to develop literacy skills needed to qualify for further education, job training, and better employment, and to reach his/her full potential as a family member, productive worker, and citizen.

ACLS Program Monitoring Tool

Introduction

Indicators of Program Quality Self-Assessment

The Indicators of Program Quality articulate what Community Adult Learning Centers need to have in place in order to provide high quality adult basic education services. These indicators were developed in collaboration with the field in 1992, when the National Adult Education Act mandated that states adopt indicators of program quality and use the indicators to monitor the success of programs.

Over time, the Indicators of Program Quality provided the foundation for the *Massachusetts Guidelines for Effective Adult Basic Education for Community Adult Learning Centers and ABE Programs in Correctional Institutions*. The Guidelines, which are updated regularly, capture not only the Indicators of Program Quality but also provide additional detail on both state and federal policy and related compliance requirements. The Guidelines are available at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/abeprogram/>.

In tandem with the Guidelines, the Indicators of Program Quality should be used as benchmarks against which a program can measure its own progress in key areas. Programs are strongly encouraged to use the Indicators of Program Quality as a self-assessment tool and as a tool to develop a continuous improvement plan.

Indicators of Program Quality and Monitoring Site Visits

The Indicators of Program Quality are also used by Adult and Community Learning Services (ACLS) to monitor program success. Each year, ACLS selects a limited number of programs for an on-site, multi-day monitoring site visit. During a monitoring site visit, a team representing ACLS and its regional workforce development partner uses the Indicators of Program Quality to assess the status of the program's key components. The monitoring team (The Team) assesses the program's status by means of a data collection process based on the Standards and Criteria that support the Indicators.

The monitoring site visit begins with a pre-monitoring meeting with members of The Team and the program's staff. The purpose of this meeting is to ensure that all staff understand the purpose of the monitoring and the overall process. The ACLS program specialist will work with the director to arrange the logistics of the monitoring site visit. During the monitoring site visit, The Team will review documents (e.g., curriculum) and conduct interviews with staff and a sampling of students. At the conclusion of the monitoring site visit, The Team will present preliminary feedback to the program. After the site visit, The Team will prepare a report that recognizes the program's strengths and, as needed, recommends next steps for continuous improvement. Programs that are out of compliance will be required to take immediate action to resolve compliance matters. Finally, the program will have an opportunity to review the report prior to the closing step in the process which is an exit meeting with The Team and program staff.

Indicators of Program Quality	
Indicator	Descriptor
Indicator 1: Curriculum Development, Implementation, and Instructional Methods	Curriculum development and instruction are aligned with and incorporate standards that contribute to students' progress toward achieving their goals.
Indicator 2: Student Educational Progress	Students demonstrate gains in literacy and/or English skills and abilities that impact their roles as workers, family members, community members, and as lifelong learners.
Indicator 3: Instructional Support Services	The program offers advising and other services to support instruction and meet students' needs.
Indicator 4: Community Linkages	The program has developed linkages that connect community assets to student needs.
Indicator 5: Program Continuous Improvement Planning	Program continuous improvement planning embodies effective organizational structures and processes to serve the needs of adult students.
Indicator 6: Professional Development	Exemplary professional development opportunities enhance educator professionalism to provide quality instruction for students.
Indicator 7: Program Leadership, Management, and Accountability	Program leadership, management, and accountability effectively address all components of service delivery.

Steps in the Program Monitoring Process — A Guide for the Program Director and Program Staff

Setting Dates

1. The program director is notified via letter from ACLS that the program has been selected to be monitored.
2. The program specialist assigned as liaison to the program will serve as the team leader for the monitoring. A second program specialist will be assigned to the monitoring team as well as a representative from the local workforce partner. A third ACLS staff person may be assigned for the monitoring of large and/or geographically dispersed programs.
3. The team leader contacts the director and negotiates dates to schedule the following:
 - A pre-monitoring meeting for the entire program staff to be led by the monitoring team;
 - A program monitoring (including back-up dates in case of inclement weather, etc.);
 - An exit meeting, during which the monitoring team reviews highlights of the final report.

Pre-Monitoring Meeting

1. The team leader schedules a pre-monitoring meeting with the program no later than three months after the program receives notification. The purposes of the meeting are to:
 - Familiarize all program staff with the monitoring process and its purpose;
 - Provide an opportunity for program staff to meet the monitoring team and vice versa;
 - Help program staff determine ways to prepare for the monitoring;
 - Provide examples of the types of data the team will need; and,
 - Clarify the time and input needed from each staff person during the monitoring visit.
2. The team leader sends written confirmation of the dates and times for the following: pre-monitoring meeting (about an hour), the monitoring (three or more days), and the exit meeting (about an hour).
3. The program director distributes copies of the Program Self- Evaluation and Monitoring Tool and all the interview questions to staff for review prior to the pre-monitoring meeting. ACLS recommends that the program use these materials to complete a program self-evaluation with the active involvement of as many staff as possible.
4. During the monitoring, The Team will:
 - Interview **all** staff, a sampling of students, and a sampling of community planning representatives; and,
 - Review program records, including: curricula, instructional materials and a representative sampling of lesson plans; non confidential student and personnel files; program and staff development plans; and staff and community planning meeting minutes.

The Final Report

Within a month of the conclusion of the monitoring, The Team delivers (by e-mail) a final report that identifies promising practices, recommendations, and key findings. All findings require resolution through a corrective action strategy and response.

The Exit Meeting

Within a month of the program receiving the final report, The Team reassembles at the program to review highlights of the final report at a final meeting. The date of this meeting will be negotiated with the program director and The Team. Programs should make every effort to invite all stakeholders to the meeting, including: students, teachers, advisors, support staff, the organization's leaders (e.g., superintendent, president, executive director), and grant coordinators.

Program Feedback

Within a month of the final meeting, the director may send written comments to The Team with feedback about the monitoring process and/or final report. Program feedback will be reviewed with the ACLS administrator and responded to on a case-by-case basis. The Department will assume the report has been accepted by the program without exception if no comments are received within the month.

The Corrective Action Response

All findings will require a corrective action response and a resolution to be determined by the monitoring team and communicated to the program director.

Recommendations Not Related to Compliance

Recommendations that are not compliance issues do not require corrective action. However, the program may elect to include and document such recommendations in its annual continuous improvement process.

The Massachusetts Indicators of Program Quality: The Standards and Criteria

Quality Indicator 1: Curriculum development and instruction are aligned with and incorporate standards that contribute to students' progress toward achieving their goals.

Standard 1.1. The ABE program has documented program-wide English Language Arts (ELA) and math curricula aligned with the *College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education*.

<i>Criterion</i>	<i>Source of Information</i>
A. The program has documented curricula that include a scope and sequence and curriculum units aligned with the level-specific standards in the <i>College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education</i> (CCRAE standards).	A. Staff interviews, documented curriculum
B. The curricula emphasize the academic skills of reading, writing, speaking, and math and these are fully aligned with the level-specific standards in the CCRAE standards in order to coordinate instructional levels.	B. Staff interviews, documented curriculum
C. The program has regular and ongoing common planning time for the purpose of revising curricula.	C. Staff interviews, documentation
D. Instructors use written lesson plans that are aligned with the documented curricula.	D. Staff interviews and a representative sampling of lesson plans

Standard 1.2. The ESOL program has a documented program-wide curriculum aligned with the *ABE Curriculum Framework for ESOL and the College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education*.

A. The program has a documented curriculum that includes a scope and sequence and curriculum units aligned with the benchmarks in the <i>ABE Curriculum Framework for ESOL</i> and the CCRAE standards level-specific standards.	A. Staff interviews, documented curriculum
B. The curriculum emphasizes the academic skills of reading, writing, speaking and math and these are fully aligned with the benchmarks in the <i>ABE Curriculum Framework for ESOL</i> and incorporate the level-specific CCRAE standards where applicable and supportive of English language learners' next steps for college and/or careers.	B. Staff interviews, documented curriculum
C. The program has regular and ongoing common planning time for the purpose of revising curricula.	C. Staff interviews, documentation
D. Instructors use written lesson plans that are aligned with the documented curriculum.	D. Staff interviews and a representative sampling of lesson plans

Standard 1.3. Curricula incorporate “authentic” real-life contexts that are responsive to the needs, skills, goals, and interests of adult students in their roles as workers, family and community members, and lifelong learners.	
A. The curricula is contextualized with the goals, interests, and needs of the students to help them succeed in next steps including postsecondary education and careers.	A. Staff and student interviews, review of documented curriculum
B. The curricula and associated materials reflect the diverse educational, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds of the students served.	B. Staff and student interviews, review of classroom materials
C. The program uses instructional materials with contexts relevant to students in their roles as family members, workers, community members, and lifelong learners.	C. Staff and student interviews, review of classroom materials
Standard 1.4. Instructional methods, materials, and practices reflect a variety of approaches to implement the curriculum.	
A. Instructional methods include interactive activities to engage a range of learning preferences, (e.g., visual, aural, tactile, kinesthetic) etc.	A. Student and staff interviews, and a review of a sampling of lesson plans
B. Instructional strategies include whole group, small group, and individualized instruction to respond to the needs of the student population at diverse levels and with different learning styles.	B. Student and staff interviews, and a review or a sampling of lesson plans
C. A variety of tools and technologies (e.g., audio-visual, computers, video, tablets, smart phones, smart boards, calculators.) are used to support learning.	C. Student and staff interviews, review sampling of lesson plans
D. The technology coordinator supports teachers in the effective integration of current technologies into the curricula and instruction.	D. Staff interviews and documentation
E. The program uses resources to effectively provide all students with instructional materials for classroom use, and for review at home either at no cost or for a refundable deposit.	E. Student and staff interviews
Standard 1.5. The design and delivery of instructional services meet the minimum requirements of the <i>Guidelines for Effective ABE for Community Adult Learning Centers and ABE Programs in Correctional Institutions.</i>	
A. The program offers at least a sequence of three classes at the same part of the day (morning, afternoon, or evening.)	A. Document verification
B. Each class in the sequence offers 32-48 weeks of instruction per year or a minimum of 150-175 hours per class per year.	B. Document verification
C. Each rate-based class offers a minimum of 5 hours of instruction per week.	C. Document verification

D. Student enrollment is consistent with the approved number of slots per service type.	D. Document verification
E. Where the sequence of three class offerings is met through collaborations, the curricula at collaborating programs are complementary with each other according to the ABE and /or ESOL curriculum polices.	E. Document verification (including Memorandum of Agreement)
Quality Indicator 2: Students demonstrate gains in literacy and/or English skills and abilities that impact their roles as workers, family members, community members, and as lifelong learners.	
Standard 2.1. The program's assessment practices follow ACLS assessment policy and procedures.	
<i>Criterion</i>	<i>Source of Information</i>
A. A minimum of two staff members are trained to administer and/or score each assessment required by their program design: ESOL = BEST Plus and/or TABE CLAS-E Reading or Writing assessment and/or ABE = MAPT and TABE 9/10, Level L. (Note: Only one trained staff member is required for TABE L.)	A. Teacher interviews and program/teacher files
B. All staff administering and scoring assessments have successfully completed trainings and recertifications to administer and score the state-required tests and have documentation of their status.	B. Staff interviews and teacher files
C. The program documents that procedures are followed to ensure consistent test administration and scoring among program staff.	C. Staff interviews, review of documented program assessment policy
Standard 2.2. Program staff (teachers, advisors, etc.,) use assessment results and other data to drive the continuous improvement of curriculum, instruction, and student learning.	
A. ACLS-required standardized assessments are used to measure student progress, inform students of their progress, and inform instruction.	A. Staff and student interviews and samples of student work
B. Classroom or program-developed assessments are used on an ongoing basis to measure student progress, inform students of their progress, and inform instruction.	B. Staff and student interviews and samples of student work
C. ABE programs use the MAPT score reports to inform instruction.	C. Staff and student interviews
Standard 2.3. Students make progress toward and achieve their goals.	
A. The program has a documented student goal-setting process.	A. Staff and student interviews
B. The program ensures that staff regularly communicates with students regarding goal setting and their progress towards meeting goals.	B. Staff and student interviews

C. The program ensures that goal setting is done with a staff member who has an ongoing relationship with the student.	C. Staff and student interviews
D. The program ensures that goals are determined by the student, negotiated, and recorded with a staff member. Goals are revisited with students as needed.	D. Staff and student interviews
E. The program ensures that student goals inform instruction and are incorporated into the program's curriculum development process.	E. Staff and student interviews, reviews of curriculum and sample lesson plans
F. The program has a documented process to follow up with students whose goals cannot be data matched and this process is being implemented.	F. Staff and student interviews

Quality Indicator 3. The program offers advising and other services to support instruction and meet students' needs.

Standard 3.1. Educational and career advising is provided to all students.

<i>Criterion</i>	<i>Source of Information</i>
A. Students can identify the designated educational and career advisor. An advising schedule is sufficiently flexible to meet students' needs as reflected on a posted schedule.	A. Student interviews
B. Individual Education and Career Plans (ECP) are in process and recorded for each student. These plans are revised as needed.	B. Education and career advisor interviews, samples of non-confidential student records
C. The program has a process for helping students to explore options for education, training, and/or careers. The program assists students to acquire the skills and knowledge needed to achieve their education and/or career goals.	C. Education and career advisor interviews, staff and student interviews
D. The program has the capacity to provide advising in the native language of the most predominant non-English speaking student language group.	D. Student and staff interviews
E. The program communicates key aspects of program policy and procedures to all language groups.	E. Staff and student interviews, documentation such as a handbook

Standard 3.2. The program provides reasonable accommodations for students with physical and learning disabilities either through the program's own resources or by referral to outside agencies.

A. The program has a system (policy, staffing, and resources) in place to provide reasonable accommodations for students with self-disclosed disabilities (physical and/or hidden) through its own resources or by referral to outside agencies.	A. Staff interviews, documentation such as a handbook
B. The ADA coordinator orients new staff and trains all staff regarding disability issues at least annually.	B. Staff interviews, schedule of trainings completed, agenda or learning objectives and participant list for each training
C. The ADA coordinator keeps documentation of ADA related activities in locked files to assure confidentiality.	C. Review of non-confidential student records

Standard 3.3. The program has adequate retention strategies in place.

A. Within 30 days of enrollment, each student receives an orientation that includes information on the attendance policy, advising services, grievance procedures, rights and responsibilities, and basic rules and regulations.	A. Student and staff interviews, documentation of orientation
B. The program provides each student with a student handbook that clarifies and explains program policies. These may include, for example, policies regarding attendance, absenteeism, grievance procedures, educational and career advising (and all student support services), assessment, course offerings, severe weather, safety procedures and emergency evacuations, drug and alcohol policy, expectations for staff and student behavior, and other appropriate program-specific information.	B. Copy of student handbook, student and staff interviews
C. The program employs retention strategies that help students persist in the program to meet their goals.	C. Student and staff interviews
D. The program implements a process that follows up on student absences.	D. Student and staff interviews
E. The program provides ancillary services (e.g., childcare, transportation) for which it receives funding.	E. Student and staff interviews

Quality Indicator 4. The program has developed linkages that connect community assets to student needs.

Standard 4.1. The program has engaged the partnership in the community planning process in order to provide opportunities for students to access support services and participate in community activities.

<i>Criterion</i>	<i>Source of Information</i>
A. The partnership has secured the active involvement of a wide range of community organizations as members of the partnership which represent the selected community planning model (e.g., single focus, multi-focus, college and career readiness, or family and community engagement.)	A. Community partnership membership list with affiliations; meeting minutes with attendance; director and/or community planner interview; (optional: interviews with representatives from partnership)
B. The partnership regularly monitors and assesses its progress to meet its goals.	B. Director and/or community planner interviews
C. The partnership regularly reviews community assets and needs to identify major changes in the community.	C. Director and/or community planner interviews
D. The program is actively engaged as a community partnership member in setting priorities and developing and implementing action steps to meet unmet needs.	D. Director and/or community planner interviews
E. Through the community partnership, the program helps students access resources in the community. Students benefit from a broad array of educational, employment and training, and health and human services in order to successfully pursue their goals and aspirations.	E. Director and/or community planner interviews, documentation

Quality Indicator 5. Program continuous improvement planning embodies effective organizational structures and processes to serve the needs of adult students.

Standard 5.1. The continuous improvement planning process is purposeful, ongoing, and systematic, and is focused on the program's effectiveness in supporting learners in the attainment of language and literacy skills.

<i>Criterion</i>	<i>Source of Information</i>
<p>A. Program continuous improvement planning includes a systematic approach to collecting and using data in order to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assess program strengths and needs; • identify priorities for program improvement; • identify goals; • develop a continuous improvement plan to meet those goals; • implement the plan; and • evaluate the effectiveness of the plan and revise as needed. <p>The process looks at each component and the interrelationship of components within the program (e.g. intake, orientation, assessment, advising, instruction).</p>	<p>A. Continuous improvement plan; other documentation such as meeting minutes, student surveys, staff and student interviews</p>
<p>B. The program uses a variety of methods to gather and document input from students in order to determine satisfaction with the program and to inform program improvement.</p>	<p>B. Staff and student interviews and documentation of methods used to gather input from students</p>
<p>C. The program uses a continuous improvement process that incorporates staff input.</p>	<p>C. Continuous improvement plan; staff interviews; staff meeting minutes</p>
<p>D. The program provides two to four weeks of paid time for direct service staff to devote to issues of planning and development during non-instructional weeks.</p>	<p>D. Staff interviews</p>
<p>E. The program holds full staff meetings on a regular basis (at least quarterly) that allow for the maximum possible participation of both full and part-time staff and documents meetings with minutes.</p>	<p>E. Continuous improvement plan; staff interviews; staff meeting minutes that include attendance and pre- and post- meeting minutes</p>
<p>F. A limited number of designated staff is responsible for program continuous improvement planning.</p>	<p>F. Continuous improvement plan; SMARTT plan, other documentation, and staff interviews</p>
<p>G. The continuous improvement plan is documented, and all staff understand their role both in the planning process and in helping to achieve the program's goals.</p>	<p>G. Continuous improvement plan; staff interviews</p>
<p>H. The director is proficient in using Cognos to retrieve and analyze program data.</p>	<p>H. Director interview</p>
<p>I. Program staff review data on an ongoing basis, including Cognos data; all staff meet at least twice per year to analyze data that affect daily operations, program planning, and continuous improvement planning.</p>	<p>I. Continuous improvement plan, staff interviews, staff meeting minutes</p>
<p>J. Program maintains a minimum of two staff proficient in SMARTT.</p>	<p>J. Interviews with two staff trained in SMARTT, review of documentation</p>

Quality Indicator 6. Exemplary professional development opportunities enhance educator professionalism to provide quality instruction for students.

Standard 6.1. The program uses an integrated process for program and professional development, and provides adequate staffing to lead that process.

<i>Criterion</i>	<i>Source of Information</i>
A. The program has a process for identifying program improvement goals. The program has identified one or more program improvement goals. The program's staff development goals support program improvement goals.	A. Staff interviews, continuous improvement plan, individual staff development plans
B. Every staff member (including administrators) creates an individual professional development plan annually that addresses individual professional goals and relevant program improvement goals.	B. Staff interviews, continuous improvement plan, individual staff development plans

Standard 6.2. All staff engage in staff development activities for not less than 12 hours per year to help all students achieve their goals and be prepared for college and career.

A. Documentation is on file that each staff member has engaged in relevant staff development activities for at least 2.5% of his/her total paid hours and for not less than 12 hours/year. Each staff person receives the minimum 12 hours and the director distributes consolidated staff development hours according to the program's needs.	A. Program development coordinator interviews and staff development plans
B. The director and program development coordinator work together to ensure that staff receive information about professional development opportunities.	B. Staff interviews
C. The program provides access to professional development opportunities for all staff by providing substitutes or using other strategies to support staff development.	C. Staff interviews

Standard 6.3. The program ensures that all staff complete the trainings that are required for their roles.

A. The director has completed the New Directors' Orientation (NDO) or is within her/his first 12 months of hire.	A. Director interview and documentation
B. The director has completed the ABE Program Design training or is within her/his first 12 months of hire.	B. Director interview and documentation
C. The director ensures that two staff are trained and proficient in SMARTT data entry.	C. Staff interviews

Quality Indicator 7. Program leadership, management, and accountability effectively address all components of service delivery.

Standard 7.1. The program administration provides educational leadership to ensure a standards-based, high quality program that succeeds in preparing students for college and careers.

<i>Criterion</i>	<i>Source of Information</i>
A. The director guides the talents of staff, students, relevant external stakeholders, and board members (if applicable) toward achieving goals for college and careers.	A. Director and staff interviews
B. The director continually maintains high expectations for staff.	B. Director and staff interviews
C. The director promotes strategies and structures for the advisor(s) and teachers to work together to encourage career and college readiness for all students.	C. Director and staff interviews

Standard 7.2 The program has effective and equitable personnel policies and procedures specific to the Community Adult Learning Center.

A. All staff receive an orientation to the program.	A. Staff interviews
B. All staff receive an employee policies and procedures handbook that addresses key employee issues. These may include absenteeism, travel reimbursement, benefits, safety procedures and emergency evacuations, grievance procedures, performance appraisal, expectations of staff, working hours, professional development, and benefits.	B. Employee handbook and staff interviews and an employee handbook specific to the CALC program
C. Hiring interview teams include key stakeholders (e.g., student and staff input).	C. Staff and student interviews

Standard 7.3 The program provides staff supervision and evaluation to support teaching and learning.

A. The program has a current organizational chart that includes the umbrella organization as well as the entire ABE program.	A. Organizational chart
B. The director maintains up-to-date written job descriptions for each job category of the ABE program.	B. Director and staff interviews & review of job descriptions
C. The director provides ongoing supervision for all non-instructional staff and annually conducts performance evaluations that include written feedback and follow up as part of the evaluation process.	C. Director and staff interviews and a review of job descriptions.
D. The director provides ongoing supervision for instructors and annually conducts performance evaluations that include formal classroom observations with written feedback and follow up as part of the evaluation process.	D. Director and staff interviews and a review of job descriptions.

Standard 7.4. The program maintains an efficient and accurate bookkeeping/ accounting system.

<i>Criterion</i>	<i>Source of Information</i>
A. The program provides access to its bookkeeping/ accounting system and demonstrates how grant funds and matching share expenditures are coded and tracked.	A. Interviews with fiscal and/or director, sampling of expenditure sheet
B. The inventory of computers, copiers, furniture, and other major items purchased with ESE funding is updated annually. There is a policy for disposal of such items when they become out of date.	B. Interviews with fiscal and/or director, equipment inventory; equipment disposal policy
C. There is a time and effort record maintained for each staff person that reflects appropriate alignment among the hours worked on the grant, the hours in the budget, and the payroll.	C. Interviews with fiscal and/or director, review of staff timesheets and staff payroll records

