**From:** Adult ESL Assessment [mailto:aea@cal.org]
**Sent:** Thursday, January 14, 2016 1:34 PM
**Subject:** BEST Plus 2.0 Updates

Happy New Year from all of us at the Center for Applied Linguistics. As we noted in our email to you last month, CAL is committed to providing you with the information you need to prepare for the launch of BEST Plus 2.0 on July 1, 2016. Please take a moment to review the following updates. You can find more information online at the BEST Plus 2.0 web page. As always, please don’t hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

**BEST Plus 2.0 Rollout**

 CAL will provide each state and each program with one complimentary BEST Plus 2.0 Test Administrator Guide and one USB drive that includes the BEST Plus 2.0 test administration software and the new score management software.

 To ensure we have the most updated shipping information, CAL will be contacting programs in February 2016 with a link to a web page for programs to update their contact and shipping information.

 Watch for our email and postcard with the link. For test security, please note that CAL will only send the complimentary BEST Plus 2.0 materials to programs that have confirmed their shipping information.

**Pre-Order BEST Plus 2.0 Starting May 16, 2016**

 BEST Plus 2.0 print-based examinee test booklets and picture cue books (Forms D, E, and F) will be available for pre-ordering on the CAL Store starting Monday, May 16, 2016. Orders for print-based test materials received by June 20, 2016, will be shipped to arrive by June 30.

 Prices for BEST Plus 2.0 are now available on the BEST Plus 2.0 web page. Price changes for computer test administrations will go into effect on July 1, 2016.

 Computer test administrations ordered at any time will continue to be credited to the programs’ accounts and will not be affected by the transition to BEST Plus 2.0.

 CAL can work with your state to order BEST Plus 2.0 print-based test materials and computer test administrations at a bulk rate. Please contact us for more information.

**BEST Plus 2.0 Webinars – Join us to learn more and ask questions**

CAL will be conducting webinars for NRS users on February 17, 2016, at 10 AM and 4 PM EST and for non-NRS users on February 18, 2016. Click on your preferred webinar date below to register.

**For NRS Users of BEST Plus 2.0**

1.    [February 17 at 10 AM ET](https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4501199765072165377)

2.    [February 17 at 4 PM ET](https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/2877792836893520897)

**For Non-NRS Users of BEST Plus 2.0**

1.    [February 18 at 10 AM ET](https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/2599408587368625153)

2.    [February 18 at 4 PM ET](https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/5464992075562160897)

**New NRS Score Ranges**

The new NRS score ranges for BEST Plus 2.0, effective July 1, 2016, are listed below. You can also find these posted on the BEST Plus 2.0 web page.

Beginning ESL Literacy       88 to 361

Low Beginning ESL             362 to 427

High Beginning ESL            428 to 452

Low Intermediate ESL        453 to 484

High Intermediate ESL       485 to 524

Advanced ESL                     525 to 564

Exit criteria from NRS        565 and higher

**Pre- and Post-Testing**

Please note that you cannot pre-test with the original BEST Plus and post-test with BEST Plus 2.0 for NRS reporting.

 Starting July 1, 2016, programs must use BEST Plus 2.0 for pre- and post-testing for NRS reporting. This means that scores from the original BEST Plus cannot carry over into the new program year.

 Returning students will need to be retested with BEST Plus 2.0 per NRS guidelines. Programs should follow policies set by states and OCTAE.

**Instructional Hours**

CAL has revised guidance for instructional hours for BEST Plus 2.0 and BEST Literacy as outlined below.  Guidance on instructional hours is also posted on the BEST Plus 2.0 web page.

 CAL recommends re-testing students at the end of their period of instruction, with 60 hours minimum (80–100 hours recommended) of instruction prior to re-testing.

 In instances where a student does not have 60 hours, programs should follow state assessment policies and NRS guidelines when re-testing at the end of the instructional period.

 If students receive more than 60 hours of instruction, CAL does not recommend re-testing students at the 60 hour mark; rather, students should be tested at the end of the instructional period to avoid over-testing.

CAL recommends that states work with programs to review program assessment policies and reference the current OCTAE NRS Implementation Guidelines (dated February 2015) in their entirety where necessary.

**Original BEST Plus Materials and Computer Administrations**

 Programs with computer test administration balances in their accounts and on testing computers will not have to make any changes once the BEST Plus 2.0 software is installed. Computer test administrations from BEST Plus will carry over into BEST Plus 2.0.

 For the print-based version used for NRS reporting, CAL recommends that original BEST Plus examinee test booklets (Forms A, B, and C) be used by June 30, 2016. NRS users will not be able to use them after July 1, 2016.

 To finish your Program Year 2015 data collection (i.e., scoring, data entry, and NRS reporting), NRS users will need to use the original BEST Plus score management software on the red Test CD (dated February 2005) or on the original BEST Plus USB. Programs should save a copy of the red BEST Plus CD or original BEST Plus USB for this purpose.

 Any unused print-based scoring administrations in your program account balance will be converted to use as computer test administrations as of July 1, 2016. This is especially important for NRS users.

 There are no changes to the scoring rubric.

 Programs will be able to download a free PDF of the scoring and software sections of the new BEST Plus 2.0 Test Administrator Guide (TAG) to update their current TAG. New test administrators will need a new BEST Plus 2.0 TAG after July 1, 2016.

 On July 1, 2016, programs and test administrators using BEST Plus for NRS purposes will need to destroy all original BEST Plus examinee test booklets and picture cue books (Forms A, B, and C) and the black Administrator Practice CD. All red BEST Plus Test CDs and original BEST Plus USBs should be destroyed as soon as Program Year 2015 NRS reporting has been completed.

 Original BEST Plus test materials will not be valid for NRS reporting for Program Year 2016 or beyond.

**CAL Contact Information**

To make sure that your records are up to date, we are providing the current contact information for CAL.

Center for Applied Linguistics

Attn: BEST Plus

4646 40th St NW

Washington, DC 20016

Email: AEA@cal.org

Phone: 866-845-2378

Visit the [BEST Plus 2.0 web page](http://www.cal.org/aea/bestplus/2.html) for more information.

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions you may have. Thank you for your continued support.

Daniel Lieberson

Director, Product and Service Operations

Center for Applied Linguistics

**CAL’s adult ESL assessments staff are available to answer questions.**

Email: aea@cal.org

Telephone: 866-845-2378, option 1 (toll free)

Monday—Friday 10 am–6 pm Eastern Time

Note: CAL respects your privacy. If you do not wish to receive electronic messages in the future, please let us know at aea@cal.org.

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